



areas have had disastrous consequences.

How, Murray asks, can a person with little education or few skills find fulfillment? As a good neighbor, an effective parent, or a valued friend. If the government is incapable of keeping the streets safe enough for children to walk to school, neighborhoods—in any meaningful sense—can never come into being. Government can set the conditions that allow these bonds to form, for instance, by making neighborhoods safe. Otherwise, Murray says, it should get out of the way. A president who pays attention to *In Pursuit* could give millions of despairing Americans a chance to start working through these difficult times.

If Charles Murray provides theoretical justification for the importance of neighborliness, John Shelton Reed tells you how much fun it is to be a good neighbor. In *Whistling Dixie: Dispatches from the South*, the University of North Carolina sociologist spells out why minor-league baseball games, church picnics, and fishing trips are important.

Even though he calls himself a “crypto-semi-neo-Agrarian,” Reed is not an enemy of modernity, he is no apologist for the Jim Crow days, and he doesn’t imagine that everything was perfect 40 years ago. But he is onto something: Not so long ago, life was more civil. And (I would argue) we’ve lost much of that civility because we expect politicians and bureaucrats to solve every problem that comes our way.

John Shelton Reed and Charles Murray would probably agree about many things. The next president would be wise to listen to what they have to say.

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## ★ Karl Hess

Because the next U.S. president will face crucial decisions about abandoning or restoring a republican form of government, it is urged that he read two current books—*In Pursuit: Of Happiness and Good Government*, by Charles Murray (Simon & Schuster, 1988), and *The Disuniting of America*, by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. (W.W. Norton, 1992)—and the somewhat older *The Institutional Imperative*, by Robert Kharasch (Charterhouse Books, 1973).

Murray’s book can take its place as the peer of any book ever written on the nature and propriety of government—not as an ideological treatise but as a careful questioning based on only one assumption: that the pursuit of happiness, person by person, is in fact why our own government, an epic and historic innovation, was created and constitutionally constrained. Murray writes about people, not society, and makes the difference crystal clear. His book is a guide to the preservation of liberty, which, in turn, is the essential condition for the pursuit of happiness. The next president, being a representative of some faction or another of exactly the sorts warned against in *The Federalist Papers*,

probably will find Murray’s book intolerable. Alas.

Because the next president will serve during a time when the factions will have developed their own special languages—and possibly will even have been elected by echoing special vocabularies—the Schlesinger book is a superb reminder of the success up until now of the melting-pot dynamics of the country that still remains the preferred destination of so many immigrants, legal or not. When people vote with their feet, they generally vote American, no matter the politically correct position of blaming America for most, if not all, the world’s ills. The Schlesinger book is particularly impressive as a counter to anti-American slanders because of the author’s long and honorable representation of the modern liberal position. In this book he even sounds a bit like a classical liberal.

The Kharasch book is one of those overlooked gems that can make your day when you find a copy on a shelf of used books. It is a lighthearted but actually most serious look at how bureaucracies operate. The Iron Law: Bureaucracies exist in order to exist, no matter their publicly stated goals or roles. Because the next president will be in large part ruled by the demands of the bureaucracies, this book is an essential guide to the facts behind the factions. It also presents serious recommendations as to how the bureaucracies could be tamed. An example: No agency authorized to *declare* an emergency should also be authorized to *manage* it.

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## ★ John Hood

Despite the pandering rhetoric of the election campaign, foreign policy remains the first and foremost duty of any president. To fulfill that duty, our new president must first have a solid understanding of the century’s worldwide conflicts, both their historical roots and their significance for future policy making.

If the rise and almost-fall of totalitarianism demonstrates anything, it is the principle that “ideas have consequences,” as do idea makers. Intellectuals, far from being cloistered agents of learning and discourse, ultimately determine the course of human events—by creating rabid, revolutionary movements with millions of victims, or alternatively, by constructing a philosophical framework for protecting liberty. Leaders ignore the life of the mind to their peril. Today’s philosophy students can be tomorrow’s Khmer Rouge or Shining Path. Today’s mild-mannered professor or author can be tomorrow’s Karl Marx or Abimael Guzman.

Paul Johnson’s *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* demonstrates that the conflicts and catastrophes of the century have their roots in intellectual trends. The new president must understand the importance of ideas, of philosophy, and of rhetoric, if he is to lead his nation out of its current post-Cold War torpor. Ronald Reagan, despite policy miscues,

will always be counted as among the greatest of our presidents because of his implicit understanding of the power of ideas (gleaned, perhaps, from his career as an actor—a field not too distant, in many ways, from that of rhetoricians and scholars).

More specifically, the new president must thoroughly understand why Marxism failed, both as a political system and as a system of economic, psychological, and cultural insights. Reading Thomas Sowell's *Marxism: Philosophy and Economics* would be an excellent start.

For a little light reading, I'd advise my president to read the plays of Shakespeare—particularly *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Julius Caesar*—for their insights into human action and the nature of leadership. Both George Bush and Bill Clinton escaped the American education system before its demise and thus have no doubt read these works. But Shakespeare is best savored, not simply skimmed. And if all the world is indeed a stage, then the next president of the world's only superpower will play the lead. He had best memorize the right lines.

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## ★ F. Kenneth Iverson

The president should read:

*Trashing the Planet*, by Dixy Lee Ray with Lou Guzzo. A well-known scientist gives an even-handed, common-sense perspective on environmental issues. It avoids the distortions and hysterical rhetoric that seem to be the order of the day.

*The Fair Trade Fraud*, by James Bovard. The author provides an in-depth look at our chaotic trade laws, which give incompetent industries an entitlement to milk the American consumer. *The Fair Trade Fraud* is the frightening story of the 8,000 tariffs and 3,000 quotas that restrict foreigners' rights to sell and American citizens' right to buy, and the description of an area where clearly the government has invaded the rights of the individual.

*The Next Century*, by David Halberstam. A short book by a thoughtful observer of society on our problems and the changes we need to make a better tomorrow.

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## ★ Elizabeth Larson

Set in South Africa half a century ago, Alan Paton's deeply moving tale, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), is both a tragedy, in the classical meaning of the word, and a paean to the human virtues and dignity sadly lacking in much of American society today. Many nonfiction works have been written in recent years decrying the effects of the welfare society and the cult of victimization on personal morals and responsibility. For all their careful

analysis, documentation, and statistics, however, none of those books brings home to the reader as Paton does the evil of abdicating individual responsibility and the human dignity of those who willingly live, and die, as a result of their actions.

A sidelight to Paton's central tale of a simple Zulu pastor and his wayward son is the story of the pastor's village—the land overworked and infertile and the people despondent. A wealthy white man arrives one day with plans to reverse this “tragedy of the commons” by dividing the land among the villagers. The right to private property is the subject of the other two books I suggest for our incoming president: *Free Market Environmentalism*, by Terry L. Anderson and Donald R. Leal (1991), and *Takings: Private Property and the Power of Eminent Domain*, by Richard Epstein (1985).

Anderson's and Leal's environmental reader is the most important book for any political leader surrounded by aides, policy makers, and green advocates claiming that only the government can remedy environmental “crises.” While other free-market environmental books are essential resources for information on specific environmental problems and why government “solutions” have made them worse, *Free Market Environmentalism* provides the fundamental principles used by every free-market environmental writer. Anderson and Leal explain, with many historical examples, that environmental problems can be solved by providing the right incentives to the people involved and by letting human initiative, not government mandates, take charge.

Particularly in light of recent battles between property owners and environmental activists over the “taking” of private property by restricting an owner's use of his land, Epstein's authoritative analysis of the concept of eminent domain restricted in the Constitution is the most important work on the subject available. The deceptively simple questions Epstein considers (What is a taking of property? Do current regulations—say, zoning or rent control—fall into that category?) ought to be posed to every policy maker from the president to your local zoning board—and, unfortunately for the security of property rights in America today, almost never are. A new president couldn't have a better foundation upon which to build his presidency than a profound respect for what the Founders considered one of the inalienable rights of women and men.

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## ★ Laura Main

Our nation's problems stem from an internal sort of cancer—call it lack of “family values” or, to be blunt, simply a lack of values. It touches every segment of our country, from crime on our streets to the well-being of our businesses, and it has very little to do with having children out of wedlock.

Even with large segments of the population receiving some sort of government aid, we still find a nation in the grips of so-called