

But at present nurturant Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and others in this country are not organized. They are not seen as a single movement, a progressive religious movement. Worse, secular progressives do not see those with a nurturant form of religion as natural members of the same political movement. Not only do spiritual progressives need to unite with each other, they need to unite with secular progressives, who share the same moral system and political objectives.

What is a strategic initiative, and how is it different from regular policy making?

There are two kinds of strategic initiatives: The first is what I call a slippery slope initiative. The idea of a slippery slope initiative is to take a first step that seems fairly straightforward, but gets into the public eye an additional frame that you want to be there. The idea is that once the first step is taken, then it is easier and often inevitable to take the next step and the next step and the next step.

The conservative Supreme Court works by slippery slope decisions, one step at a time. Consider the following progression. First, the court allowed corporations to contribute to ballot initiatives as a limited form of the First Amendment right of free speech. Then, their Citizens United decision gave corporations the ability to contribute as much as they want in elections, as a form of free speech. Then their Hobby Lobby decision extended the First Amendment freedom of religion to corporations so that they do not have to provide contraception to women employees as specified by the Affordable Care Act, opening the door to a wider use of freedom of religion by corporations to avoid various fair treatment laws.

Let's take another example. It used to be the case that conservatives tried to cut social programs one by one, and then they figured out how they could cut them all at once: through tax cuts. Cutting taxes is a strategic initiative, not of the slippery slope variety but of a deeper variety, one that has wide effects across many, many areas. If you cut taxes and create a large deficit, then when any social program comes up—it could be health care for poor children, or services for paraplegics, or whatever—there won't be enough