

American Storytelling and the Challenges Conservatives Face

By Krystina Skurk

“Stories change hearts, they change minds, they change everything,” radio host Lee Habeeb said in his recent presentation at Hillsdale College in Washington, D.C.

In his September 26th lecture at Hillsdale College in Washington, D.C., Habeeb emphasized the importance of storytelling while telling a fair number of stories himself. Habeeb’s point was to prove to the audience the power of storytelling. “Why don’t we, who care about our nation’s story, take the business of storytelling seriously?” he asked.

Habeeb is a 2016 Pulliam Fellow in Journalism at Hillsdale College, a radio executive and producer, and vice president of content at Salem Media Group. He also hosts “Our American Stories,” an innovative show that tells positive stories about American life.

Habeeb also questioned conservatives who are more proud of the child that wants to join the military than the one that wants to be an actor or a writer. “The left views careers in the arts the way we view careers in the military and business. They believe in this stuff, we don’t,” he said.

“...Conservatives own a few media platforms: Fox News, talk radio and some websites. But it’s news and opinion, mostly. It’s programming designed to feed the choir, to preach to the choir, not grow it. We’ve invested little in storytelling platforms that will attract new fans to the great brand called America,” Habeeb said.

The top network executives that decide what Americans watch on television or what movies get made are almost exclusively liberal, Habeeb explained. If a script does not align with their worldview, it goes nowhere. Artists know this and thus write things that will please the media curators. “A handful of owners make the majority of us feel as if we are a minority in our own country,” he said.

Habeeb also explained that conservatives have failed to win ground in the media because “rather than invest in storytelling, we spent billions of dollars on think tanks. “[D]o we believe that white papers and op-eds can change the country?” he asked.

Habeeb went on to say that the only time conservatives do spend money on media is to purchase political ads. Tragically, that money goes to the networks that run shows that attack conservatives. “We’re actually funding our enemy’s platforms,” he said.

During the question and answer portion of the event, Habeeb talked about not letting the left create the culture. He stated that neither Christians nor conservatives have “been good enough in asserting our own cultural identity.” He talked about the fact that the left has made numerous documentaries about Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whereas there are significantly fewer about Justice Antonin Scalia.

In conclusion, Habeeb encouraged the audience to “start telling the story of America to Americans. Stories about all that’s good and decent and beautiful about this country.” He warned that letting “the left alone tell the story of America isn’t just gross negligence -- it’s cultural suicide.”

On an upbeat note he finished by saying, "We have great stories to tell. Let's start telling them. How hard can it be? After all, liberals do it."

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If you missed the event- don't worry you can watch it here: