

Don't Let the Media Choose Our President

Powerful forces in our nation want to choose our next leader. Don't let them control you.

Beware of media manipulation. Right now, some journalists, reporters and media executives are positioning candidates in the order of their preference. The "serious" candidates get exposure while the rest garner attention only when they stir up trouble. I watched this during MSNBC's May 3 Republican debate.

Most of the time was spent on the "top three" candidates (former Gov. Mitt Romney, former Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Sen. John McCain) and the one loose cannon, 1988 Libertarian candidate Rep. Ron Paul. Much time was wasted on shameless promotion of a Web site sponsor, which posted pre-written questions and asked people to "vote" on the questions. These were then presented as questions from the public. That sort of manipulation isn't even subtle!

Moderator Chris Matthews seemed more interested in creating controversy than in giving the voter the opportunity to hear the candidates share their beliefs and positions concerning various issues. How can you get to know where a candidate stands when the moderator demands a simple "yes" or "no" response to a ridiculously loaded question such as, "Will you work to protect women's rights, as in fair wages and reproductive choice?"

In this manipulative media machine, the most qualified candidate may not only be overlooked but also cunningly

ignored or avoided. Such is the case with one man who deserves careful consideration and evaluation.

Former Gov. Mike Huckabee is undoubtedly a qualified leader. He is a man guided by the principles that have made our nation great: strong states and limited federal government, the family as the secure cornerstone of our society and a strong personal faith.

Long before governing Arkansas for more than 10 years, Huckabee worked for me in our evangelistic ministry. I know him well and respect him greatly.

He stepped into the spotlight quite suddenly in 1996 when Gov. James Guy Tucker Jr. received a felony conviction in the famous Clinton Whitewater scandal. As lieutenant governor, Huckabee took over the duties of the state's highest office and not only served but also excelled. The people liked him so much that he garnered a higher percentage of the 1998 vote than any previous Republican gubernatorial nominee in Arkansas.

In 2002 the voters reaffirmed his leadership, and he served until 2007. His leadership in areas of technology, education and health care gained him national attention, and Time magazine honored him as one of the five best governors in America. You wouldn't know it by listening to the media, but Huckabee placed second in a March 2007 poll in Iowa, behind Romney and ahead of Giuliani. He placed second in an August straw poll.

Huckabee is a man who can set the agenda for the 2008 election if given the opportunity. He offers real solutions to the

critical issues of our time. He holds deep convictions yet knows how to listen to opposing viewpoints. He will not be swayed by public interest groups or manipulated by the media.

These are the proven qualities that we need in our next president. Leaders must have credentials to confirm the convictions they claim. Their track records in life and public service reveal who they really are, not who they are trying to be.

Our next president must have what Ronald Reagan, Teddy Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln possessed—the ability to publicly communicate and inspire the nation to make right choices, move in the right direction and resolutely stand by the wise decisions of our leaders.

Our next president must understand the imperative of rebuilding relationships with other nations to elevate the reputation of America throughout the world. Huckabee has said that we are great people because we have continually expressed acts of compassion toward developing nations and willingly sacrificed to defend the freedom of others throughout the world. We must build upon this history of selfless leadership.

A great leader will also understand the importance of protecting the most innocent life: the child in the womb. Life must be valued, and its value must be effectively communicated to the women who make life-or-death choices for their children.

We will shape our world for future generations when we go to the polls in 2008, but the names on the ballots will be determined this year. Our Founding Fathers, with wisdom from

above, put the power in the hands of the people.

We must not be manipulated into allowing the media and poll results to make the decision for us. Listen carefully to all the candidates and support one with the ability to lead with conviction and effective communication.

James Robison and his wife, Betty, host the Life Today television program ([lifetoday .org](http://lifetoday.org)), seen in more than 250 million households worldwide. Their Life Outreach International ministry helps feed thousands of children in crisis areas of Africa. To learn more about the 2008 presidential candidates, visit