

5 Great Republican Leaders We Called 'Mr. President' – Part 5

Publisher's Note: Today's "Greenelines" is part 5 of a five-part series on Republican presidents noted for their leadership skills. The order of presentation does not reflect a ranking. Read part 1, part 2 , part 3 and part 4.

William H. Taft was the 27th president of the United States. He served from 1909-1913.

The most notable takeaway from his presidency is how Taft led in the shadow of one of the greatest presidents ever to serve—Theodore Roosevelt. Biographies of Taft headline the opinion that he did not have the necessary skills to be president. Many write that Taft didn't have the passion needed to serve.

A similar fate awaits many leaders as they follow such a forceful, energetic and capable leader as Roosevelt. It's always difficult to measure up to a powerful predecessor.

Many ministry leaders can testify about attempting to replace a loved and effective leader.

Taft accomplished much. Republicans mounted against him as he continued to trust bust companies such as Standard Oil and American Tobacco Company. Roosevelt was progressive and so was the Republican Party. But Taft talked progressively while he prosecuted trusts and increased tariffs. Perhaps this explains why he was thumped in his bid for re-election by Woodrow Wilson.

President Taft led the fight to pass the 16th amendment. I'm sure we all recall the 16th amendment to our Constitution:

“The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration.”

Taft was quoted to have said, “I am afraid I am a constant disappointment to my party. The fact of the matter is, the longer I am president, the less of a party man I seem to become.”

Transition periods in successful organizations are often more difficult than a transition in the midst of success. When things are going well, people are slower to accept change and less likely to need the voice a leader. I’ve been handed keys in more than one transition with the admonition, “Please try not to mess it up.”

People cry out for strong leadership, mostly in desperation.

It seems to me the best approach in leading in the shadow of greatness is to move slowly and work hard to understand the grass roots of factors affecting the success of the organization.

“Things” are rarely as good or as bad as it seems.

I’ll close this series about presidential leadership with my favorite Taft quote, “Don’t write so that you can be understood, write so that you can’t be misunderstood.”

Today’s Scripture

“No king is saved by a great army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. ... The eye of the Lord is on those

who fear Him, on those who hope in His lovingkindness” (Ps. 33:16, 18).

Platform Tip No. 56

Platform building requires sustained consistent effort. Perhaps this is why there are so few powerful platforms in ministry.

Daily effort is difficult. Doing something every day without feedback or metrics requires faith and a long-term view.

Do you want to learn more about developing your personal platform?

Send for my free series of lessons titled, “The Fundamentals of Creating, Curating and Developing Content for Multiple Platforms.” Send your request to: platform@.

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