

Mat Staver Says Republican Party Needs to Stop Moderating Our Values

The political philosophy of the Republican Party and Gov. **Mitt Romney** during the presidential campaign was to downplay social issues and focus solely on jobs and the economy. Four years ago, McCain-like Romney—could not and would not articulate the full panoply of **conservative values**. Their strategy didn't work in 2008, and it didn't work in 2012.

The **Republican Party** had enormous success in the 2010 mid-term election. At that time Tea Party activists and social conservatives worked together to usher in one of the largest changes in American history. In 2010, the Republican establishment was pushed aside as the grass roots took control of primaries and party conventions and selected pro-life, pro-family, and pro-national defense men and women to lead with integrity and honor.

As we look at the **2012 election** and search for answers, we can see that the problem began in the primary. Tea Party activists, Christians, and pro-family Americans could not agree on a conservative candidate, and the Republican establishment supported a moderate. Romney failed to excite in the primaries, and he failed again in the general election.

But for his well-financed campaign, Romney would not have become the Republican nominee. The grass roots never fully embraced him, and he never embraced the grass roots. When invited to speak at churches or conservative, religious meetings, he refused or did not respond. He refused to roll up his sleeves and speak to a variety of constituents. He wrongly thought his one-note message of jobs and the economy would win the day, but while that issue is exceptionally important, he

failed to reach the hearts and emotions of the electorate and ran from any issue that fell outside of jobs and the economy. Even during the last debate on **foreign policy**, he oddly tried to turn the topic back to his jobs and economy message.

Uninspired, conservatives, Republicans, Independents and Blue Dog Democrats stayed home—or worse, voted for **Barack Obama**. Independents and Blue Dog Democrats could not see the stark difference between one-note Romney and Obama. Despite four years under the most pro-abortion, pro-same-sex marriage, anti-religious freedom, big government and weak foreign policy president, Romney received nearly 1 million **fewer** votes than Sen. John McCain. Anybody could have shown the stark difference between Obama's anti-colonial ideology and mainstream America. Anybody but Romney and the establishment.

While **evangelical Christians** represented 26 percent of the total vote in 2008 and again in 2012, the issues that matter to this voting bloc were largely ignored! This enormous voting bloc could produce positive change if it had a pro-life, pro-marriage candidate who would inspire and unify them. They have always been the grass roots activists, but Romney failed to reach out to them in a significant way. He failed to mobilize them.

Ten percent of all the votes cast in 2012 came from Hispanics, but the GOP and Romney's jobs message did not resonate with this demographic either. Despite the fact that Hispanics are traditionally family-centered, the most anti-family president in American history received more than 70 percent of the Hispanic vote, up from the 67 percent he received in 2008. Romney had no plan for Hispanics. He blew an opportunity when he spoke before them, and he failed to share a shred of concern for them.

During the second debate, Romney was asked a question by a Hispanic female about his plan to deal with the undocumented immigrants. He ignored the question, skimmed the answer

without addressing it, and followed up on a prior question. I knew then that he had lost the Hispanic vote. He did nothing of significance to reach out to the Hispanic community. He failed to inspire Latinos and give them hope for America. Republicans need to embrace their conservative values and reach out to Hispanics, not marginalize them.

As the only Caucasian who serves on the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, which represents nearly 41,000 evangelical Hispanic churches, I think I know a bit about this community. It is time the Republican Party listens. The party will find there is a lot more in common than they might think. Their values are not those of the **Democratic Party**, but the Democrats appear to Latinos to be the only party that listens, and at least appears to care

In the last debate on foreign policy when asked about the Libyan tragedy and the shameful way the Obama administration handled this matter, Romney dodged the question and veered off to the economy and jobs. Obama gave Romney an October surprise with his mishandling of Benghazi, but Romney could sing only one note: the economy and jobs. The exit polls showed more people trusted Obama on foreign affairs than Romney. This is inconceivable, except for the fact that Romney was almost mute about foreign affairs.

During the Republican Primary, when Romney carpet-bombed his opponents' characters by radio and TV ads, he was able to rise up in the polls and come from behind. But, each time he won in the primaries, voter turnout was down from 2008. He attacked his opponent but failed to inspire. Yet, during the general election, Romney didn't seriously attack Obama. Where were the ads decrying Obama's mishandling of Benghazi? He failed to show clear distinctions between conservative values and Obama's radicalism.

For those who say the Republican Party needs to moderate its views to win, they easily forget the 2004 and 2010 elections.

Both were mandates. The 2012 election is not a mandate for anything. What it teaches us is that the voter turnout was less in 2012 than 2008, and that Romney got even fewer votes than McCain, something I thought could not be possible. But it was possible because Romney does not resonate with conservative values. We need a thorough conservative foundation that encompasses social, economic and foreign affairs.

To the GOP establishment: Stop running from our values, and stop giving us moderate presidential candidates.

To the church: Stop talking about voting values only at election time, and start teaching **biblical values** every Sunday.

Republicanism was founded on a premise that all men are created equal. It is time we return to those values. When our values are clearly and unashamedly articulated, we win. When we run from them or hide them, we lose. It's that simple.

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