



# COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY

## *Remarks*

Mr. Michael Medved

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MR. MEDVED: Since this was going to be the last major speech, I wanted to leave you with something entirely positive, which is, how we can win. But to answer the question about how to win, you first have to look back and see why we lost. And you know if you have ever helped a child or a grandchild get ready for taking a scholastic assessment test or anything like, what do you do when you are trying to figure out the answers? The first thing you do is eliminate all the wrong answers. Let me tell you a couple of wrong answers because you hear about this a lot on talk radio and it is not true. It is simply not true. Please understand this and take it home with you tonight and don't ever repeat it and don't ever tolerate anyone saying it. There were no four million missing conservatives in this election. There were no four million fewer votes that Mitt Romney got than John McCain got. Mitt Romney actually got nearly one million more votes than John McCain. President Obama got four million fewer votes than he got the first time. The second myth that needs to be exploded, there were not millions or even hundreds of thousands of Christian Evangelicals who didn't come out and didn't vote for Mitt Romney because of his faith. That was something the Left constantly promoted, constantly hyped up, and constantly made a very big deal. If you look at the exit polling - exit polling is fascinating because with exit polling they ask people after they vote - and the exit polling is based upon three hundred and sixty thousand people and the same percentage of Evangelicals.

Actually slightly more, a higher percentage of Evangelicals voted in this election. White Evangelicals were 25% of the total electorate in 2012 and they voted 78% for Romney, which by the way, ties a record. Romney got a higher percentage of white Evangelicals than Bush, a similar percentage to President Reagan. Now that is very dramatic and that is very true. There is something else about this that while we are talking about good news, some of the numbers here are just stunning and they are counter intuitive. And I have actually been spending a good deal of the weekend looking over them. I have my little exit polling here and if you look over this you can learn a lot about our country and what is really go on in our country. One of the things we keep hearing is that marriage is over; the institution is marriage is gone. Actually, 60% of all Americans who voted in this election are currently married. And the vote among that 60% was 58 for Romney and 42 for Obama, a sixteen point gap. If we actually were able to establish a marriage requirement before you could register to vote we would never lose another election, right? 60% of the people are married and they gave a 16% edge to Romney. Here is another one. When it comes to religious participation, you keep hearing about the growth in secularism, according to the exit polling only 12% of Americans said they had no religious affiliation, no religious preference. It is higher than it used to be but it is still twelve percent. Okay you can do the math, that means 88% do have some religious alignment. The 12% that have no religious affiliation voted four to one for Obama - big surprise. But of those people who do participate regularly in religious services, 55% of all American voters go to church or synagogue at least

once a month and they gave a margin to Mitt Romney, a stunning margin to Mitt Romney, of 13%. That is a very decisive margin. That by the way includes all ethnic minorities, everything. We are not now talking about white Evangelicals, we are talking about anybody that goes to services. And here is another one. 59% of voters lived in households with household income more than fifty thousand dollars a year. I think most of us can agree that fifty thousand dollars is a middle class income today. The actual median income per household is just about fifty thousand. But 59% of voters, and in that group including very middle class people, Romney won by eight points. So how did he lose? He lost because he got wiped out among people who never go to church or synagogue. Among people who are single and among people who earn less than fifty thousand dollars a year and particularly those who earn less than thirty thousand a year where he lost three to one.

Okay, here is the good news and this is so important for Conservatives to take to heart. Barack Obama won the election solely on the strength of hugely disproportionate majorities among those Americans who are single, irreligious and poor. The good news is nobody wants to stay single, religious and poor, right? Republicans are what Democrats want to be when they grow up. That is the truth. By the way, that was my experience. I changed my registration to Republican basically as part of the process of growing up. And as I say it is the three "P's": parenthood, paychecks and prayer that move people to the Right. My book, *Right Turn*, is about how I went from a punk Liberal activist to being the lovable Conservative curmudgeon that I am today. But the questions becomes, why should we be encouraged by what I have just explained about the idea that basically democrats want to grow up to be republicans because the population is getting older. Now this is not necessarily a good thing for America. I'm one of the people who share the concerns. There is a good new book; I had the author on my show recently, Nick Eberstadt who wrote a book called *What to Expect When No One Is Expecting*. We have a birth dearth in America. We need to increase our birth rate. I mean we clearly do. The Epperson's with their sixteen grandchildren are doing their part. So another family here with fourteen, look, I imagine many people in this room are doing their part. But the point is and that is not a suggestion for activity later tonight. Why not? The basic point here is as the population is getting older when people move through life they almost inevitably make more money. The dirty little secret about American poverty is the majority, actual majority of people who live below the poverty line are in one of two groups. They are either very young, under thirty or they are immigrants. Both categories of people tend not to stay poor. They don't and it is demonstrable. One of the problems that we have in this country is we look at rich and poor as permanent kinds of classifications. One of the fascinating things in Steven Moore's presentation earlier this morning here at CNP was he made it clear for people in the 1% only 4% of people get into the one percent and then stay there for the rest of their lives, the one percent of top earners in the population. People in America - they go up they go down, we go in every different direction. So one of the things that will work to our advantage is that as people age they are more likely to get married, even today. Because the big difference in marriage is not that fewer Americans are getting married it is that Americans are getting married later and they are having fewer children. Why would it be that people who are getting married and who go to church or

synagogue and who are earning a little bit more would be Conservative? Obviously, because they don't have to rely on government. I don't need to throw myself on the tender mercies of Uncle Sam because I have my wife Diane. The truth of the matter is that most of us count on what Edmund Burke described as the "little platoons of society," our families. By the way, married women gave Romney, all married women by the way including all ethnic minorities, married women gave Romney a margin of eight points.; a very decisive margin. There wasn't really a gender gap in this election, there was a marriage gap. In any event, when you have a little bit more money that you are earning you feel less reliant on the government. And certainly if you go to church or synagogue you know to trust the big G, God more than the little G, government. And you also have a community to rely upon. So one of the ways that we win for the future is encouraging these developments in people's lives that are good for them anyway. I mean anyone here want to raise your children to be permanently poor, single and irreligious? And by the way, that irreligious thing, what is fascinating in the United States of America is even people who describe themselves as religiously unaffiliated think religion is a good thing. And they overwhelmingly would like their children to be more religious. Because one area where there is a huge consensus in American life, Ralph Reed, has written about this very effectively. One of the areas where there is a great consensus in American life is the opinion that religious faith is a positive force in our society. That means that you need to throw away all the Liberal rants that say that Conservatives can't win unless we strip ourselves of our religious basis. That is not a disadvantage that is an advantage. People in the United States understand that religion is a force for the good in this country.

But that brings me to what is really the bad news. And it is stunning bad news out of these exit polls. And this to me, of all the things on all these details they asked people coming out of the exit polls - about thirty questions - was the most interesting one. They asked what candidate quality was most important to you. And they had four choices; shares my values, strong leader, a vision for the future, and cares about people like me. It was almost evenly divided among those four. In other words, 27% said shares my values, 18% strong leader, 29% vision for future, cares about people like me, only 21%. People thought Mitt Romney shared their values more than Barrack Obama by 13 points. They thought Mitt Romney was a stronger leader by 23 points. Mitt Romney had a better vision for the future by 9 points. He only lost on one quality. Cares about people like me, where the exit poll weighing was 18% thought Romney cared about people like me and 82% thought Barack Obama cared. That is where he won the election. He won the election based not just upon the people who were unmarried and irreligious and poor but upon all those people who were convinced that Mitt Romney just didn't care about people like them. They had another question on the exit polls. Do you think Barack Obama's policies will benefit the rich, the middle class or the poor most? Okay, for Barrack Obama 79% thought either middle class or the poor. For Mitt Romney only 34% thought the middle class, the overall majority thought his policies would benefit the rich. Exactly zero percent thought that Mitt Romney's policies would benefit the poor. Thank you Jimmy Carter's grandson and 47% comment that Mitt Romney made, which was a disaster. You cannot get elected President of the United States if exactly zero percent of your fellow citizens think your policies will benefit

the poor. Now why is that, because we're a good and decent and generous people. My colleague Arthur Brooks, of the American Enterprise Institute did a powerful piece in *The Wall Street Journal* this past week about the moral calculus in American elections. All American elections are to one extent morality. People vote what they think is moral. The one area in which there is most unanimity on moral policy in the United States is compassion for the poor and helping the poor. Conservatives believe in that. We give more. We give more to charity. Moderates believe in that and certainly liberals believe in that. The idea is that we lost this election more than anything else based on the perception that Republicans, Mitt Romney in particular, don't care about people like me. People thought he shared their values but he doesn't care about people like me. And by the way, the final and I promise I won't hit you with any more statistics for the exit polling but this is also amazing. My wife and I have been talking about this all day because it is so staggering. They asked people, was the President's response to hurricane Sandy a factor in your vote. 64% said it was a factor in their vote and that 64% voted two to one for Obama. 15% of everyone that voted said it was the most important factor in their vote and they voted three to one for Barack Obama. So for those of us who thought, and I was one of them, that we were going to win this election, we got blown away. We did. And the media coverage and President Obama's handling of it, what does that have to do with? He cares about people like me. He cares about people. Now what exactly did Barack Obama do to mitigate the damage from the hurricane? Talk to people in New Jersey now. It is taking forever. There was no kind of spectacular wonderful, it was just like hurricane Katrina it was all about atmospherics and gestures and the way things looked. But President Obama was able to communicate "I care."

So the question comes, how do we communicate that we care in order to win future elections? And this related, I think, to a very very brilliant analysis that was offered about twenty years ago by Norm Ornstein who is an analyst of elections in Washington. In Jewish tradition there is a long tradition that if you actually say something over in the name of someone who said it originally instead of just stealing it you actually help to bring Messiah or help to bring Messiah back. But in any event that is why I am acknowledging Norm Ornstein. Not that he is the Messiah. Norm said this, that what American people vote for is either a nice Conservative or a tough Liberal. What they won't vote for is a nice Liberal or a tough Conservative. Why is that? People assume that Conservatives are tough. That is why George W. Bush launched this entire phrase "compassionate conservative." And for those of you, and I know there are many people here, that know President Bush, he is one of the nicest kindest most generous men. He is a prince of a human being. But by the way, so is Mitt Romney. If you look at Mitt Romney's compassion, his personal involvement in charity and helping the less fortunate it is light years beyond anything that Barack Obama has done in his life. And yet he didn't have the ability to talk about it. And Barack Obama was able to communicate that I am a tough Liberal. How was he tough? Well, he killed Osama Bin Laden didn't he? Do you ever hear about that during the campaign? A few times. But President Reagan won his elections because he came across as the quintessentially nice Conservative. And for Bill Clinton to win his election, you may not remember this but it was stunning, in the middle of that 1992 election

where he was still governor of Arkansas, he rushed back to Arkansas to preside personally over the execution of a mentally handicapped young man. I believe the name was Ricky Rector. He was there to show that he was a tough liberal. I'm presiding over an execution. He stood up to Sister Souljah. So what we need to do is to show that we are in fact compassionate conservatives. I am not suggesting resurrecting that term but I am suggesting three things. There are three things to show the way that we care, to emphasize it. Number one is to treat people like individuals rather than as members of groups. Number two is to emphasize the personal more than the political, and number three is to emphasize the positive more than the negative. Let me do these very quickly. When it comes to treating people as members of groups, not treating them that way but treating them as individuals, this is one of those things that we are very very good on. It is the other side that wants to classify everybody by a bunch of boxes on the census bureau. They want to divide people according to race. They want to divide people according to marital status. They want to divide people according to sexual orientation. The truth of the matter is we can't fall into that. That is precisely why that comment about 47% of Americans who don't pay taxes was so devastating. Those 47% of Americans who don't pay taxes are by no means all free loaders. Nobody in America, okay I won't say nobody, very few people in America want to be dependent on the government. Most of the people who receive food stamps do not want to receive food stamps forever. We are Americans, Americans love to work. Most Americans do love to work. By the way, that is emphatically true of immigrants including people who have immigrated to this country illegally. Most of them are working. In fact the percentage of unemployment and idleness among illegal immigrants is below 4%. Why, because it is really really hard, and it should be, to get any kind of public benefits. When people come over to this country and sometimes crawl through sewers and over broken glass and risk their lives to come here, they don't come here because they want to replicate Mexico or El Salvador or any place else. This is one of the reasons that if we want to show that yes we are a party that cares let us recognize that we judge people not in the categories they are but as individuals. Which means that if there is someone who has broken the law and entered this country illegally, that cannot be the only crime for which there is no possible redemption or forgiveness. There has to be a process and it shouldn't be easy but if someone is deeply committed and is willing to pay fines and do a lot of paperwork and go to the back of the line and take a lot of time and effort just to become an American citizen to discomfort himself like that, for us to say no, we are not going to treat you as in individual we are not going to treat you as a fellow American, you are going to be a member of this group forever because of the way you entered this country and there is nothing you can possibly do about it. If we take that position, we lose credibility as a party of compassion. We lose credibility as a party that treats people as individuals based on their individual desires. If we assume that everybody who currently is getting some kind of federal benefit, by the way, one of the things that is stunning about this, they did a huge piece in *The New York Times* they couldn't understand it. Where in Red States the majority of people who were getting benefits were voting Republican. The ideas that people don't want that, that is not an ambition for Americans to live based on the government dole. So you appeal to individuals. This brings me to the second distinction where we become the party of hope and compassion and caring which is to emphasize the personal

rather than the political when you talk about the republicans being the party of the married couples, of religiously involved people of people who are earning above middle class status. Conservative ideas not only work politically, they work personally. We need to emphasize the fact that the values and ideas that we champion. The values and ideas that would bring people success; commitment, frugality, hard work, a long term future those are values that not only would benefit the nation but they benefit each individual. When we talk about our children, does anyone want our children to have radical progressive values? You know most progressives don't want their children to have progressive values. Some do, but you know if you look at President Obama for goodness sakes, he appears to be raising his daughters with some pretty solid traditional values. Those are the values that we need to appeal to and empathize that they work. Not just politically, not just the broad prospective but they work personally for the country.

That brings me to being positive rather than negative. It is very very hard to sound compassionate; it is very very hard to sound caring when you are always talking about the end of the world. One of the things I have said on my radio show many times is that it is absolutely safe to bet against the end of the world. Why, because usually you are going to win. If you lose that bet you won't be around to pay it off. So you have nothing to worry about. Bet against the end of the world. One of the things that upsets me is Conservative rhetoric that says we have lost our country. This is what turns people off about Conservatives. And by the way, President Obama just recently went through the worst week of his presidency. No president in history, he had a 13 point swing in his approval rating with gallop, a 13 point swing in five days because of the sequester. Why, because he was, as Peggy Noonan said today in the journal, Dr. Doom. Oh it is gloom, it is doom. The American people don't respond to that. They respond to "its morning in America." They respond to our greatest days are ahead of us not behind us. They respond to the fact that this country is a nation of kindness and optimism. And when it comes to that optimistic spirit that is why the core issue here is not a green eye shade kind of where we have to balance the budget and we have to balance this. It has to be growth. That is what we are talking about. Growing the economy, growing families, growing communities, growing lives we have the right answers. We have the right answers not only for the country, not only for our states, as Arizona is demonstrating, we have the right answers for individuals and for families and for communities and that is what we have to be able to do, If we emphasize appealing to people based on their individual characteristics and decisions not membership in some kind of group not writing people off based upon being a member of some type of group by the way, on that I promised not to give any more exit polling but this is pretty interesting to me okay. 18% of American voters last time said they were members of a union household. 40% of them voted for Romney okay think about that. That is amazing when a majority union members today are public employees they are. A heavy majority if unionized workers today are public employees; teachers and civil servants and the SEIU and the AFSCME. But 40% voted for Romney. We shouldn't write off any group in America and we certainly shouldn't write off America. If we talk about the ability to grow the country, to expand the bonds of community and prosperity we

will do just fine. And we can convince people that we should never ever have again a situation where zero percent of voters think that republican policy would benefit the poor.

We all care about the poor. I know I was talking to some people here; people are involved in prodigious charitable efforts on the private sector. We should emphasize that. I wish Mitt Romney had talked more about some of his own efforts in that regard. That is an important thing and by the way, it is consistent, consistent, consistent - check the book, *Who Really Cares* by Arthur Brooks. It is consistent that conservatives do really give more both in terms of volunteering time and donating money to help people who are poor. We should be proud of that and we should emphasize that. And look, this was a close election. There will be other elections. We saw some great candidates up here tonight. We are going to have a terrific election in 2014 and you know what is really exciting to me? I mean really really exciting to me? Is that chances are even if Hillary Clinton does run, that we are going to have a three way democratic primary struggle between three retreats. Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and John Kerry, and by the way, don't leave out Secretary of State Kerry, he wants it and he is planning for it. Look, this is a joy if for no other reason for optimism and celebration. It is the idea of running against one of those three especially with one of our Republican young guns and we have a great bench. We are going to be together for future CNP's and we are going to be together to celebrate future victories. But the key to that is showing the rest of the world just how deeply committed we are not just to an abstraction and the nation at large but to helping every single American and yes including the least of these. That is necessary, it is appropriate, it is a prerequisite for victory, it is a prerequisite for decency and it is a prerequisite for sustaining our position as the greatest nation on God's green earth. Thank you very very much for your attention.