Mike Huckabee

Mike Huckabee served as the 44th governor of Arkansas (1996-2007) and was a candidate in the 2008 United States Republican Presidential primaries where he finished second to Senator John McCain in delegate count and third in popular vote. This race allowed him to establish a national following for his conservative principles.

Huckabee’s career before politics was spent as a denominational leader and pastor. He became the Arkansas Baptist State Conventions’ youngest president. Currently he is the host of the highly rated Fox News Channel hit “Huckabee” and is heard daily on ABC radio networks’ “Huckabee Report.”

Morality and the Economy

I am sure like a lot of Americans you are concerned about the fact that gasoline is twice as expensive as it was two years ago. I’m sure that you’re concerned that there are almost 15 million Americans who are looking for work and can’t find it; you’re concerned that this country is over 14 trillion dollars in debt. Let me try and explain the debt this way; if someone started spending a million dollars a day, on the day Jesus was born, and spent a million dollars a day from that day till now, they would still have 716 years left spending a million dollars a day before they would have spent their first trillion dollars. Does that give you some idea of how big a trillion is? And our government has racked up a debt of 14 and a half trillion dollars.

The biggest proposal that we’ve seen out of Washington is they would like to trim the budget by a whopping 6 billion dollars. To put that in perspective, that is the equivalent of less than .9 of a percent of the debt. To put it in another way, it is like me saying I’m going to lose weight by trimming my toenails. It’s going to take more than that.

We are in many ways a country in trouble, but I am not here tonight to be the pessimist. We are an incredibly resilient country. And if you look back, we have a past that should never have been. Our country was founded by a group of farmers, ministers, business people, and lawyers, all of whom really had no business challenging the British government. They reached for their muskets that were better suited for rabbit hunting than taking on the best-trained, best-equipped and most prolific army in the world at that time. They had this rather startling idea of government, that rather than be
governed by a House of Lords, they would elect from among themselves a house of the people, and that those people would represent their interests. That was in itself revolutionary.

The words of the Declaration of Independence were revolutionary as well: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” The idea that all men were of intrinsic worth and equal value was in fact a radical idea. And so there was a radical notion that this country would be established with the idea that no person would be intrinsically worth more than another, and no person would be automatically worth less than another.

Most of us are living today, even in spite of all the economic downturn, better than we ever imagined that we could be when we were kids growing up. Even in the midst of an economic downturn, I look around and say, “You know God has really been much better to me than I ever imagined.” And most of us truthfully have to say that. Now the reason we have to say that is because the generation before us made great sacrifice to give us the country that we enjoy.

To live in this country is a blessing from God. And if we mess it up, it is because we forget that it is a blessing from God. I want to say, without apology, that when I hear people talk about the terrible meltdown on Wall Street, and they act as if it was all based on the economics of Wall Street; they are missing the point. It was not so much a money problem as it was a moral problem. Wall Street used to be a place where people invested in products and services, and there was a tangible value in the product or service in which they invested. And so they invested in something that was real and if people worked really hard to make it valuable, it brought back a return on the investment. And if the companies did not work to make it successful, people lost their investment. It was pretty simple.

But then some people started realizing that they could make more money rather than investing in a product or service if they actually started betting on what a product or service might be worth out in the future. And then they could bet for it and against it at the same time which means they were going to make money either way—but the people who were actually making the product or service would likely lose.

Wall Street is not much different than the casinos in Las Vegas except for one big difference. If you go to Las Vegas and you make a wager and lose, you pay your own debt or you get your own legs broken. If you messed up on Wall Street, you let all the small business owners around the country and all the individual taxpayers pick up the tab because the government was willing to bail out all the people who lost at that big level. It was decided that there were some companies that were “too big to fail,” which means if you lived in a place like Williamsburg, Kentucky and ran a florist or a dry-cleaning shop or a restaurant, they obviously considered you too small to succeed. And herein lies the essence of the economic meltdown. It was not just a money problem. It was a moral problem based on unmitigated greed where people were trying to get something for nothing and get it in a hurry before they got discovered, the equivalent of financial musical chairs where people were hurrying around trying to make sure they had a seat and didn’t care whether someone else did. The government’s response to that was utterly ridiculous: go in and reward the companies that had been recklessly mismanaged at the expense of the ones that had been effectively and righteously managed.

So here is how it worked. If you were a business that had done well, provided effectively for your employees, operated with integrity, provided your customers with a good product or a good service at a good price and were successful, your taxes would be raised in order to bail out the companies who had not been managed well, who had not been careful with their assets, who had not been prudent with what they did have. So here we ended up with an economic system in which we penalized productivity and rewarded reckless irresponsibility.

Thinking of responsibility in my own...
life, I think about the fact that I am beyond the point now of getting my kids raised, and they are off on their own and all of them now have their own jobs. And that is a great moment. I will tell the parents and students here tonight that the two greatest moments in your life as a parent is the day the kid is born and the day the kid gets out of college and off your payroll and on somebody else's. But I have learned a little something from raising kids: if you want a certain behavior, you reward it.

So if there is behavior in the economy that we want, we should reward it, not punish it. For example, if we want a strong economy and create jobs, reward the people who work. We should reward the people who take chances with their money by putting it in a business so it can create jobs and build inventory. We should want people to save their money rather than to spend every last dime. That makes sense, doesn't it? In fact, we should even want people to save to the point, that when they die, their kids do not have to go borrow money to pay for the funeral. We should reward prudence and responsible behavior. But what do we do in our current tax system? We penalize all of those things. We tax work whether it is a company's work or an individual's work. We tax savings. We tax capital gains, and this means if your investments actually work if you made a good one, a smart one, we say no. We punish that. Yet, if you make a bad investment you can take it off your taxes. We will reward you for being stupid, but we punish you for being smart. I am not making this up! It is all in that 67,000 pages of the tax code that nobody understands including the people that wrote it—in fact, especially the people who wrote it.

What kind of message is it that we send to the next generation of young Americans? They say, “Hey don’t worry about working hard, making A’s and studying all night because, if you flunk, we will just take some of the points from your classmates who did stay up all night and study while you were partying, and we’ll give it to them and that way it will all balance out.” Every decision Congress makes today will affect you a heck of a lot more than it will ever affect me. If we really are serious about making the kind of country we want, then it means that we have to change from the behaviors that hurt us to the behaviors that actually strengthen us. That is why it makes no sense at all to punish the people who do well and to reward the people who don’t. When the government actually gets into the business of picking the winners and the losers in the market place, think about what that means.

Not only is this wonderful arena used for events like this tonight but it is also used for sporting events. Basketball is played in here. If basketball is played in this arena and if your team is out there giving their best, but the guys in the striped shirts start calling the game so that the other team ends up winning, not because they played better than your team, but because the officials actually favored the other team, how would you feel about that? You wouldn't like it. You see, the people in the striped shirts are not supposed to determine the outcome. Their job is just to refereee the game to make sure that it
is played fairly by the teams and the play of the teams will determine the outcome. When our founders created our government, they created the government to be the guys in the striped shirts. The only purpose of government was to be very limited and very restricted, and essentially to insure fair play.

Our founders thought that government would be largely local and pretty much limited. This would be the family where mothers and fathers raise their own children to know the difference between right and wrong. This is, in fact, where the government is supposed to be, and if we get government right at that level it usually works out at the rest of the levels.

I always said there is only one law that we need, and it is this one: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” If you think about it, every law we have is built on this one that Jesus gave us. If we really lived by this law, there would never be another case of domestic violence, never another murder, never another burglary, never be another car theft, carjacking, or armed robbery. There would never be another Bernie Madoff cheating his investors. There would never be a person who forged a signature or defrauded an elderly person out of their life savings by selling them some ridiculous Ponzi scheme. It would never happen because no one wants that to happen to them so they would never do it to somebody else. Every law that we have amplifies that law. We have to define it more and more clearly because people missed it at the basic level. But if we all lived by that rule, then we would live the way our founders really intended. Government would essentially be self-government. We would govern ourselves by the moral code that we agreed to as a social contract. The moral code of the Judeo-Christian ethic delivered from the Bible.

I tell you that if we live by it, a community and a country would prosper automatically. Why? A lot of the money that we spend in this country is to pick up the pieces of broken humanity. Do you realize that 2/3 of the children living in poverty in the United States would not live in poverty if the mothers of those children were married to the fathers of those children? Simple as that. Today 41% of children in America are born out of wedlock. 75% of the black children in this country are born out of wedlock. Does it have an economic impact? It does. You want to quantify it? Here it is.

The “dad deficit” in America is startling. By “dad deficit” I mean how much it costs you as a taxpayer in this country to pick up the pieces because a man has biologically fathered a child but never was his daddy and provided for him. He just created the child and disappeared. The cost to you as a taxpayer in America is 300 billion dollars a year, just from the dad deficit. Even by Washington's standards, that is a lot of money.

And so when people say we don't want to hear about all this stuff – of character, integrity, and morality because what we want to do is focus on the economy—I agree, let's focus on the economy. If we want to right our economy, we must right the character of this country so that we live in a way that we live responsibly and we live independently rather than always living on the dependence of what someone else will do for us. That is the strength of America.

America has always been its greatest when we realized that what America gave us is not necessarily what we deserved but what, by the grace of God, we were given: the freedom to do anything we want to with our lives. We would be responsible for taking advantage of
the opportunities, working hard, getting a good education and doing something with it. By being responsible to someone else, by showing up early and staying late and giving a man a decent day’s work for decent pay, this is being responsible.

And that’s how we became a great country. And the greatness of our country cannot necessarily be exported to some foreign country where they don’t believe in those basic rules of personal responsibility and individual worth. I will be the first to tell you that the idea that we can just wholesale export democracy as we know it and love it, and have it for every nation on earth because surely they must want it too, is wrong. It won’t work if the heart and soul of that nation believes that people are expendable and that individuals don’t have personal worth. It doesn’t work unless we believe that the other person is as valuable as we are. When there is a culture in which people believe that they can strap a bomb to the belly of their own child and blow him up in the name of advancing his country or his cause, I am telling you that this is not the way we are wired. And most of us, in fact, are the product of people who sacrificed their very lives to get to this country. I tell people that I get on my knees every night and thank God I live in a country that people are trying to break into, not a country they are trying to break out of.

I have been to Israel fifteen times and I take people who go with me to see Yad Vashem, the memorial dedicated to Holocaust victims. I want them to see the destruction and death created by the Third Reich. I took my family which included my youngest daughter one time. She was only eleven years old. I was afraid that it would be too much for her. At the close of the memorial there was a guest book for names and comments. My daughter signed her name and wrote some poignant words, “Why didn’t someone do something?”

Well I left that day saying “Dear God, please don’t ever let there come a time in America when one day a father stands over his daughter and watches her write words about this country and ask, “Why didn’t somebody do something?” Dear God, please let there be somebody who will do something.

And maybe it’s a student on this campus who says “I’ll be somebody; I’ll do something.” And if it is, then this night will have been worth it. If there is at least one student, one citizen that says, “Here am I Lord, send me.” God Bless You and Thank You.
A Walk of Faith in Service with Mountain Outreach

By Dr. Chris Leskiw

I had just stepped foot on solid ground again when it was made abundantly clear to me that I would need to make yet another trip back up the ladder. It was July, it was over 100 degrees, and we were laying a black shingle roof. My boots stuck to the shingles as I walked over the roof to assess the damage. The reason for my quick return to the roof was a simple and innocent enough question, ‘do we have any more shingles?’ The problem for me was the person asking the question, “Zac” an energetic 13 year old who was caught between two worlds. One world where as a child you could fool around and be cute, and another world where you were a teenager that had to seem cool at all times. Zac was at this awkward stage where he would laugh at inappropriate times and try to capture the attention of some girls in his youth group who had traveled to aid Mountain Outreach (MO) in their construction ministry. I was supervising a 30 plus member youth group in the construction of a porch deck, roof, and a whole interior renovation of a home. It seemed that every job Zac did that week turned out to be a disaster in my eyes. So I had brought him in close to me and put him to work shingling the new roof. Zac consistently – though not purposefully-destroyed shingle after shingle as he put nails in the wrong place, cut through existing shingles, etc. My patience was gone, yet God helped me hold my tongue and instead pass Zac a new nail or shingle.

When it came time for this youth group to leave, they gathered for one last devotion session. The Pastor provided some time for students to speak and share how God had acted in their lives during this mission trip. Zac stood but couldn’t get the words out due to his emotions. He stood and tears ran down his face and his voice squeaked. Finally, he could share his heart, and in an instant, I was brought to tears with him. You see, Zac’s Dad was killed in Iraq a few months prior to this mission trip, and Zac said he hated God and didn’t want to come to Kentucky to serve the Lord. Yet with every nail he bent and shingle that had to be torn off, he saw God’s presence in his life when someone from MO would say ‘that’s not a big deal’ and give him another nail or another shingle. I had totally missed the point of God including me in His plans to serve His Kingdom. Here I thought I was doing His will by managing a large construction site and praying at the start and finish of projects. What I had not done was to focus on showing His Love. There were always those MO college students who would show that love to the homeowners or the mission teams that were helping us, but I thought it was my job to just be the construction guy. I was wrong. Those few words Zac had spoken had humbled me and drew me closer to Christ as I begged for forgiveness for having the wrong intentions all this time- to build a house, instead of building His Kingdom. After that day, the quote from Psalm 127 that is on the back of all MO T-shirts -“Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who built it” -had new meaning to me. I’m not going to say I have it all worked out now, but I do know that the service opportunities provided by Mountain Outreach have changed my life and my walk of faith.
You can remember Cumberlands in your will or trust, or you might want to create a charitable gift annuity to provide you with a lifetime income as you assist deserving students.

With charitable gift annuities:

- The rates are significantly greater than bond rates and certificates of deposits.
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If you are considering the establishment of a Charitable Gift Annuity to provide life-long income for yourself and vital support for University of the Cumberlands, please contact Jim Taylor at presoff@ucumberlands.edu.

Remember, as a financial supporter of Cumberlands, you are encouraging today’s students as you also demonstrate your continuing commitment to the University’s mission to educate individuals for lives of responsible service and leadership.
Rudy Giuliani

“Principal Leadership in a Time of Crisis”

April 3, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
O.Wayne Rollins Center
Williamsburg, KY

In 1993, Rudy Giuliani was elected mayor of New York City and was mayor on September 11, 2001 when America suffered the worst attack in its history as terrorists crashed planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Mayor Giuliani immediately began recovery of the city and was widely lauded for his leadership during these challenging times.