



'Me Too' Republicans

Many ideas presented as “new” are just rehashes of old ideas that have been tried before — and have failed before. So it is no surprise that the recent “Growth and Opportunity Project” report to the Republican National Committee is a classic example of what previous generations called “Me too” Republicanism.

These are Republicans who think that the key to winning elections is to do more of what the Democrats are doing. In effect, they say “me too” on issues such as immigration, in hopes of gaining more new votes than they lose by betraying their existing supporters.



In the wake of last year’s presidential election debacle for the Republicans, the explanation preferred by “moderate” Republicans has been that the GOP has been too narrowly ideological, and needs to reach out to minorities, women and young people, rather than just to conservatives.

In the words of the “Growth and Opportunity Project,” the problem is that conservative Republican candidates have been “driving around in circles on an ideological cul-de-sac.”

But the report itself says that the Republicans’ election problems have been at the national level, not at the state level, where a majority of the governors are Republicans. Are the Republican moderates suggesting that the reason Mitt Romney lost in 2012 is that he was driving around in a conservative cul-de-sac? Romney was as mushy a moderate as Senator John McCain was before him — and as many other Republican losers in presidential elections have been, going all the way back to the 1940s. The only Republican candidate who might fit the charge of being a complete conservative was Ronald Reagan, who won two landslide elections.

The report to the Republican National Committee is on firmer ground when it says that national Republican candidates have not articulated their case very well — that “we too often sound like bookkeepers.” Republican candidates “need to do a better job talking in normal, people-oriented terms.”

Absolutely. It doesn’t matter how good your case is, if you don’t bother to articulate it so that voters understand you.

The heart of the report, however, is the argument that Republicans need to reach out to minorities, women and young people. With Hispanics and blacks becoming a growing proportion of the American population — and both groups voting overwhelmingly for Democrats — the Republicans are obviously in big trouble in future elections if they don’t do something.

But if they do what this report advocates, they could be in even bigger trouble. Here again, facts seem to mean nothing to those who wrote this report.

They propose going through such organizations as the NAACP to reach black voters, as if the NAACP



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owns blacks, in violation of the 13th Amendment. Not only is the NAACP virtually a wholly owned subsidiary of the Democratic Party, the kind of black voters that the Republicans have some hope of winning over are unlikely to be enthralled to the NAACP, and many of them may see through such race hustlers.

Or do all blacks look alike to those who wrote this report?

It is the same story with Hispanics and Asian Americans. The Republicans are supposed to go through these groups' "leaders" as well — mostly leaders tied to the Democratic Party ideologically or otherwise. You might think that a Republican Party that talks about individualism would try to appeal to individuals.

Individuals whom the Republicans have some chance of winning over may well be a small minority within these groups. However, if the GOP can reduce the Democrats' 80 percent of these groups' votes to 70 percent, that can swing elections.

But a shotgun approach to minorities won't do it.

When it comes to minority votes, the Democratic Party is much like Eastman Kodak during the long period when it sold the vast majority of the film and cameras in the country. How did its competitors manage to drive Kodak into bankruptcy?

Not by saying "me too" while trying to imitate Kodak and trying to outdo Kodak with better film and better film cameras. They went digital instead. But that approach requires a lot more thought than apparently went into this report. Polls and focus groups are not a substitute for thought.

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