

**Back to Basics for the
Republican Party
By Michael Zak
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Back to Basics for the Republican Party is a history of the party with special emphasis on its origins and development through the Reconstruction era. The book also tells the story of the Democratic Party as well as of the Whig, Greenback, and other parties. The narrative concludes during President Clinton's second term.

Sample paragraphs: "The Republican Party is the Party of Lincoln." Though Republican candidates may say this occasionally during campaign season, we forget just as soon as they do. What does "Party of Lincoln" actually mean? And more importantly, what should it mean, for us Republicans and the country we love?

How many Americans know why the Republican Party began or what its original purpose was? Not many! How many Americans know, for example, that the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act were reforms that the Republican Party struggled for in vain during the Reconstruction era a hundred years earlier? Fewer still. The 13th amendment banning slavery, the 14th amendment extending the Bill of Rights to the states, and the 15th amendment according voting rights to blacks -- all three were enacted by the much-maligned Radical Republicans in the face of fierce Democrat opposition. How many Americans know that? Again, very few.

Now whose fault is it that so much past glory of the Republican Party goes unnoticed today? Who should we blame? Ourselves, of course. How can we hope to convince voters to place their confidence in us when we lack confidence in our own heritage? And how can we Republicans battle Democrats effectively on economic, foreign policy, and other fronts when we act as if the world began the day we were born?

To retake the ideological high ground and fight off the socialism at the core of the Democratic Party we Republicans must embrace the GOP's original reform agenda that is at once pro-free market and pro-constitutional rights. The founders of our Party understood that to win and to deserve to win, there should be no separating the two. To understand this original vision of our Republican Party we look to the site of the 2000 Republican National Convention. Philadelphia is not only where the Constitution was written but where in 1856 the first Republican National Convention met in order to save it, for their generation unto ours.

Today's Republican Party places itself at an immense disadvantage. Rather than express clearly what we should be for -- the free market society we Republicans won the Civil War to preserve -- on too many issues, too often our Party's policy is merely that we are against whatever Democrats are for, or perhaps we want less of it than they do. Our Party is an athlete who has lost his balance -- we are in good shape, with plenty of drive, but until we regain our footing we are going nowhere.

The author, a native and resident of Chicago, is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and the American Graduate School of International Management. A former Foreign Service Officer, he has posted to Mexico, Venezuela, and Poland. Before writing this book, he worked as a financial analyst in Chicago and New York.