

[*A Glorious Disaster: Barry Goldwater's Presidential Campaign and the Origins of the Conservative Movement*, J. William Middendorf II, Basic Books, 290 pages]

You Know He's Right

By Gregory L. Schneider

IN A RECENT HBO DOCUMENTARY on Barry Goldwater produced, written, and directed by C.C. Goldwater, Barry's granddaughter, one of the more interesting comments came from former CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite: "If Barry were alive today, he'd be a liberal." I doubt it, but from the talking heads on the program, including Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton (who was a Goldwater girl before she went to college) and James Carville, you'd think that Goldwater ran on the donkey's ticket back in 1964.

The reason for the liberal love-fest for Goldwater has to do with the senator's longstanding antipathy to the social politics of the Religious Right. While Goldwater was a conservative, he was never comfortable with the social issues of the 1970s and with the Moral Majority or its supporters.

Goldwater was always libertarian-oriented when it came to his social politics. In the 1981 battle over Arizonan Sandra Day O'Connor's nomination to the Supreme Court—most conservatives justifiably opposed her—Goldwater said of Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell (who never publicly opposed O'Connor), "every good Christian should line up and kick [his] ass." No wonder Carville, Clinton, and Cronkite find him so appealing.

Despite the strange new respect some modern liberals have for Goldwater, his appeal for conservatives will always be cemented by his challenge to Lyndon Johnson in 1964. What historians used to depict as a great liberal triumph is now the jumping-off point for conservatism as a political movement and "the last liberal campaign."

From the founding of Young Americans for Freedom in 1960—ostensibly due to the publication of Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*—to the formation of the New York Conservative Party to William F. Buckley's run for mayor of New York City ("If I won, I'd demand a recount") to the election of Ronald Reagan as governor of California in 1966 and finally to the takeover of the GOP by conservatives in the 1970s, Goldwater served as the *prima voce* of the emerging conservative majority.

Getting us back to that moment—despite the klaxon-din of liberals claiming Goldwater as one of their own—is the major achievement of a new memoir of the Goldwater draft movement and 1964 campaign by J. William Middendorf II. Middendorf was one of the principal organizers of the Draft Goldwater effort and the only member of that group who stayed on in an official capacity during the campaign.

My initial reaction to a new memoir about 1964 was, "Oh no, another story by an insider in the Goldwater campaign!" We already have chronicles by F. Clifton White (*Suite 3505*), William Rusher (*Rise of the Right*), Lee Edwards (*Goldwater*—a biography that contains snippets of Edwards's role in the campaign), as well as numerous campaign histories, several biographies of the senator, and other accounts of conservatism in the 1960s. Is there anything new to say?

Thankfully, yes. Middendorf has a few new stories to tell as well as some different interpretations of older stories. In his breezy memoir, we get a lively and updated account of the Goldwater campaign and its impact on conservative politics. His role as the treasurer of the campaign gives insight into the dynamics of campaign financing in those days, and his long involvement in GOP politics makes for an interesting story about how much has changed since 1964.

There is not much about Middendorf's life in the book. He discusses how "my early political and economic thinking had been conditioned in the quasi-Marxist world of eastern prep schools

and Harvard." He entered Harvard in 1943, apolitical, shy, and withdrawn at 6'5" tall, with a bad complexion; he relates how he was "overwhelmed by a team of absolutely stunning girls wearing some sort of Eastern European peasant garb" who wanted him to join their political club, which just turned out to be the John Reed Club. As Middendorf writes, "had I accepted their offer to join the Communist club, you most likely would not be holding this book today." Perhaps not, but given the earlier leftist careers of many on the Right, he might still have wound up a neoconservative at least. It probably would have kept him from being a guest at John F. Kennedy's wedding, however, a surprising tidbit he mentions in the book.

In the early 1960s, Middendorf worked for his family's investment company on Wall Street and was interested in getting involved in politics. He became active as a fundraiser for the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee and grew to know Goldwater, who headed up the GOP's Senate races. Middendorf did not know him well, however, when William Rusher and John Ashbrook began their effort to recruit Goldwater for the 1964 GOP nomination—a project exposed by Cronkite (who you can be sure never saw Goldwater as a liberal then) in a Dec. 2, 1962 broadcast on CBS News. Goldwater was not interested in running and had no problem telling Clif White this fact.

But the men in the organization persevered and drafted Goldwater to be the nominee. Goldwater knew the cause was hopeless, especially after the death of his friend Kennedy in November 1963. He and Kennedy had hoped to tour the country together in one plane, debating at various stops. In an increasingly polarized political world such a tactic may have revolutionized presidential campaigning.

Instead, Goldwater was matched against Lyndon Johnson, a "dirty fighter" as he called him. Persuaded by his campaign advisers and by friends like John Tower and Norris Cotton that it was too late to turn back, Goldwater decided to run. "Lose the election, but win the

party,” Middendorf has Goldwater saying in early January when he announced his decision to run. Goldwater would do just that.

The reasons Goldwater lost are well worn, and Middendorf stakes no new ground here. Not only did Goldwater face Johnson, a political master who stopped at nothing to win, he also confronted opposition from within his own party, liberals like Nelson Rockefeller and William Scranton. Goldwater’s campaign team also floundered, with the senator surrounded by inexperienced Arizonans like Denison Kitchel and American Enterprise Institute chairman William Baroody, who isolated the *National Review* conservatives from active roles in the campaign.

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Then there was the candidate himself. Middendorf admires Goldwater tremendously and numerous times credits him for taking a principled stance on issues during the campaign. When supporters made a short film, “Choice,” which showed rioting in urban areas (with white college students and black inner-city kids featured throughout), Goldwater decided not to air it, believing it depicted blacks as the rioters more frequently than whites. “It is racist,” Goldwater said. Goldwater also refused to use the scandal surrounding Walter Jenkins, Johnson’s long-time aide who was arrested *en flagrante* with another man at a Washington YMCA. When the campaign suggested slogans like “Either Way with LBJ,” Goldwater said, “Hands off.”

Johnson and the media, who were the incumbent’s lapdogs throughout the campaign, never hesitated to depict Goldwater in unflattering terms. From the daisy ad (an invention of later PBS ethics-in-government champion Bill Moyers) to the CIA bugging of Goldwater’s airplane to the consistently hostile press—Goldwater was labeled everything from a fascist to a racist to a war-

monger by the media—Johnson used every dirty tactic imaginable to win. Just as Goldwater thought, he epitomized the “dirty fighter” image.

Goldwater, however, was an inept campaigner and his own worst enemy. Blunt, defensive, ornery, Goldwater refused to participate in the game of political campaigning. Middendorf describes many incidents in which a tired Goldwater refused to greet well-wishers (some of whom had waited for hours at airports) and instead walked right past to get to his waiting car. He disdained “puff pieces” about himself or his family, though he did allow himself to be filmed on his ham radio, a constant companion during the campaign. Middendorf describes one funny incident

where Goldwater—an Air Force reserve pilot—took the controls of the campaign plane and proceeded to land in what the author describes as perhaps one of the worst landings ever; he wonders if Goldwater did it purposefully as the media were sitting in the rear of the plane and would have had the worst of the landing.

Goldwater was no Ronald Reagan when it came to his campaign style or his personality. His ideas were sound, but often Goldwater couldn’t convey them effectively, sticking, as Middendorf argues, to “national themes” rather than to local issues that could have been used more effectively. There are the old stories about Goldwater stumping for the elimination of Social Security before an audience of senior citizens or the termination of the Tennessee Valley Authority while appearing in Tennessee. Goldwater was surely ahead of his time in discussing the elimination of these government programs; it was Americans who would have to catch up (and in the case of Social Security privatization, as George W. Bush discovered, there are still miles to go in making the case).

In the end, it is hard to deny Middendorf’s claim that the Goldwater campaign was a glorious disaster. He proudly writes as former finance chairman that the campaign ended with a budget surplus—though much of the money budgeted for ads and for commercials went unspent when it appeared the gig was up late in October. The campaign did lay the groundwork for later success.

Middendorf concludes the book discussing his role in the formation of the American Conservative Union and in the Nixon administration, where he served as secretary of the Navy. He would go on to be an ambassador and a board member of the Heritage Foundation. For him, the world he helped create through his labors in 1964 bore fruit, allowing him entrée into the world of GOP politics.

At the end of the campaign in 1964, Middendorf wrote a lengthy memorandum about where the campaign went wrong. He concluded, “The Democrats had long since learned that most voters knew little, and cared less, about issues. The Democrats appealed to emotion. We appealed to logic. We lost.”

Perhaps that is an accurate assessment. The emotion against Goldwater was visceral, and liberalism was still in its heyday. It wasn’t hard in the climate of the 1960s to label Goldwater a fascist and a racist. Within 15 years and with a far better candidate, conservatives would claim victory even when liberals said the same things about Ronald Reagan.

Conservatives won in 1980 (and later) by combining emotional appeals with grassroots mobilization around issues, like opposition to abortion, whose logic Goldwater could never seem to grasp. Neither could the liberals who now claim Goldwater as their own. Perhaps one reader of this book should be C.C. Goldwater, who might learn what her grandfather really stood for and why in many conservatives’ hearts he will always be right, not left. ■

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MUSIC

Bach Reaches Out to God

By Ralph de Toledano

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH, the most towering figure in music's pantheon, saw composition and performance as a craft, more exalted than pottery making but no inspirational bath. To the compliments on his organ playing, he once responded, "There is nothing remarkable about it. All one has to do is hit the right notes at the right time and the instrument plays itself." Put down the right notes in the right way and you have great music. He would have been baffled by later composers who courted the muse by deep-breathing and yanking at the psyche. It was his craft to compose, working at it steadily and producing more than a thousand works.

His religious compositions alone would have sufficed for any other composer—five "Passions" and three oratorios, plus Masses, Magnificats, motets, and other larger and smaller works for church use. Secularly, there was his *Kunst der Fuge*, his skeletal "Art of the Fugue" which took that form as far as it could go; the Concertos for Violin in A Minor and E Major and the Double Concerto in D Minor (recorded respectively by Isaac Stern and Stern and Itzhak Perlman); the *Clavier-Übung* in the distinguished renditions of Paul Badura-Skoda; and the many other works for most of the instrumental gamut.

Yet we forget in our awed admiration and respect for Bach's genius and the unflagging beauty and solidity of his music that when what some consider his greatest religious work, the "St. Matthew Passion," was first performed, there were critics who dismissed it as "operatic comedy." For a hundred years it was forgotten until the 20-year-old Mendelssohn resurrected it—and then it

was greeted as if it were the Second Coming. Berlioz, who understood Bach with more precision than the new worshippers, would write somewhat petulantly, "God is God and Bach is Bach."

Bach believed that the "aim and final reason" of all music is "the glory of God. . . . Where this is not observed, there will be no real music, but only a devilish hubbub." Even in his most secular works, he was addressing God. My own view is that he was speaking more to God's glory in the B Minor Mass than in the "St. Matthew Passion." For one thing, the Romance languages—Latin, Spanish, Italian—are pen-throated. German, the language of the "Passion," is not. How can one speak freely to God with an *umlaut* caught in the gullet? Bach coped with this difficulty, but he could not surmount it. Perhaps he realized this, because it is always the violins that soften the sung language when the Christ is singing.

Nevertheless the power, the beauty, and the cadence of the "St. Matthew Passion" cannot be gainsaid. I remember the tremendous excitement in the late 1930s

In contrast to the "St. Matthew Passion"—Bach's most fervent Protestant and Germanic statement of belief—there is the less personal Mass in B Minor, in which he reaches back in spirit 150 years to the Catholic expression of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina and Tomás Luis de Victoria. Bach sent the first section of the B Minor to the Catholic Elector of Saxony with a request for a court appointment. It is often said that his motivation was simply to get an appointment. But it is impossible to listen to the B Minor Mass and still hold that opinion. Bach took his theology seriously, and I subscribe to the more reasonable explanation that he was appealing to the *catholicism* of the Catholic Church.

After re-playing the "St. Matthew Passion," I took down the old but still great recording of the B Minor by Herbert von Karajan, with Elizabeth Schwarzkopf and Nicolai Gedda among the soloists, and a much later one by Otto Klemperer and the New Philharmonic Orchestra, also with Gedda. Could career consider-

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BACH COPEd WITH THIS DIFFICULTY, BUT HE COULD NOT SURMOUNT IT.

when RCA Victor issued the first complete recording. Those were the days of the heavy 78 rpm shellacs, and the three muscle-challenging volumes of the "Passion," with their awkward breaks as each record thudded down on the turntable, were a trial. Then we later had it on three long-playing records, stereo, digitally recorded, and later still on CD, beautifully paced and sung by the Knabenchor Hannover and the NDR Symphony Orchestra, directed by Raymond Leppard.

The "St. Matthew Passion" is grandly conceived—in 24 scenes, double-choruses, chorales, arias, concerted passages. Yet underlying this structural complexity there is the deep simplicity of a foursquare and personal religious statement. Perhaps Leppard is telling us that if you play the right notes at the right time, the music conducts itself.

ations have produced the tranquility and exaltation of the "Et Unam" or the "Et incarnatus est?" Could a composer who believed that all music was a celebration of God have written the tremendous grandeur of the "Sanctus" merely to get a court appointment? In the "St. Matthew Passion," Bach faced towards the Reformation, in the B Minor Mass towards the Counter-Reformation. In the former, he took a step forward to the music that would evolve. In the latter he stepped back to the mysticism of Victoria and the effulgence of Palestrina. In both he lifts up his eyes and his heart to God. ■

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