



# Elbow Rahm

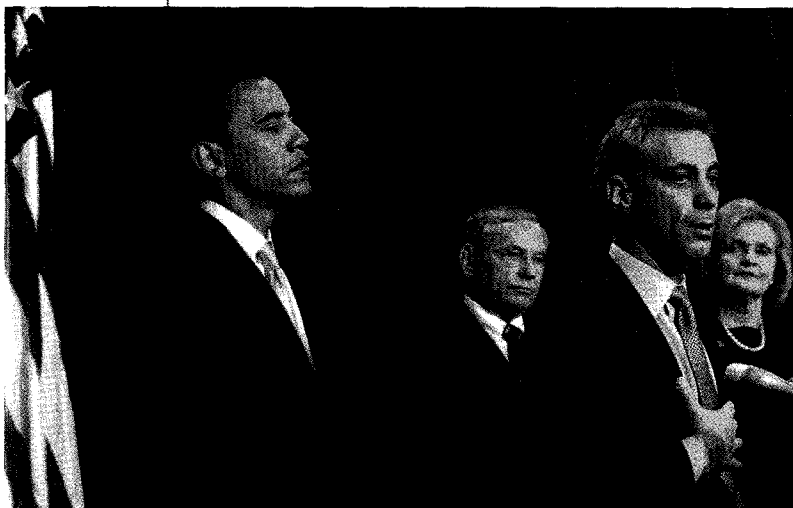
by John H. Fund

**B**ARACK OBAMA HAS APPOINTED Chicago congressman Rahm Emanuel as his new White House chief of staff. Emanuel, a bruising partisan street fighter, has the kind of blunt-talking tough-guy persona that Obama clearly doesn't possess but would like to call on in his relations with Congress. Emanuel is also a political brain of the highest order,

a notoriously aggressive Democratic House majority whip in the 1980s who pioneered the kind of squeeze plays on businesses designed to get them to pony up campaign contributions that are now routine in politics. Emanuel then became a political advisor to Bill Clinton. He made his mark by advising then Gov. Clinton in 1991 to forgo campaigning in New Hampshire and instead embark on an ambitious national fundraising tour. The tour raised enough funds to bankroll the Clinton campaign's ad blitzes necessary to fend off character attacks later on.

In the Clinton White House, Emanuel was a key communications advisor and also a strong supporter of the first HillaryCare. But he really came into his own after leaving the Clinton White House. Following a brief but highly lucrative career as an investment banker in Chicago, he was elected to Congress in 2002 and quickly rose through the ranks. In 2006, he became chairman of the Democratic House campaign committee and chief architect of the party's campaign strategy that year. He recruited many of the insurgent challengers who knocked off Republicans with rhetoric that shied away from the ultra-liberal themes of past Democrats. Syndicated columnist George Will paid him a supreme compliment after the 2006 election when he wrote:

The Democratic Party, a slow learner but educable, has dropped the subject of gun control and welcomed candidates opposed to parts or even all of the abortion rights agenda. This vindicates the candidate recruitment by Rep. Rahm Emanuel and Sen. Chuck Schumer, chairmen of the Democratic House and Senate campaign



having orchestrated much of the machinery with which Democrats took back the House in 2006. It's as if Obama had picked a liberal counterpoint combination of Al D'Amato and Karl Rove to run his White House.

Emanuel is nothing if not driven. He calls himself a "Vince Lombardi Democrat," because he shares with the late Green Bay Packers coach the belief that "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Emanuel's life has been a testimony to that philosophy. He started out as an aide to Tony Coelho,

committees, respectively. Karl Rove fancies himself a second iteration of Mark Hanna, architect of the Republican ascendancy secured by William McKinley's 1896 election. In Emanuel, Democrats may have found another Jim Farley, the political mechanic who kept FDR's potentially discordant coalition running smoothly through the 1930s.

To make a more recent comparison, the Obama White House is likely to take on some of the look and feel of the Clinton White House and the political "war room" that Dick Morris ran in the mid-1990s. Indeed, Emanuel's appointment may be an olive branch extended to the Clinton forces. During the primaries this year, Emanuel maintained neutrality during the long battle between Obama, who hails from his own political base of Chicago, and Hillary Clinton, with whom he has long enjoyed good personal ties.

The longer Obama is a candidate, the more he has seemed to appreciate the Clinton approach. If this is the "change" Obama has in mind, voters may be surprised how much it turns out to be an updated edition of the last Democratic White House.

But it may well take a different approach to the Democratic Congress than Bill Clinton took. Obama obviously has thought carefully about mistakes made by previous Democratic presidential winners who wrongly believed a Congress controlled by their own party would help make them a success.

**P**OLLSTER DOUG SCHOEN, who helped Bill Clinton win reelection in 1996 in the face of overwhelming odds after the 1994 Democratic debacle, recently warned in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed: "If the Democrats govern as if there is no Republican Party, they are likely headed to the kind of reaction that Bill Clinton faced when he made the same misjudgment after the 1992 election victory." Schoen cited specifically a meeting in Little Rock after the election with Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and House Speaker Tom Foley, when Clinton agreed to defer to Congress on key elements of his legislative agenda. The subsequent lurch to the left did incalculable damage to his presidency.

That may be one reason why Obama has chosen Emanuel, who has a reputation for hyper-aggressiveness but has also exhibited impatience with left-wing members of his party who have overly ambitious ideological agendas. A likely first assign-

ment for Emanuel will be reminding House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that, after only two years of Democratic control, Congress already has a lower approval rating than even President Bush's.

In an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv*, Emanuel's father, Dr. Benjamin Emanuel, also gave a hint of how Obama's pick may repair strained relations with some Jewish Americans worried about Obama's past cozy ties with pro-Palestinian academics. Dr. Emanuel said he was

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convinced his son's appointment would be good for Israel. "Obviously he will influence the president to be pro-Israel," he told *Ma'ariv*. "Why wouldn't he be? What is he, an Arab?"

To the extent Obama becomes a successful president, it will be because he remains his own man and trusts the brilliant political instincts that have gotten him this far, this fast. Look not just for a presidential weekly radio address but a weekly YouTube video. Also look for him to use Emanuel to knock heads together and make sure every Democrat possible is following the Obama agenda and not one of his or her own devising. ❁

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**John H. Fund** is a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and *The American Spectator's* *Politics* columnist.

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# When the Giving Gets Rough

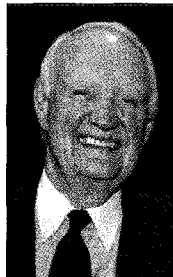
by Jonathan Aitken

**D**ONOR FATIGUE, NOT TO SAY COLLAPSE, is fast becoming a major problem for many nonprofit organizations. Due to the crisis on Wall Street and the recession on Main Street, giving to good causes is in precipitous decline. As the year end approaches, fear looms large in many nonprofits' finance departments. I know this because I am directly or indirectly associated with nine of them, all doing admirable work in the field of Christian ministry and charity. Of these, the two least affected are experiencing a 25 percent drop in their donor income, the two worst hit may have to close down, and the rest are struggling. However, there are occasional exceptions to this downward spiral. These tend to come from family foundations whose principals, for one reason or another, have decided not merely to weather the storm but to chart new courses of increased giving.

One such counter-cyclical nonprofit is the McDonald Agape Foundation (MAF), which is expanding its support for Christian scholars, professorial chairs, and education programs in leading universities such as Harvard, Yale, Duke, and Emory. This fall MAF opened its latest benefaction

at Oxford: the McDonald Center for Theology, Ethics and Public Life. I predict it will make a groundbreaking impact far beyond the dreaming spires of my alma mater.

The founder and major benefactor of MAF is Alonzo L. McDonald.



At various stages of his 80-year life he has been CEO of McKinsey worldwide, White House staff director in President Carter's administration, and United States ambassador heading the Tokyo round of multilateral trade negotiations during the 1970s. But these days his passion is what he calls "leaving a small footprint for Christ in influential places of learning by supporting teachers who attain both the highest levels of scholarship and represent models of spiritual knowledge and faith."

Such a purpose might sound like piling Ossa upon Pelion in the University of Oxford, where cloisters have been crowded with Christian scholars striving to leave their footprints on the sands of theology and religion ever since the 14th century. But the McDonald Center will be different, because of three 21st-century ingredients: timing, purpose, and method.

For at least half a century a dominant assumption throughout Western Europe and in large parts of America has postulated that the influence of religion is on the wane. Matthew Arnold's gloomy assessment of "the melancholy long withdrawing roar" of the sea of faith has looked all too prescient. As modern life became more rational, more scientific, more permissive, more technological, and more secular, the concomitant decline in religion seemed inevitable. But this so-called secularization thesis has been shaken by several recent developments. Post 9/11, the fear of Islamist violence has caused many communities to reexamine their own theological foundations and to learn about others. The growth of Christianity in China, Africa, Asia, and other parts of the developing world is a spiritual