The Right Words: Great Republican Speeches that Shaped History by Wynton C. Hall

Award-winning presidential scholar and speechwriter Wynton Hall brings together the Republican Party’s greatest oratorical gems, from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and Teddy Roosevelt’s the Man with the Muckrake to Ronald Reagan’s Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall and George W. Bush’s our mission and our moment speech after 9/11. Hall examines the historical context of each of these great addresses and reveals the persuasive secrets that make each speech truly outstanding.

My Personal Review:
This book is valuable for two reasons. First, it is not a random collection of one person’s view as to what constitutes a great speech. The 17 speeches examined here are oriented around eternal Republican themes of individual (rather than collective) responsibility; a belief in values that are absolute, not relative; and a strong national defense, the foundation of individual civil liberties.

Second, each speech is intertwined with commentary on its historical setting. Platiudes need no explanation. Great speeches, though, are rooted in a specific historical context while also appealing to timeless values.

Those of other political parties will gain from reading this book. It is not meant to convert but to educate. Serious people will want to look beyond the caricature of Republicans so often presented in many media sources. Understanding the basic beliefs of one of America’s two major political parties is valuable regardless of one's political persuasion.

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