

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Compassionate Fascism

John W. Robbins

Last November the American people and the Electoral College elected a Methodist President. Methodism, of course, shares several theological notions with Roman Catholicism, two of which are man's free will and the necessity of doing good works in order to obtain final salvation. President Bush's favorite hymn, as he repeatedly has told us, is "A Charge to Keep I Have," the next three lines of which are: "a God to glorify/a never dying soul to save/and fit it for the sky." Perhaps even a sober Roman Catholic would demur from the implied Pelagianism of these words, but Methodists, at least devout ones, do not. They save their own souls; they fit them for the sky. And one of the indispensable ways they do this is through good works. Now, thanks to President's Bush's leadership, those good works will be federally funded.

President Bush's theology explains much about his administration's policies. For at least a year he has been meeting privately with Roman Catholic bishops, cardinals, and cardinals-to-be. John F. Kennedy himself, precisely because he was a Roman Catholic, probably could not have gotten away with the sort of private audiences President Bush has been keeping with prelates of the Roman Church-State. Besides, Kennedy seemed to prefer private meetings with floozies, for which the American people ought to be thankful. When it comes to the preferred vices of rulers, ordinary strumpets trump spiritual strumpets.

The Roman Church-State, whose social teaching and some of whose theology President Bush has adopted as his own, is described by the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture with these words: "Come and I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the Earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the Earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.... And the woman whom you saw is that great city [which sits on seven hills] which reigns over the

kings of the Earth" (*Revelation 17*). Rome reigns over our king. George W. Bush has made it clear that he endorses the social teaching of the Roman Church-State. In his May 20, 2001, commencement address at Notre Dame (Our Lady) University, President Bush said,

Notre Dame, as a Catholic university, carries forward a great tradition of social teaching. It calls on all of us, Catholic and non-Catholic, to honor family,¹ to protect life in all its stages, to serve and uplift the poor....

Karl Rove, the President's long-time adviser, speaking to the National Catholic Leadership Forum in Washington on April 25, said that President Bush's compassionate conservatism fits well with the Roman Church-State's principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. "Catholic teaching is between libertarian indifference and bureaucratic centralization," Rove said. Other speakers, including Steven Wagner, editor of *Crisis* magazine and the Republican Party's new National Chairman for Catholic Outreach, said that President Bush "talks the Catholic language."

A Holy War on Poverty

Here is more of that "Catholic language" from the President's Notre Dame address:

In 1964, the year I started college, another President from Texas delivered a commencement address talking

¹ For a more accurate view of the Roman Catholic treatment of marriage and the family, see Sheila Rauch Kennedy, *Shattered Faith: A Woman's Struggle to Stop the Catholic Church from Annulling Her Marriage*. It is outrageous that two institutions that have sinful views of marriage and the family — the Roman Church-State and the Mormon Church — now enjoy reputations as defenders of the family.

about this national commitment [to the poor].... In that speech, Lyndon Johnson advocated a War on Poverty which had noble intentions and some enduring successes. Poor families got basic health care; disadvantaged children were given a Head Start in life.... In 1966 [*sic*; correct date: 1996] welfare reform confronted the first of these problems [created by the War on Poverty].... But our work is only half done. Now we must confront the second problem: to revive the spirit of citizenship....

Welfare as we know it has ended, but poverty has not.... We do not yet know what will happen to these men and women, or to their children. But we cannot sit and watch, leaving them to their own struggles and their own fate.... Jewish prophets and Catholic teaching both speak of God's special concern for the poor. This is perhaps the most radical teaching of faith....

Mother Teresa said that what the poor often need, even more than shelter and food...is to be wanted.... This is my message today: There is no Great Society which is not a caring society. And any effective War on Poverty must deploy what Dorothy Day called "the weapons of the spirit...."

It's not sufficient to praise charities and community groups, we must support them. And this is both a public obligation and a personal responsibility.

The War on Poverty established a federal commitment to the poor. The welfare reform legislation of 1996 made that commitment more effective. For the task ahead, we must move to the third stage of combatting [*sic*] poverty in America....

Government has an important role. It will never be replaced by charities. My administration increased funding for major social welfare and poverty programs by 8 percent. Yet government must also do more....

So I have created a White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. Through that Office we are working to ensure that local community helpers and healers receive more federal dollars.... We have proposed a "Compassion Capital Fund," that will match private giving with federal dollars.

And we're in the process of implementing and expanding "Charitable Choice" – the principle, already established in federal law, that faith-based organizations should not suffer discrimination when they compete for contracts to provide social services. Government should never fund the teaching of faith, but it should support the good works of the faithful.

Some critics of this approach object to the idea of government funding going to any group motivated by faith. But they should take a look around them. Public money already goes to groups like the Center for the Homeless and, on a larger scale, Catholic Charities. Do the critics really want them cut off? Medicaid and Medicare money currently goes to religious hospitals.

Should this practice be ended? Child care vouchers for low income families are redeemed every day at houses of worship across America. Should this be prevented? Government loans send countless students to religious colleges. Should that be banned? Of course not....

Groups of this type [Habitat for Humanity] currently receive some funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The budget I submit to Congress next year will propose a three-fold increase in this funding....

The federal government should do all these things; but others have responsibilities as well — including corporate America.... But if we hope to substantially reduce poverty and suffering in our country, corporate America needs to give more – and to give better. Faith-based organizations receive only a tiny percentage of overall corporate giving....

I will convene a summit this fall, asking corporate and philanthropic leaders throughout America to join me at the White House to discuss ways they can provide more support to community organizations — both secular and religious....

I leave you with this challenge: serve a neighbor in need...because the same God who endows us with individual rights also calls us to social obligations.

Now where did these ideas come from? Dr. Marvin Olasky, advisor to President Bush, Professor of Journalism at the University of Texas, Senior Fellow of the Roman Catholic Acton Institute, and editor of the pro-Roman Catholic *World* magazine, is generally credited with coining the term "compassionate conservatism"; but he is not the source of these ideas. True, Olasky was present at the White House on January 29, 2001, when President Bush signed the Executive Order creating the new Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, but many others were there too: Charles Colson, whose Prison Fellowship and Justice Fellowship hope to get more taxpayer money; Dr. James Skillen, president of the Center for Public Justice, a think tank promoting faith-based policies; Michael Joyce, president of the Bradley Foundation, a conservative foundation promoting faith-based policies; and representatives from the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, The Salvation Army, Teen Challenge, Habitat for Humanity, the Islam Center of America, Young Life, World Vision, and so on. They all stand to gain financially from the new policy, and have found their "place at the table," or more accurately, at the trough. The love of money, as some long forgotten person once wrote, is a root of all kinds of evil.

In his Notre Dame speech President Bush cited as authorities Dorothy Day, a Roman Catholic social worker and socialist of the 1930s, and Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic social worker of the late 20th century. Both of them echo the collectivist social teaching of the Roman Church-State, which is the source of Bush's ideas, as he suggested at

the beginning of his address. That social teaching, as I have demonstrated in detail in my book, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*, is Antichristian, pagan in origin, and has spawned at various times fascism, socialism, corporativism, feudalism, and the welfare state. It is this collectivist teaching that the President thinks “our world needs to hear,” as he said in his remarks at the dedication of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., on March 22:

I’m grateful that Pope John Paul II chose Washington as the site of this Center. It brings honor and it fills a need. We are thankful for the message. We are also thankful for the messenger, for his personal warmth and prophetic strength.... Always, the Pope points us to the things that last and the love that saves. We thank God for this rare man, a servant of God and a hero....

In remarks preceding the dedication, made while receiving Roman Church-State cardinals, bishops, and other leaders in the East Room of the White House, President Bush said,

I’ve been struck by how humble the good folks [the prelates] are; how there’s a universal love for mankind and a deep concern for those who are not as fortunate as some of us. The Catholic Church is fortunate to have such strong, capable, decent leadership. And America is fortunate to have such strong leaders in our midst.... All of you are part of the humanizing mission which is part of the “Great Commission,” and the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center...will bring this message to generations of Americans in this capital of our nation. The best way to honor Pope John Paul II, truly one of the great men, is to take his teachings seriously; is to listen to his words and put his words and teachings into action here in America. This is a challenge we must accept.

As Princeton University’s McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Robert George, remarked in the *National Catholic Register*, “Bush made clear that he is not backing away from his faith-based initiative, despite criticism of some, not all, evangelical leaders and many libertarians.... What Bush is, in effect, stating is that ‘I am a John Paul II Republican....’” Professor George is, of course, a Roman Catholic. And President Bush is indeed a John Paul II Republican.²

² President Bush is not the first convert, but he seems to be more enthusiastic about the religion than some others. Last year, under pressure from the Vatican, Republican Congressional leaders dropped their opposition to a Clinton administration proposal to forgive the debts of 30 poor countries. President Clinton made the

Despite what Professor George implied, the President has met with virtually no opposition from so-called evangelical leaders. *Christianity Today*, for example, enthusiastically endorsed the Bush plan in its April 2 issue, saying, “Bush’s plan...is great.” Those most often cited as opponents — Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, for example — do not oppose the program in principle; they just grouse about money possibly going to “non-mainstream religions.” Pat Robertson has endorsed Bush’s plan as “an excellent idea.” The ersatz evangelicals are not only supporting the President’s plan now, they have been supporting it all along. His legislative program is being pushed in the House of Representatives by a Baptist minister, J. C. Watts of Oklahoma, and in the Senate by Joseph Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew from Connecticut, and Rick Santorum, a Roman Catholic from Pennsylvania.

Faith-Based Foolishness

Central to President Bush’s program is “faith.” This faith seems at first to be quite independent of any doctrine, for the President makes it clear that his administration will fund “Methodists, Mormons, and Muslims.” “We will help all in their work to change hearts while keeping a commitment to pluralism.”³ Obviously this sort of faith has nothing to do with Christianity; in fact, it is inimical to Christianity. Secular social reform efforts, according to the President, have failed because they cannot change hearts, but “people of faith” can change hearts, and the government will help them do so.

Some misguided and foolish Christians think that only Christ can change lives, and they therefore preach the false gospel of the changed life. They do not understand either Christianity or false religions. One of the most impressive testimony meetings I have ever attended was in the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Moslems, Mormons, Methodists, and Mariolatars can give similar testimonies: “The Koran, or Holy Mother Church, or the Queen of Heaven, or the Saints have changed my life.” The natural man can believe and does believe many varieties of false religions, some of which may indeed help him curb his drunkenness or his womanizing or his wife beating. But none of these religions is true; none can save his soul; only the finished work of

proposal a week after John Paul II called for government forgiveness of debts during 2000, a “Jubilee Year.”

³ Relativist tolerance is always disguised intolerance. When asked during the campaign if he would support federal funding of the Nation of Islam, Bush replied, “I don’t see how we can allow public dollars to fund programs where spite and hate is the core of the message.” But the Nation of Islam had produced results: It is reputed to be very effective at dealing with drug abuse and crime problems; in fact, in the early 1990s, the Department of Housing and Urban Development had contracted with the Nation of Islam to provide security in public housing projects. Under pluralism, all religions are equal, but some are more equal than others.

Christ, accepted in simple faith, can do that. And it is precisely this message of the Gospel that all these religions and government policies oppose. When fans of faith-based organizations say they want results, they are demanding results that they can observe, record, quantify, and subject to statistical analysis. They could care less about the souls of those on whom they operate. If Mohammedanism can produce sober citizens from drunks, more tax money and power to it.

Today it is common to hear that faith helps people recover from accidents and illness; faith helps them put their lives and families back together, or, as President Bush puts it, "Social scientists have documented the power of religion to protect families and change lives. Studies indicate that religious involvement reduces teen pregnancy, suicide, drug addiction, abuse, alcoholism, and crime." Ronald Sider, writing in *Christianity Today* (June 11, 2001), informs us that "a growing body of research demonstrates that religion often goes hand in hand with good citizenship and overall health." Which religion? It doesn't seem to matter for faith-based foolishness. Mormonism works as well as Christianity, and the messages of Prophet Mohammed and the Apparition Mary are as effective as the Gospel of Christ. They all work. And the President has made it clear that he wants results.

Now this exploitation of religion by government for government's purposes has been the story of humanity, from the Fall of man to the 21st century. Fascism is not a new idea, invented by Mussolini and Hitler in the 20th century. Attila, the man of force, has frequently used the Witchdoctor, the man of superstition, or formed a partnership with the Witchdoctor, in order to control the people and maintain power. Faith-based fascism is but the latest example of this religio-political partnership. Ronald Sider, writing in *Christianity Today*, unwittingly put it this way:

Scholars...cite a wide range of studies showing that "religion is strongly associated with good citizenship and improved physical and mental health." Active participation in a religious group correlates with lower suicide rates, drug use, and criminal behavior; better health; and altruistic behavior.... [While] Nonreligious funders [contributors to charitable organization] may overlook a perfunctory prayer to start the day, ...they often refuse to support holistic social programs run by Christians who think that encouraging the adoption of a specific religious faith is an essential component of their social program.

Sider makes it clear: The adoption of a specific religious faith is *a component of a social program*. This is theological paganism, a complete reversal of Christian doctrine and priorities, which teach that all social programs (if there are any at all) are secondary at best, and that the proclamation of the Gospel and the whole counsel of God is primary.

Christians are to set their minds on things above, not on earthly things. They are to fear him who can destroy both body and soul, not him who can kill only the body. They are to recognize that a person is not what he eats, but what he thinks. They are to teach that God's kingdom comes, not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit working in the minds of men. They are to warn all men that this earthly life is brief, and the things of this world are passing away; that wrath is coming, and the life (or death) that follows the Judgment is everlasting. They are to warn everyone that what they *think* of Jesus Christ will result in their everlasting happiness or their never-ending agony.

The Great Commission is not a component of some larger social program; it is the whole program, and it is not social. Whatever charitable works are done by individuals, private organizations, and churches (not governments, whose purpose is the punishment of evildoers, not the ministry of mercy) are to be done in the furtherance of that mission. To reverse ends and means is to deny the Gospel. Christ said, contradicting Ronald Sider and all other proponents of the Social Gospel, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." To make earthly things the goal, and to make the kingdom of God and his righteousness the means, is a damnable perversion of Christianity.

Writing of an earlier proposal to bastardize Christianity and make it a useful contributor to good citizenship and a component of a social program, J. Gresham Machen said,

We find proposed to us today what is called "character education" or "character building." Character, we are told, is one thing about which men of all faiths are agreed. Let us, therefore, build character in common, as good citizens, and then welcome from the various religious faiths whatever additional aid they can severally bring.... What surprises me about this program is not that its advocates propose it, for it is only too well in accord with the spirit of the age. But what really surprises me about it is that the advocates of it seem to think that a Christian can support it without ceasing at that point to be Christian.⁴

Today, the so-called evangelicals are mindlessly parroting the pious bromides of the modernists and Social Gospelers of 75 years ago. To state it more clearly, many of those we now call evangelicals are in fact modernists. They have abandoned Christianity. And what pious fascists call "social justice" are the sins of envy and theft.

Faith-based Fascism

The 16th century Cardinal Tommaso Cajetan, a determined opponent of the Reformation, explained very

⁴ "The Necessity of the Christian School," in *Education, Christianity and the State*, John W. Robbins, editor, 76.

clearly the Roman Catholic theology behind faith-based fascism:

Now what a ruler can do in virtue of his office, so that justice may be served in the matter of riches, is to take from someone who is unwilling to dispense from what is superfluous for life or state [condition], and to distribute it to the poor.... For according to the teaching of the saints, the riches that are superfluous do not belong to the rich man as his own, but rather to the one appointed by God as dispenser, so that he can have the merit of a good dispensation.⁵

The same theological and moral justification of stealing by government has been stated by many popes, councils, and theologians throughout the long and bloody history of the Roman Church-State. Using the principles of the universal destination of goods and subsidiarity, the Roman Church-State concocted the most comprehensive case for economic and political fascism the world has ever seen. It is this social teaching that President Bush praises, follows, and urges all of us to follow.

Of course, he is not the first modern political leader to do so. Amintore Fanfani, Premier of Italy in the mid-twentieth century, published a book titled *Catholicism, Protestantism and Capitalism* in 1934. Fanfani presented the Roman Church-State's social teaching and concluded that "the essence of capitalism...can only meet with the most decided repugnance on the part of Catholicism." What is that essence? Individualism, the private property order, freedom of enterprise, freedom of association, freedom of religion. Fanfani, like many Protestant-poseurs today, longed for the good old days, the feudalism of the Middle Ages:

The pre-capitalist age is the period in which definite social institutions such as, for instance, the Church, the State, the Guild, act as guardians of an economic order that is not based on criteria of individual economic utility. The Corporation or Guild is typical of the period. It is the guardian of a system of economic activity in which the purely economic interests of the individual are sacrificed either to the moral and religious interests of the individual—the attainment of which is under the control of special public institutions—or to the economic and extra-economic interests of the community. Competition was restricted; the distribution of customers, hence a minimum of work, was assured; a certain system of work was compulsory; trade with various groups [guess whom] might be forbidden for political or religious reasons; certain practices were compulsory, and working hours were limited; there were a number of compulsory feasts; prices and rates of

increase were fixed; measures were taken to prevent speculation.⁶

This fascist organization of society was a result of the social teaching of the Roman Church-State, and it has been a result of that teaching wherever the Roman Church-State has been powerful enough to impose its will on a nation.

Roman Catholic historian Christopher Dawson, writing in 1936 in *Religion and the Modern State*, acknowledged Romanism's affinity for fascism:

[Roman Catholicism] is by no means hostile to the authoritarian ideal of the State.... [T]he [Roman] Church has always maintained the principles of authority and hierarchy and a high conception of the prerogatives of the State. [Roman Catholic social ideas] have far more affinity with those of fascism than with those of either [Classical] Liberalism or Socialism. [They] correspond much more closely, at least in theory, with the fascist conception of the functions of the "leader" and the vocational hierarchy of the Fascist State than they do with the system of parliamentary democratic party government....⁷

The Joy of Fascism

Who supports this faith-based fascism? Most if not all the Religious Right, including groups such as the Family Research Council and the Christian Coalition; the Roman Church-State, of course; conservatives; a considerable army of nonprofit organizations, such as the Hudson Institute, that receive money from the government and spin out "scholarly" studies allegedly showing why government funding of faith-based organizations is the answer to social problems; wealthy foundations, such as the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Bradley Foundation, that also fund such stupid studies; Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship and Ronald Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action, as well as other advocates of the Social Gospel; and even some foolish people who call themselves Reformed Christians, of whom we shall have more to say later.

The man heading the President's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, Dr. John J. DiIulio, is a former member of the board of Prison Fellowship. Calling himself a "born-again Catholic," DiIulio explains "compassionate conservatism": "Compassionate conservatism warmly welcomes godly people back into the public square.... It fosters model public/private partnerships...." Quoting a July 22, 1999, speech by Governor Bush, DiIulio says that Bush rejected the "destructive" idea that "if government would only get out of the way, all our problems would be solved." Two years later, on January 29, 2001, President Bush asserted, and he has repeated it many times since,

⁵ Cited in John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania*, 36.

⁶ Cited in *Ecclesiastical Megalomania*, 74.

⁷ Cited in *Ecclesiastical Megalomania*, 161.

“Government cannot be replaced by charities or volunteers.” President Bush clearly rejects the Biblical view of limited government. Rather than restricting government to its only legitimate role, the punishment of evildoers, as Paul says in *Romans* 13, President Bush wants to involve government further in society by expanding the “government-by-proxy” fascism that already grips America. DiIulio explained the plan to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) on March 7:

Since the end of World War II, virtually every domestic policy program that Washington has funded in whole or in part has been administered not by federal civil servants alone (there are about 2 million of those today, roughly the same number as in 1960), but by federal workers in conjunction with state and local government employees, for-profit firms, and non-profit organizations. There are, for example, six people who work indirectly for Washington for every one federal bureaucrat who administers social programs. Certain nonprofit organizations, both religious and secular, have long been funded in whole or in part through this federal government-by-proxy system.

Catholic Charities, for example, gets 65 percent of its \$2.3 billion annual budget from government. The Jewish Board of Family and Children Services receives 75 percent of its funding from government.

Far from objecting to this fascist government-by-proxy system, with its network of public-private “partnerships” and government “coordination” (such “partnerships” and “coordination” are characteristics of fascism), DiIulio intends to extend this fascist system to include even more organizations and people, specifically religious organizations. He exults in the fact that under federal law signed by President Clinton in 1996, “sacred places that serve civic purposes can seek federal (or federal-state) funding without having to divest themselves of their religious iconography or symbols.... [N]uns in habits [can] rub shoulders with Americorps volunteers...” and so on. He finds such prospects delightful because at the present time there is anti-Catholic discrimination: “Catholics who believe and follow the Church’s official teachings on social issues ‘need not apply’ to many secular nonprofits presently funded, in whole or in part, through Washington’s government-by-proxy system.”

In his speech to the NAE, DiIulio attempted to answer objections to faith-based fascism. To those who think it would corrupt their organizations if they were to participate, his answer is simple: Don’t participate. Good advice, but worthless. Under fascism, non-participation is not an option. We are compelled to pay taxes to support fascist government-by-proxy. We are compelled to obey the government’s proxies. The freedom not to participate should be extended to the collection of taxes, not just to the

distribution of stolen property that DiIulio calls federal funding. One slogan of Italian Fascism was “Everything within the State; nothing outside the State.” Our home-grown fascists operate on the same principle, working to expand a political system that already penalizes those who oppose institutionalized and legalized theft and rewards those who favor legalized theft. Their goal is to politicize what remains of private charity.

In an interesting remark to the NAE, DiIulio disclosed his Antichristian view of the church: “Community helpers and healers need and deserve our individual and collective help. But they would need it less, much less, if the church behaved like the church, unified from city to suburb....” These sentiments are Antichristian for at least two reasons. First, the Christian church is not a social welfare organization. Anything it does to care for the physical welfare of people is incidental and subordinate to its overriding purpose, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christian Gospel is not the Social Gospel. Paul even gives us instructions on who is not to be helped — those who will not work and widows under age 60 — to name two groups. Second, the church is not supposed to be a centralized institution. The churches in the New Testament are scattered over a wide geographical area; there is no centralized administration, no denominational apparatus, only congregations and an occasional presbytery meeting. The churches’ only visible links to each other are not organizational, but the apostles and evangelists. When the apostles die, there is no visible, structural, or organizational link between the churches. Their unity lies solely in “one Lord, one faith, one baptism”; Paul mentions nothing about one denomination. There is no common organization. Of course, the ambitious founders of DiIulio’s Church-State, the bishops of Rome (not Jesus Christ or Peter), seeking to supplant both the head of the church, Christ, and his apostles, invented and asserted apostolic succession, claimed to be the vicars of Christ walking on Earth, and imposed their control on other churches. Two thousand years after Christ the bishops of Rome are still seeking to impose their control on other churches. It is this bureaucratic and totalitarian view of the church that DiIulio favors, and it is this Antichristian view of the church that compassionate fascism will encourage, support, and if successful, impose. No wonder DiIulio says, “our hearts are joyous and light.”

The Nominally Reformed

Marvin Olasky, an adviser to President Bush pushing compassionate fascism, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), and a member of the board of Covenant College. Dr. Amy Sherman, who started the Abundant Life Family Center at Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Charlottesville, Virginia, is now Urban Ministries Advisor there. That church already receives government funding for its social programs, and it apparently desires more. Dr. Sherman uses her position with The Hudson

Institute to propagandize for faith-based fascism. Russ Pulliam, editor of the *Indianapolis Star* and a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, published an essay in that denomination's magazine, *Covenanter Witness*, saying,

Bush should stand his ground in response to any legal threats to drag his proposals into court. He has the First Amendment on his side, based on a strict constructionist reading of the Constitution.... Thomas Jefferson approved federal grants to Roman Catholic missions to the Indians. Congress approved its own government-paid chaplain.... There is nothing unconstitutional about a government grant for a rescue mission that helps the homeless....

Not only does President Bush have the Constitution, Thomas Jefferson, and Congress on his side, according to Pulliam, he has Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the Apostle Paul as well:

In *Romans 13*, Paul explains how civil government is designed to be a "minister of God to thee for good." The king of civil government, after all, is Jesus Christ; so it should not be surprising that he can use that government to help in the resolution of social problems, through cooperation with ministries like Prison Fellowship.

Pulliam is not alone; the *Christian Statesman*, a periodical published by the National Reform Association, whose members are supposed to be conservative Presbyterians with Reconstructionist proclivities, has expressed similar views.

It may come as a surprise to Pulliam and his friends that there is no constitutional warrant whatsoever for federal subsidies to rescue missions. The arguments he uses — what Jefferson and Congress may or may not have done — beg the question: He ought to show that what they did was constitutional, rather than assume that the actions of Jefferson and Congress are *ipso facto* constitutional. Pulliam, for example, should have quoted James Madison's February 27, 1811, veto message to Congress:

The appropriation of funds of the United States for the use and support of religious societies [is] contrary to the article of the Constitution which declares that Congress shall make no law respecting a religious establishment.

Furthermore, there is no warrant in the Constitution for any federal welfare program, let alone a welfare program for religious societies.

Pulliam's understanding of Scripture is no better, and perhaps worse, than his understanding of the Constitution:

If Jesus Christ is king of civil government, and if it is therefore proper to use civil government to "help in the resolution of social problems," then it also follows that it is proper to use government to help in the resolution of religious problems. One good non sequitur deserves another. That is how totalitarianism comes, step by illogical step.

The separation of church and state — a phrase that has been demonized by the Religious Right for the past 20 years — is what has afforded and still affords us some religious freedom in this country. The Roman Church-State — indeed all pagan religions — has always been opposed to the separation of church and state, and it remains so today. Now it has millions of conservative dupes singing its siren song of partnership between church and state.

Conclusion

Faith-based fascism will increase the size and scope of the federal government, extending it to organizations that have hitherto been outside the state. That is the explicit goal of the policy, as expressed by the President himself. "Everything within the State; nothing outside the State."

Faith-based fascism will increase, not decrease, the constituencies of the welfare state, creating new special interest groups, government-funded religious organizations, that will pressure officials to grant them more money.

Faith-based fascism is based on a political delusion. John DiIulio and President Bush tell us that federal grants will be awarded and withdrawn on the basis of results. DiIulio asserts: "Opening competition for federal funds to all, including tiny local faith-based organizations, could usher in a new era of results-driven public administration. Scores of federal welfare programs could be cured or killed." For someone who has co-authored a textbook on American government, DiIulio shows little understanding of how government actually works. Government-grant awards and denials are decided by political clout, political cronyism, and political biases. With the addition of government grants to faith-based organizations, we must add religious clout, religious cronyism, and religious biases. Tax funds will flow to political and religious friends and be withheld from political and religious foes.

Faith-based fascism, therefore, will affect which religious societies will grow and which will not. Those with federally funded programs will attract members; those who obey the Bible and the Constitution will be pushed from the public square, marginalized, criticized, and persecuted by the "armies of compassion." Richard John Neuhaus' "naked public square" will once again be filled with praying, autodafeing fascists, just like in the good old days.

How should a Christian respond to the President's baiting questions, "Do the critics really want them [Catholic Charities] cut off [from federal funding]? Medicaid and Medicare money currently goes to religious hospitals. Should this practice be ended? Child care vouchers for low income

families are redeemed every day at houses of worship across America. Should this be prevented? Government loans send countless students to religious colleges. Should that be banned?"

The President answers, "Of course not."

The Christian answers, Yes, and the sooner the better.

End the student loans; they are funded by money stolen from taxpayers; they have driven the cost of a college education out of sight; and they are used to put young people deeply into debt at the start of their lives.

End the child care vouchers; they are funded by money stolen from taxpayers, and they are used to put children into 9-to-5 orphanages.

End the subsidies for medical care; they are funded with money stolen from taxpayers; they have raised the price of medical care to exorbitant levels; they have encouraged people not to provide for their own; and they have made government an idol.

End the subsidies to Catholic Charities and World Vision; they are funded with money stolen from taxpayers. If those charities were half as wonderful as they tell us, their efforts would attract adequate voluntary contributions. The fact that these charities must rely on funds obtained by force suggests that their programs are less than worthwhile, less than efficient, or less than beneficial.

And let's be clear about charity. Charity is not compelling someone else to give *his* money to the poor. It is giving one's *own* money away; it is *freely* contributing one's *own* time. Government charity is a contradiction in terms, for government has no money except what it collects by force from others. What President Bush proposes is not greater charity, but aggravated theft and increased compulsion. There is nothing Christian or charitable about it. It is a violation of the Ten Commandments.

This writer has heard no "Christian" leader give the correct answers to the President's questions. They have already agreed in principle with the President's faith-based fascism. Long ago they abandoned the whole counsel of God, choosing which Biblical doctrines they would believe and teach, and which they would ignore. Many of them have abandoned the Gospel of the substitutionary death of Christ for his people and justification by faith alone. Now they have denied what the Scriptures teach on private property, the role of government, and the social order.

The salt has lost its savor; it has become worthless; and it deserves to be trodden underfoot by men.

Recommended Reading

Fanfani, Amintore. *Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism*. University of Notre Dame Press [1934] 1984.

Flynn, John T. *As We Go Marching*. Free Life Editions [1944] 1973.

Laquer, Walter. *Fascism: Past, Present, Future*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Robbins, John W. *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church*. The Trinity Foundation, 1999.

Rummel, R. J. *Death by Government*. Transaction Publishers, 1995.

Nothing written here is to be construed as lobbying, or as endorsing or opposing any candidate for any office whatsoever. This is a religious commentary on the religious policies of the United States Government, and our commentary on them is protected by the Word of God and the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.