

# Bush's 'Faith-Based' Initiative Would Make Poverty a Crime

by Art Ticknor

Today's poor in the United States are the victims and perpetrators of illegitimacy and abandonment . . . but they are not suffering from thirst, hunger, or nakedness, except by choice, or insanity, or parental abuse.

—Marvin Olasky, George W. Bush adviser, and author of *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Books, 1992)

With President Bush's creation of the White House Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Wall Street financial oligarchy, under the rubric of "compassionate conservatism," has moved a step closer to looting the American population under the cloak of religion. Under this program, "faith-based" and other not-for-profit groups will administer more Federally financed social services, often provided by government.

At the forefront of this rush to fascism is the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty, and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

The Acton Institute is the current home of Bush's social policy "guru," Marvin Olasky, whom the London *Observer* identifies as one of the "Four Apostles" of Bush's long-expected initiative—which will bring back the hated "Contract on America" of Newt Gingrich, which, in effect, declares poverty to be a crime.

During 1989-91, Olasky worked at the Heritage Foundation. His 1992 book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, was a Heritage Foundation project. The book carries an introduction by professional racist Charles Murray, author of *The Bell Curve*. Olasky joined the board of Gingrich's Progress and Freedom Foundation, which published a compilation of writings by the futurists Alvin and Heidi Toffler, with a lavish introduction by Gingrich.

In his book, Olasky, always the pessimist, attacks the 1920s president of the National Conference of Social Workers, for believing in the divinity of man, and alleged that the modern social liberalism of the 1920s, was tied to a theology which no longer believed in sin. According to Olasky, "The underclass we have always had with us," but the problems of the underclass are not solved by money. The problems are problems of the spirit. To give money to the underclass is to

make it grow, as people will work less and less. Government can't help, it only makes things worse. What's left? "Moral uplift," one by one.

This is really a cover for doing nothing at all. Olasky and his malevolent ilk fraudulently misconstrue the Biblical phrase, "the poor ye always have with you," as if it were a mandate against the eradication of poverty.

## Mont Pelerin Ideology

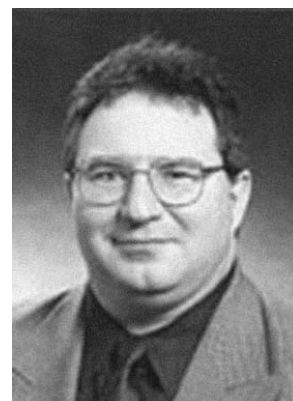
The majority of these people are from the Mont Pelerin Society, the British-headquartered "free market" ideology shop that was founded by Friedrich von Hayek to promote the philosophy of 18th-Century radical hedonist Bernard de Mandeville, who argued that private greed and corruption are the only path to public virtue. The Mont Pelerin gang are most famous for peddling the idea that the underground economy—i.e., organized crime—is a viable and integral part of economic life, and should be decriminalized.

According to its website, the Acton Institute seeks "to build prosperity and progress on a foundation of religious liberty, economic freedom, and personal moral responsibility." Its Board of Directors includes Dr. Alejandra A. Chafuen of the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, Dr. Edwin J. Feulner, Jr. of the Heritage Foundation, and Rev. Robert A. Sirico. Its Board of Advisers includes Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute, Dr. Steve Hanke of Johns Hopkins University, and Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute. Olasky, a promoter of "compassionate conservatism," is a Fellow at Acton.

The Board of Trustees of the Manhattan Institute includes Maurice R. Greenberg of American International Group, Inc., William Kristol of Rupert Murdoch's *The Weekly Standard*, and Lord Robert Skidelsky of the Social Market Foundation. Approximately half of the board members are executives at financial services firms.

## Bush's Two-Faithed Team

Senior Fellow John J. Di-Iulio, Jr., Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania, has been named Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Stephen Goldsmith, chairman of the Manhattan Institute's Center for Civic Innovation, has been named Special Adviser to the President for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Myron Magnet, editor of the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*, wrote *The Dream and the Nightmare*, "the book that helped shape Bush's message," according to Olasky. Law-



John J. Di-Iulio, Jr.

rence Lindsey, President Bush's chief Economic Adviser, was a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

By choosing DiIulio, Bush is seeking to enlist the support of both religious conservatives and New Democrats for his domestic crisis-management policies. DiIulio is a Fellow at the Brookings Institution as well as the Manhattan Institute. He has written articles for *The Weekly Standard*, and for the Democratic Leadership Council's *Blueprint* magazine. As director of the Jeremiah Project, he studies and assists faith-based programs. He identifies himself as a "New Democrat."

As recently as October 2000, DiIulio was the kickoff writer in *Blueprint*, in a special feature on "the quality of life." In his article, DiIulio argued, in effect, for decriminalization of drug use, saying that non-violent drug offenders should not be jailed.

DiIulio is well-known for his tough-on-crime stance. In the book *Body Count: Moral Poverty and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs*, co-authored with William J. Bennett and John P. Walters, he asserted that "moral poverty," not economic poverty, is the cause of crime. The authors claim that the increase in crime is the exclusive result of children growing up in communities that lack "loving, capable, responsible adults who teach the young right from wrong." The purpose of the criminal justice system is "to exact a price for transgressing the rights of others," according to the authors.

DiIulio has proposed more money for more cops, more prisons, and stiffer and more strictly enforced sentences. In an article in the *American Prospect*, DiIulio claimed that there is not much difference among criminal classes; they are "plea-bargain-gorged convicted and imprisoned criminals," most of whom have committed several property or violent crimes. Even if they are senior citizens, they should be kept locked up. DiIulio asks, "Why not 'two-strike' laws?" with sentences of at least 15-20 years, with no time off for good behavior and no parole. He also says that society has a right to express its "moral outrage" at the acts of criminals by, among other things, keeping them behind bars. He cites a Brookings study showing that "incarcerating a greater fraction of convicted felons would yield positive social benefits."

According to DiIulio, the outreach of black churches and faith-based groups can restore inner-city neighborhoods. "Especially in America's high-crime, low-literacy neighborhoods, organized religion remains the backbone of civil society," he writes. He praises the efforts in Jamaica, Queens; Philadelphia; and Boston, and calls on corporations, foundations, and, where appropriate, government agencies, to fund these faith-based initiatives. Taking one step further, he says that government cannot afford to replace faith-based help. He cites University of Pennsylvania social-work scholar Ram A. Cnaan, who estimates that it would cost the government and other non-religious institutions \$200 million per year to provide the same services.

Myron Magnet summed up the message of "compassionate conservatism" in an article in the Feb. 5, 1999 *Wall Street Journal*: "The poor need the larger society's moral support; they need to hear the message of personal responsibility and self-reliance, the optimistic assurance that if they try as they must, they will make it." In other words, people are poor because they want to be poor.

Stephen Goldsmith was the chief domestic policy adviser for Bush's Presidential campaign. As the former Mayor of Indianapolis, he was involved in privatization schemes and slashing the wages of the workforce.

## Ongoing Investigations

However, there are several ongoing investigations in Texas of cases of brutality, beatings, and illegal imprisonment of teenagers enrolled in church-run drug-addiction programs. One center, Roloff Homes in Corpus Christi, is now under grand jury investigation for abuse of a teenager, who claims he was forced to jump into a cesspool as punishment for trying to run away. Bush says that these programs are totally successful, and that these privatized operations are "the next step for welfare" after the 1996 welfare reform.

According to the London *Observer*, Tory leader William Hague also supports a bigger role for religious organizations in providing welfare services. Olasky was invited to Britain for talks, where "his fierce support for the rolling back of the state struck a chord almost as much as his Bible-thumping militancy."

Fortunately, not everybody is buying into the Bush "compassionate conservatism" hoax, and some of DiIulio's dirty laundry is airing in public. On Feb. 5, the *Washington Post* published a commentary by Vincent Schiraldi, who criticized the DiIulio appointment: "For those of us who have followed the politics of crime and punishment for the past decade . . . no single person has been more closely identified with unsound crime analysis and punitive imprisonment policies than John DiIulio."

Schiraldi cited an incendiary 1996 report by DiIulio, in which DiIulio described a "rising tide of juvenile super-predators" laying a path of devastation across urban America. DiIulio predicted that, in a few years, unless harsh crime prevention measures were adopted, America's cities would be overrun with 270,000 unredeemable killer kids. DiIulio's predictions were never borne out, but his policies contributed to a 1990s decade when the prison population soared to more than 2 million, and the African-American community was particularly devastated.

In a similarly obnoxious *National Review* article, quoted by Schiraldi, DiIulio had written that most American juveniles are "fatherless, godless, and without conscience," and that "all that's left of the black community in some pockets of urban America is deviant, delinquent, and criminal adults surrounded by severely abused and neglected children, virtually all of whom have been born out of wedlock."