

# **“FAITH-BASED” PROGRAMS RIGHT MOVE BY BUSH**

President-elect George W. Bush will meet today with an array of religious leaders to discuss his plans for promoting “faith-based” social service programs. Catholic League president William Donohue took the occasion to explain why the league supports this move:

“There is nothing new about ‘faith-based’ social service organizations; they have been operative in the U.S. since the nineteenth century. What is new is the overwhelming empirical evidence that shows how efficacious these programs are in meeting the needs of the dispossessed. Whether the problem is drug addiction, literacy, empowerment for the homeless, attending to the needs of women in distress, or any other malady, the data demonstrate that secular government programs pale in significance to the achievements registered by ‘faith-based’ initiatives. And that is why the Catholic League applauds the interest that George W. Bush has shown in encouraging these programs.

“Given the results of ‘faith-based’ programs, it is hard to believe they remain controversial. Now it could be argued that those who oppose these programs are the enemy of the poor. More than likely, however, it is the single-minded determination to scrub society clean of any public expression of religion that motivates this crowd. But it must also be said that those who object to what Bush wants to do would rather see the poor ill-served by secular programs before they would ever support successful ‘faith-based’ initiatives. This proves how shallow is their interest in ameliorating the conditions of the needy.

“No institution has done more to improve the life chances of the dispossessed than the Catholic Church, and this is

especially true of Catholic schools in the inner cities. That is why the time is ripe for a new partnership between church and state, one that allows 'faith-based' programs to breathe freely without being suffocated by secular extremists. Accordingly, we hope Bush turns a deaf ear to those who resist change and are stuck in the social mud of the 1960s."