

IS BUSH TOO HOLY TO BE PRESIDENT?

Catholic League president William Donohue today addressed the growing criticism of President Bush's emphasis on religion:

"The role of religion in the life of President Bush is coming under increasing criticism both at home and abroad. 'Nowhere does the Bible call for crusades,' is how German President Johannes Rau replied when asked about Bush's understanding of religion. A similar remark was made by French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin: 'In no way can God be called on for a vote of confidence.' A Swedish lawmaker was even more breathless when he said, 'I've never seen anything like this before.' The head of the German Bishop's Conference, Cardinal Karl Lehmann, showed how thoroughly modern he is when he admonished Bush for his 'careless way of using religious language'; the good cardinal advised that this 'is not acceptable anymore in today's world.'

"In the U.S., Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State says Bush is on a 'divinely inspired' mission that is endangering our liberties. An official of the Utah chapter of American Atheists brands Bush's rhetoric as 'divisive.' Freedom From Religion Foundation chief, Annie Laurie Gaylor, opines that Bush is 'the most recklessly religious President we've seen.' To Presbyterian minister Fritz Ritsch, Bush thinks he's 'theologian in chief.' *Commonweal*, a magazine of the Catholic left, accuses Bush of the sin of 'moral simplicity,' one that is 'a dangerous illusion.' *Time* writer Joe Klein worries that Bush's faith 'does not discomfort him.' Protestant theologian Martin Marty frets that 'Bush's God talk will set the tinderbox that is the Muslim world on fire.' Muslim American Society official, Shaker El Sayed, warns that Bush 'is claiming a divine mandate.' Michael Cottle of the *New*

Republic is upset that Bush 'is charging into battle with the blind confidence that God will *of course* help him emerge victorious.'

"This is the way the Bush-fearing gang operates. They put words in his mouth and then denounce him for saying what he never said. We pray the president continues to invoke God's name whenever he sees fit and does not yield to those who tremble when he does."