

# STATE DEPT. FAITH CHIEF IS GOOD FIT

Recently religion professor Shaun Casey was named to head the State Department's new Office of Faith-Based Community Initiative. The recently deceased sociologist of religion Robert Bellah once described civil religion as "a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals" that date to the Founding; they represent "the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out God's will on earth."

Casey has said, "I, frankly, am glad American civil religion is dying." He did not say what he will do to hasten the death of our civil religion, nor did he speak to what exactly he would like to put in its place. Perhaps he will unveil a secular agenda, or a statist substitute, in the name of advancing religion, of course.

The White House Faith-Based director, Melissa Rogers, predictably gushed over Casey. She congratulated Mara Vanderslice Kelly as well for her yeoman work on faith-based issues.

In 2004, Bill Donohue exposed Vanderslice, then working for John Kerry, as a left-wing activist who spoke at rallies for ACT-UP, the gay group responsible for busting into St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1989 and desecrating the Eucharist. She was immediately subjected to a gag rule. Donohue was blamed for Kerry's decision to silence her.

In 2006, Mara Vanderslice was named one of the 12 most important religious voices in the Democratic Party. Shaun Casey was also on that list. Looks like Kerry has chosen another religious superstar to join his team. Just think of it—if these are Kerry's religion-friendly sources, imagine what his atheist friends at Martha's Vineyard must be like!