

Bush's 'Faith-Based' Policy Returns United States to Feudalism

by Marianna Wertz

On Jan. 29, President George W. Bush signed two executive orders, creating a new White House office of Faith-Based Action and clearing the way for the Departments of Health and Human Services; Housing and Urban Development; Labor; Justice; and Education to set up guidelines for "faith-based groups"—churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.—to "participate," i.e., receive government money for administering, those departments' programs.

Activities such as operating homeless or domestic-abuse shelters, after-school programs, drug and alcohol treatment centers, and food banks, whose demand has already been skyrocketing since the 1996 Federal "welfare reform" legislation, will be handed over to so-called religious groups, including every Pentecostal sectlet that wants to stand in line at the government money-spigot.

"In many ways, this is the next step in welfare reform," Bush's spokesman said, on announcing the initiative. The 1996 law will expire in September 2002, and Bush's initiative is aimed at setting the groundwork for the sweeping changes which an "emergency-rule" government will be forced to push through, under conditions of global economic collapse.

Eliminate the Nation-State

Under the cover of Bush's rhetoric about "armies of compassion" and "faith-based initiatives," the President is in fact proposing to remove the Federal government from responsibility for the general welfare of the population, to throw away the centuries of progress achieved since the Middle Ages.

As Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly written, modern civilization is the product of the successful battle for the nation-state, begun in the Fifteenth Century under France's Louis XI, and which reached its apogee in America's successful revolution against the British Empire, and America's Constitutional principle of "the general welfare" as the responsibility of the nation.

Bush's plan to turn over the nation's welfare, health, housing, criminal justice, and other social service programs to "faith-based communities," is not only a complete annihilation of President Franklin Roosevelt's "safety-net" concept; it is not just a dangerous mixing of church and state; it is, most dangerously, a return to the period in human history known as feudalism, before nation-states took responsibility for the general welfare of the population, and 90% of the population, the serfs, were treated as human cattle.

The context for this treason against the Constitution is the onrush of outright depression conditions in the nation, with mass layoffs and energy crises condemning to misery additional millions—beyond the millions already living in poverty as a result of the 1996 welfare reform policy—while the Bush Administration says, "Let them eat faith."

Two of the most extreme "states' rights" (i.e., Confederate) defenders in the Bush Cabinet, will be primarily responsible for the implementation of this policy. First and foremost, will be John Ashcroft, Bush's racist nominee for Attorney General, who will be defending the policy from the numerous expected lawsuits challenging its Constitutionality, and pushing "faith-based" initiatives on the criminal justice level. Ashcroft is, himself, the champion of the "charitable choice" provision in the 1996 welfare reform bill, which the Clinton Administration limited by excluding organizations involved directly in religious worship. Bush's plan will allow such organizations to participate, and expand their participation beyond welfare services.

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, who fought for just this national policy as Governor of Wisconsin, will oversee its implementation. Thompson's Wisconsin was famous for its "light touch" welfare policy—welfare recipients being forced to work were not to be told about programs such as food stamps and health care, which were supposed to be available to them from the state and Federal governments, even under the reform law.

Directly responsible for the White House initiative, will be John J. DiIulio, a political science professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Former Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, a pioneer of privatization schemes, will chair the advisory board. (*EIR* will have more to say on their backgrounds in an upcoming article.)

Homelessness and Hunger Are Skyrocketing

Three studies released at the end of 2000, document the fact that the nation's homeless and hungry population—the majority of whom are families thrown off the welfare rolls since 1996—has already been skyrocketing, before the full impact of the onrushing depression has even hit. The studies indicate a rise in homelessness and hunger in the range of 15-30% in 1999 and 2000.

In addition, the case study of the New York Building Trades Council's defeat of a state welfare-to-work program