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► **To cite this version:**

John Chandler. Collateral Damage: September 11th and the Performance of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain. Cahiers du MIMMOC, 2016, Le 11 septembre dans le monde : politiques, cultures, identités, 16-2016, 10.4000/mimmoc.2468 . hal-02022767

HAL Id: hal-02022767

<https://hal.science/hal-02022767>

Submitted on 25 Jun 2024

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Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain

Cahiers du MIMMOC

16 | 2016

Le 11 septembre dans le monde : politiques, cultures, identités

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/mimmoc/2468>

DOI: 10.4000/mimmoc.2468

ISSN: 1951-6789

Publisher

Université de Poitiers

Provided by Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France



Electronic reference

John CHANDLER, "Collateral Damage: September 11th and the Performance of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative", *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* [Online], 16 | 2016, Online since 10 May 2016, connection on 25 June 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/mimmoc/2468> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/mimmoc.2468>

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Collateral Damage: September 11th and the Performance of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

John CHANDLER

- 1 After a campaign based primarily on domestic issues, one of the last preoccupations of George W. Bush when he became president was to be a “nation builder” or a war president. Yet, as Lew Daly notes in *God’s Economy*:

That his presidency will be remembered for little else reflects the extraordinary impact of September 11 on American foreign policy and political institutions, but also on American religious debates. Bush’s crusade in the Muslim world sparked for many, a simplistic, dangerous vision of clashing civilizations and global conflict between good and evil. But an important secondary effect, no less devastating, was its crowding out of the religious debate he was actually prepared to have when he came to Washington.¹
- 2 And a major part of that religious debate was the Bush administration’s expansion of government funding for qualified religious nonprofit community-service organizations through the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI).²
- 3 While taking into account Daly’s general observation, we can note, however, that 9/11 did not have the easily identifiable impact on faith-based policy that may be so spectacularly seen in relation to homeland security, airport safety, or the fight against terrorism. Rather it is the timing of the event and its relation to the developments in Congress and within the Bush administration which conspired to create substantial, and arguably catastrophic, collateral damage to the effectiveness of the policy. If 9/11 did not instigate debate, then, this analysis will evaluate how it did constitute in a number of ways a catalyst in both the intensification of conflict concerning such policy as well as the Bush administration’s failure to effectively apply it.
- 4 In order to show how 9/11 had an influence on the development and execution of the FBCI, a very short description of the background of the program leading up to the event is first necessary. In a first part, “The Shattering of Consensus,” we will therefore briefly review the perspectives and debate concerning faith-based policy leading up to the 2000

presidential election, as well as the confused/confusing performance by the Bush administration to enact the initiative before 9/11. Subsequently in the second part, “9/11: the Last and Lost Chance for Effectiveness,” we will evaluate how 9/11 had an impact on faith-based policy and its performance. Throughout the analysis I will highlight one of the most important inner-circle players on Bush’s faith-based policy team at the time of the attacks, John Dilulio Jr., the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI). I concentrate particularly on Dilulio (a Democrat and supporter of Al Gore) as I consider his case and perspective a unique, efficient and useful vehicle for illustrating both the chain of events leading up to 9/11 as well as the collateral damage that 9/11 had on the performance of faith-based policy.

The Shattering of Consensus

- 5 On May 24, 1999, Americans heard a presidential candidate declare that America’s “severest challenges are not just material, but spiritual.” The candidate continued, stating that

For too long, national leaders have been trapped in a dead-end debate. Some on the right have said for too long that a specific set of religious values should be imposed, threatening the founders’ precious separation of church and state. In contrast, some on the left have said for too long that religious values should play no role in addressing public needs [...]. [F]reedom of religion need not mean freedom from religion. [...] There is a better way. [...] Ordinary Americans have decided to confront the fact that our severest challenges are not just material, but spiritual [...]. [F]aith- and values-based organizations show a strength that goes beyond “volunteerism.” These groups nationwide have shown a muscular commitment to facing down poverty, drug addictions, domestic violence and homelessness. And when they have worked out a partnership with government, they have created programs and organizations that have woven a resilient web of life support under the most helpless among us. [...] Today, I give you this pledge; if you elect me President, the voice of faith-based organizations will be integral to the policies set forth in my administration.³

- 6 This was not George W. Bush, but rather the Democrat, Al Gore, speaking at the Salvation Army Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In other words, in an otherwise often stormy presidential campaign, one consistent consensus point for both candidates was their wish to create an “even playing field” where, regulated by faith-friendly national laws, federal government agencies responsible for federal grants would be prohibited from discriminating against qualified religious nonprofit community-service organizations.⁴
- 7 This sentiment of consensus was not particularly new, following not only on previous 1996-2000 charitable choice laws, signed by Bill Clinton, but also on subsequent support within the Democratic party, which included the First Lady and future presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton.⁵ This continued bi-partisan support for a faith-based policy reinforces the assertion by faith-based pioneers like Stanley Carlson-Thies⁶ and John Dilulio that, in reality, faith-based policy has been the product of a consensual, non-partisan, long-term process, beginning in the Clinton administration, and subsequently supported by presidential candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush in 2000, John Kerry and Bush in 2004, and both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in 2008.⁷ The salient fact to underline here, then, is that in 1999 and 2000, the call for support of faith-based programs and charitable choice laws was not a specifically right-wing battle cry. On the contrary, it was a policy which had appeal not only across a relatively broad political

spectrum, but also one which had the approval of approximately 70% of the American people.⁸

- 8 To construct the proper framework for understanding how 9/11 played a role in the Bush administration's failure to apply such policy, we must briefly chart the increasingly apparent partisan antagonism in Congress leading up to September, 2001, concerning Bush's faith-based program. In this light, it is first useful to return to the controversial circumstances which surrounded Bush's election. Dilulio, for example, maintains that the Florida vote-count controversy⁹ and the subsequent fallout affected the pre-9/11 Bush White House politically to a degree that has yet to be duly appreciated, even by careful observers.¹⁰

Bush had sought the office as a centrist/compassionate conservative" who had distanced himself explicitly from the "destructive" idea that merely cutting government was next to godliness. Upon entering office in January 2001, he faced a no-honeymoon Congress. Many Democrats, even centrists, were in full partisan attack mode. Congressional Republicans and their conservative loyalists were ready to rally to the new president's defense. They did, but at a price.¹¹

- 9 It was not simply, as some analysts maintained, Republican religious extremists who sabotaged any possibility of success for faith-based policy under Bush, but it was also a predetermined objective of the Democrats.
- 10 Thus, as the Democrats were not about to give Bush any kind of honeymoon or grace period, Stanley Carlson-Thies recounts that it quickly became the general sentiment that "nothing concerning faith-based policy was going to come easily or at all."¹² For his part, Dilulio remembers a Democratic leader in Congress who told him (apologetically) in February 2001, that "there is no desire to let the president get credit or win big through compromise [and that] the charitable choice consensus would remain buried for some time to come [...] Whatever the president says about [faith-based programs], the focus through 2004 will be on what the people on his right [in the House] and other extremists say about them."¹³ However, we might add that political use of religious issues constituted a major strategy for even less extreme Republican strategists who, reciprocally, wanted to use such issues to keep the Democrats on the defensive and to force them into opposition.¹⁴
- 11 Secondly, to clearly understand the specificity of the growing antagonism between Democrats and Republicans, it is necessary to clarify what Dilulio insinuated in the above assertion that conservative loyalists rallied "at a price." Here we can note that members of the religious right, who were critics of Bush's centrist message in his faith-based plan, essentially toed the line during the presidential campaign.¹⁵ However, once Bush was elected, the right-wing extremists who wanted to challenge any centrist, bi-partisan approach were quick to go public with their demands. The Bush administration was thus subject to pressures to frontally assault the Court's neutrality doctrine,¹⁶ to alter existing charitable choice laws, and to create new laws so that federal funding could be utilized for proselytizing. Furthermore, they demanded that Bush provide the administrators of faith-based organizations with the absolute right to employ only persons of the same religious beliefs and tenets as the administrator in federally funded social service programs. Dilulio (and his Faith-Based Office) soon found himself in a messy battle with Republican staff from the House of Representatives.
- 12 Waging a campaign of disinformation in order to undermine the original plan forwarded by the White House, these Republicans distributed diverse versions of potential Bush faith

bills and, in particular, shared passages with the Christian press and the Washington media.¹⁷ The pseudo-bills contained several provisions that directly challenged the constitutional neutrality principles embodied by charitable choice laws. By March 2001, these Hill-led antics had largely eclipsed the original bipartisan plan¹⁸ described above. It was in large part through the titanesque effort and resistance of Dilulio that his concerns about the House bill's controversial provisions finally, albeit briefly, became in June 2001 the official position forwarded by the White House. As a result, by mid-July 2001, the beliefs-and-tenets language had been dropped from the bill and subsequent efforts to reintroduce it were blocked. All the same, after such a battle (that Dilulio qualified as surreal) the final draft bill, HR 7, the Community Solutions Act of 2001, presented numerous problems for both Democratic and Republican charitable choice-minded religious pluralists and pragmatists, including Dilulio.¹⁹

- 13 HR 7 was eventually passed by the House in July but it was acknowledged as having been a partisan push the entire way, despite efforts by Dilulio and some members of Congress for bipartisanship.²⁰ In short, the bill had become portrayed as a sop to the religious right. It was also clear that the bill would have great difficulty getting through the Senate which had, since the spring of 2001, a Democratic majority. Such were the partisan forces as they were pitted one against the other in the summer of 2001 and the expansion of charitable choice through an act of legislation had little chance of ever going anywhere.

9/11: the Last and Lost Chance for Effectiveness

- 14 The faith-based and community initiative aimed at reorienting the administration of social aid to a degree not attained by any other strategy undertaken in recent memory. Therefore, the return of Congress in September 2001 represented a crucial moment in determining what the future would hold for a policy of critical importance to American governance. It was a period when any kind of success in Congress demanded the utmost attention, time, precision, administrative flair and political clout that the Bush administration could muster.
- 15 However, as presidential insider Michael Gerson made abundantly clear,²¹ the first and most obvious result that 9/11 had on the Bush administration was to distract the president's attention away from these critical challenges. And based on his experience in the White House, Gerson adds that only a small reduction in an American president's attention time can have relatively dramatic results (and this was not a small reduction). The result was that "the post-9/11 reality changed things for the Bush presidency, including putting domestic and social policy on hold for months".²² For example, from the time the United States geared up its war on terrorism in 2001-2003, there was no significant faith-based legislative success, no new big tax incentives for charitable giving, and no expansion of charitable choice. After 9/11, as many commentators have noted, faith-based interest seemed to evaporate as Congress and the administration focused on terrorism. It seemed to have disappeared from the news and from the list of things to do for both supporter and opponent alike. It is both a concrete and symbolic gesture that shortly after 9/11, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was moved out and across the street to the Executive Office Building.
- 16 Beyond the obvious distraction from faith-based policy that 9/11 and the war on terrorism represented, certain other transformations in the Bush administration's approach to such policy subsequently became apparent. The most notable is the

movement rightward as the administration rode on the wave of support that Bush initially enjoyed as a war president and the consequent consolidation of his power. Instead of focusing on creating any kind of political consensus, the faith-based policy under Bush seemed to become all the more part of the simplistic vision of good and evil cited by Daly and a pawn on the battlefield of the growing blue state/red state culture war. This was compounded by the president's increasingly confused (at the least) and threatening (at the worst) presentation of the policy.

- 17 The confusion is, no doubt, due to the image/perception that Bush always gave as a leader where there often was a blurring of the public president and the private, evangelical man.²³ However, the evangelical Bush (as opposed to the president) seemed to progressively come to the surface after 9/11. Note, for example, that in his first presidential campaign speech on July 22, 1999, "The Duty of Hope," Bush clearly outlines a centrist vision very much like Gore's:

In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people, we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities, and community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives. [...]

Sometimes the armies of compassion are outnumbered and outflanked and outgunned. [...] It is not enough to call for volunteering. We will keep a commitment to pluralism, not discriminating for or against Methodists or Mormons or Muslims, or good people of no faith at all. Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it must welcome them as partners, not resent them as rivals.²⁴

- 18 The striking resonance between the speeches by Bush and Gore is later reinforced, on 29 January, 2001, when, speaking at the signing ceremony for the creation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), Bush underlined that his administration "will not fund the religious activities of any group, but when people of faith provide social services, we will not discriminate against them."²⁵ Yet later, in his State of the Union Address on February 27, 2001, Bush reiterated key themes from "The Duty of Hope" speech: "Government cannot be replaced by charities or volunteers. And government should not fund religious activities."²⁶ Another notable example of Bush's centrist vision may be seen in his comments at the National Prayer Breakfast on February 1, 2001, where he stressed that our "plan will not favor religious over nonreligious institutions. As president I'm interested in what's constitutional, and I'm interested in what works."²⁷ Finally, in a speech at the University of Notre Dame on May 20, 2001, Bush himself argued that his initiative was part of an evolutionary process in America's "determined assault" on poverty, acknowledging policy successes achieved by Johnson's War on Poverty and Clinton's offensive against welfare dependency.²⁸ In sum, Dilulio advances that during the period of the first 180 days after the announcement of the creation of the OFBCI, Bush himself made numerous public statements which plainly reiterated and underlined the centrist position:²⁹ "President Bush never publicly – nor, in my presence privately – retreated one inch from these principles."³⁰
- 19 Compare the above references, then, to later and far more alarming assurances that Bush (the evangelical) seemed to give to a far more specific American public concerning the predominance of one specific type of religion in his vision of faith-based policy. This vision is illustrated 16 months after 9/11, when in the 2003 State of the Union Address he declared "For so many in our country—the homeless and the fatherless, the addicted—the need is great. Yet there's power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people [...] I ask you to pass both my Faith-Based Initiative and the Citizen Service Act, to encourage acts of compassion that can transform

America one heart and one soul at a time.”³¹ Here, Arthur Farnsley points out that Bush gave evangelical conservatives “a wink and a nod.” Farnsley finds the nod in the view that “social problems are not caused by institutional defects in the government or marketplace but by individual irresponsibility—hence the solution is to change hearts and minds one by one.”³² He then writes that the wink was “to a conservative, evangelical moral vision of transformation. Anyone who has ever attended a camp meeting knows that the ‘wonderworking power’ is in ‘the blood of the Lamb’.”³³ Though admittedly any individual, including an outspoken president, has the right to his or her personal beliefs, Farnsley’s analysis demonstrates how Bush could easily be seen as insidiously using (or hiding behind) an allegedly pluralist policy to empower a more hidden, ultra-conservative, and evangelical agenda.³⁴

- 20 We can note that both Carlson-Thies and Gerson insisted that in order to properly evaluate Bush, one has to see what he did and not listen to what he said.³⁵ All the same, given the strength of the perceived persona of Bush in the minds of many Americans, this argument about the “real” Bush is somewhat beside the point. And unfortunately for the OFBCI, any possibility of checking the growing negative perception of faith-based policy under Bush after 9/11 was compounded by another facet of the collateral damage created that day—John Dilulio’s leave-taking.
- 21 The interest to be found in the relation between Dilulio’s status in the White House and 9/11 is not only in the fact that he was so central to the debate surrounding the creation of faith-based policy before that fateful day, but also because 9/11 coincides precisely with the day that he was leaving his post as director of the White House Office. It is true that his departure was programmed, as he had agreed to become the Faith Tsar only on the condition that he be able to leave after six months (Dilulio did not seek the position and agreed to serve only because of his dedication to the issue). It is also true that he actually stayed two more months than was planned. The fact remains, though, that just as he had cleaned out his office and was saying his goodbyes, the attacks on the World Trade Center took place. And while his departure was not the result of 9/11, the timing of it and his subsequent absence in the increasingly extremist, post 9/11 Bush White House can be argued to be of great importance.
- 22 First of all, given the distraction that 9/11 presented at a time when Bush’s faith-based program faced critical challenges, it could be argued that Dilulio could not have chosen a worse time to leave. As we have seen, Dilulio writes in *Godly Republic* that the far-reaching effects of the circumstances which surrounded Bush’s odd election have not yet been fully realized and analyzed. To a certain extent, the departure of Dilulio, carried out in such a programmed way, incited by its very nature little or no comment and seems to obscure the integral role he might have played. Though in my discussion with Dilulio, he seemed oblivious to this role, there are reasons for making a case concerning its possibility. Foremost among them is that Dilulio is a man Bush liked, respected and could talk straight with. In certain key ways, they were of the same ilk. Bush is of course known for his homey, sincere and direct way of speaking his mind. Known as an academic with impeccable credentials, Dilulio is also a streetwise 300 pound strongman from South Philadelphia who tells anyone what he thinks (an indication of Dilulio’s hominess can be seen in his highly academic yet readable *Godly Republic*, where the fact that he can bench-press 400 lbs. just naturally seems to appear in the text). Furthermore, the story of his stint as director is one of a man standing his ground not only against immense pressures

from Congress, but also from the likes of Karl Rove, Andy Card, Jim Bridgeland, and even the president himself.

- 23 A testimony to Dilulio's worth can thus be seen in the president's response to his resignation: "he asked me to at least stay on for at least one more year ... and then we'd see."³⁶ Moreover, as Dilulio conceded, he knew that if he had accepted, he would have stayed on, in reality, for the entire 4-year term.³⁷ In general, the respect, esteem, and power Dilulio held in the eyes of his colleagues is underlined in the following quote from *Godly Republic*:

[On my departure] White House senior colleagues and other staff members showered me with warm notes, most with a please-just-stay plea or subtext. Bridgeland described me as a "sage and a saint," a phrase that several White House communicators echoed. Even West Wing colleagues with whom I had frequently disagreed wrote or spoke many kind words, both in private and in public.

Karl Rove was no exception. There was between us, then and thereafter (including after my much-publicized 2002 criticisms that centered on his dominant West Wing role), no personal animosity but only the deep policy disagreements to be expected between a Philly-bred, self-styled New Democrat public intellectual on a civic-religious mission and the most capable Republican national political operative in a hundred years. Back in August 19, 2001, he told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and repeated to others, that I was the main reason, next to the president, why "faith-based had advanced at all." He called me "the guiding spirit of this" and predicted that I would continue to play "a big, important role."³⁸

- 24 This is not to take away from Jim Towey, Dilulio's replacement, but he had neither the charisma, nor the force of Dilulio. And it is after Dilulio's departure that the office was moved out of the White House. Also it is under Towey's watch that the integrity of the office became compromised³⁹ and gained, in the words of Gary Wills, "the reputation of being a slush fund for right-wing evangelicals".⁴⁰ Perhaps with Dilulio's imposing presence, Bush would have remained more focused on applying correctly the policy, rather than just more or less paying lip service to the ideal that it represented.⁴¹
- 25 Furthermore, Dilulio's presence could have conceivably constituted a check against the perceived growing extremism after 9/11 of both the faith-based policy under Bush as well as his administration in general. Dilulio could also have continued to offer a constant centrist voice to a policy that after 9/11 the president often presented in, as we have seen, debatable language.
- 26 Admittedly, the impact that I attribute to the positive role that Dilulio played and might have gone on to play in the White House after 9/11 does contradict some evaluations of him as director. For example, the authors of *Of Little Faith*, assert that "the hiring of Dilulio was not the best choice and that probably a more right-wing and evangelical-friendly director would have been more productive."⁴² Perhaps at the time the book was elaborated in 2003, this evaluation might have seemed tenable. The authors could not have known to what degree there would be a culture war or the degree to which the Bush administration would be identified with a polarized nation of blue and red states. Nor could they know that not long after Dilulio's departure, any staff in the White House would have to be card-carrying Republicans.⁴³ In other words, his role as counterweight after 9/11 to extremist factions within the administration as well as on the Hill could arguably have changed the complexion of how faith-based policy came to be identified. Also, the authors' evaluation of Dilulio in *Of Little Faith* seems to downplay the idea of the pluralist, centrist approach to faith-based policy that Bush was supposedly forwarding before 9/11 and that the American public, correspondingly, was favorable to. It thus

could be strongly argued that the greatest chance of any kind of consensus and effectiveness (whether the authors or even Dilulio knew it or not) was through the Democrat's continued presence in the White House. If we can agree with Rove, then, that Dilulio has certainly continued to play a role as expert author, teacher and commentator on faith-based issues, we can also argue that this particular role is not as important as the one he might have played had he accepted the president's request to remain director.

Conclusion

- 27 It is useful to close with the “what if” case of Dilulio as he provides a concluding focus for evaluating the events (related directly or indirectly to 9/11) that affected the Bush administration and its relationship to Congress. We are first confronted with a scenario which enables us to conjecture on how the dismal performance on most fronts of the faith-based initiative under Bush might have been otherwise. More importantly, though, Dilulio and the “what if” scenario serves to put into stark relief the circumstances and forces behind an increasingly polarized debate that ultimately crippled and limited the potential effectiveness of Bush's faith-based policy after 9/11. And finally, the case of Dilulio helps to explain why Barack Obama's White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships continues to stir debate.⁴⁴ Despite the well-known religious pluralism of Obama,⁴⁵ it is clear that the post-9/11 and post-Dilulio faith-based policy carried out by the Bush administration remains for any subsequent kind of effort a stigma, poisoning such effort with the traits of a bad pedigree.

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NOTES

1. Daly, Lew. *God's Economy*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 3.
2. This was one of the first priorities when Bush became president. The driving force behind the Bush initiative was to create a "level playing field" where faith-based organizations could compete on an equal footing with secular organizations for government funding of social aid programs. The federal government was attempting to encourage and support the participation of faith-based organizations in fighting crime, drug addiction, and poverty, while also strengthening families and neighborhoods.
3. Gore, Albert A. "Speech Delivered to the Salvation Army," *Site of the Center for Public Justice* [on line], 25 May 1999, <www.cpjustice.org>, (accessed on 8 May 2009).
4. John Dilulio underlines that Bush and Gore were not breaking new common ground: "The first law of this sort appeared as a provision (Section 104) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, better known as the 1996 federal welfare reform law. The provision was termed 'charitable choice.' It had two fundamental purposes: first, citizens who received federal aid were henceforth to have wider choices among federally funded providers of financial aid or social services, including religious charities and other religious nonprofit organizations; and second, otherwise qualified faith-based organizations, even small, grassroots, community-serving ministries like the ones that both Bush and Gore would later tout during the 2000 presidential campaign, were henceforth to be permitted to administer federal antipoverty and other social services programs on the same basis that all other nonprofit organizations were permitted to do so. A second charitable choice provision was added to the Community Services block grant program when it was reauthorized in 1998. In 2000, a third charitable choice provision was added to the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grant, and a fourth one was added to the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Hopelessness program." in Dilulio, John. *Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-based Future*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007, pp. 84-85.
5. For example, in January, 2005, she asked "who is more likely to go out onto a street to save some poor, at-risk child than ... someone who believes in the divinity of every person, who sees God at work in the lives of even the most hopeless and left-behind of our children? And that's why we need to not have a false division or debate about the role of faith-based institutions; we need to just do it and provide the support that is needed on an ongoing basis", Clinton, Hillary in "Hillary Clinton on Supporting Faith-Based Institutions at the Ten Point National Leadership Foundation," *Site of the Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs: Georgetown University* [on line], 19 January 2005, <berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/hillary-clinton-on-supporting-faith-based-institutions-at-the-ten-point-national-leadership-foundation>, (accessed on 5 July 2011).
6. Stanley Carlson-Thies is a longtime theoretician and specialist in faith-based policy and the designer of the plan used for implementation of faith-based policy during the Bush Administration.
7. That there is a consensual continuity in the development of faith-based policy is consequently expressed in Carlson-Thies' recent writings in which his historical analysis of such policy is presented within the framework of Versions 1, 2 and 3: Version I corresponding to the policy during the Clinton era, II the Bush era, and III, the present day Obama administration. See pages 945 to 947 in Stanley Carlson-Thies' article, "Faith-Based Initiative 2.0: The Bush Faith-Based and Community Initiative," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 32.3, Summer 2009.
8. We might note that: 1) this policy, in some form or another, is still supported by 69% of the American public as of November, 2009 and; 2) just 25% oppose allowing faith-based groups to

seek government funding to help the needy (“Faith-Based Programs Still Popular, Less Visible,” *Site of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* [on line], 16 November 2009, <www.pewforum.org/2009/11/16/faith-based-programs-still-popular-less-visible>, (accessed on 5 July 2011).) Also, as the Pew Forum’s U.S. Religious Landscape Survey demonstrates (conducted from May 8 to August 13, 2007), the United States remains a widely devout, religiously diverse, and religiously tolerant nation: 9 in 10 Americans believe in the existence of God; 3 out of 4 pray at least once a week; 7 out of 10 say they believe many religions, not just their faith, can lead to salvation; and more than two-thirds are not dogmatic, saying there is more than one way to interpret belief. The study is based on telephone interviews with over 35,000 Americans. It is therefore not surprising that the American mass public favors faith-friendly church-state approaches and public policies (“Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Releases First National Survey Probing Specifics Of Support for Faith-Based Funding,” *Site of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* [on line], 10 April 2001, <www.pewforum.org/2001/04/10/the-pew-forum-on-religion-and-public-life-releases-first-national-survey-probing-specifics-of-support-for-faith-based-funding>, (accessed on 20 February 2007).

9. The Supreme Court’s five-to-four majority opinion in *Bush v. Gore* reflected the political tendencies of the judges: the Court’s conservative majority endorsed the decision while its liberal, Democratic minority dissented.

10. Dilulio Jr., John J. Personal interview with the author, 11 May 2010.

11. Dilulio Jr., John J. *Godly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

12. Carlson-Thies, Stanley. Personal interview with the author, 3 August 2011.

13. Dilulio Jr., John J. *Godly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

14. Describing a conversation with one such Republican, Dilulio notes that “Far from capitalizing on bipartisan church-state sentiments and mass support, faith-based initiatives, the strategist summarized, should contain proposals that ‘force Democrats’ into opposition and make it easier to depict Democrats in Congress, even the faith-friendly centrists among them, as America’s ‘anti-God squad’, in Dilulio Jr., John J. *Godly Republic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114. Thus, passing Bush’s No Child Left Behind education bill essentially defined the extent of congressional Republican support for any major component of Bush’s bi-partisan compassion agenda. Even here, though, they were only willing to offer support if the bill was guaranteed as the first and last major bipartisan compromise.

15. For example, both Michael Gerson and John Dilulio explained to me how Bush’s “Duty of Hope” speech drew intensely negative reactions from the Republican Party’s right wings, whether they were “tax-hating libertarians” or Bible beating extremists. Dilulio, who worked on the speech, added that it went through a tumultuous process of more than sixteen rewrites. In short, “numerous Republican conservative activists hated the center-hugging compassionate conservatism” (Personal Interview with the author, 11 May 2011).

16. This is also called the equal treatment or equal protection doctrine. This perspective is opposed to what is often termed the doctrine of separationism. Its relationship to the question of faith-based social aid policy is summed up by Carlson-Thies in his book, *A Revolution of Compassion*: “No-aid separationism told government to try to be fair to all faiths by excluding them from all government support. The result was discrimination against faith-based programs and organization. The new ‘equal treatment’ strategy instead requires government to be even-handed ... If equal treatment was the right way to interpret the First Amendment’s twin requirements to promote religious freedom while avoiding establishment of religion, then it was time for a new guideline for government funding of social services provided by other organizations. It could not be right to exclude religious providers simply because they were religious or to require them to become as nonreligious as the price for accepting government funds”, in Carlson-Thies, Stanley, and Donaldson, Dave. *A Revolution of Compassion*, Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2004, pp. 48-49. We can also add the explanation by Richard Nathan, Co-Director of

the Nelson Rockefeller Institute of Government, that “the laws and regulations leading up to and including Charitable Choice and the Faith-Based and Community Initiative were made possible by a dramatic change in the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment,” in Nathan, Richard. “Opening Remarks—The State of the Law: Legal Development Affecting Government Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations,” *The Round Table on Religion and Social Welfare Policy* [on line], 5 December 2007, (accessed on 23 June 2011).

17. For example, on July 10, 2001, a front-page *Washington Post* story summarized a Salvation Army internal document which claimed that the White House had entered into a secret deal with the Salvation Army. Allegedly, this arrangement granted the organization a federal waiver exempting it from state and local employment antidiscrimination laws covering sexual orientation. However, as Dilulio recounts, “it later became clear to everyone that the information within this document was false and that there had never been any kind of deal and that no such deal had ever even been contemplated,” in Dilulio Jr., John J. *Goldly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

18. As far as the actual implementation of the policy is concerned, Carlson-Thies outlined how the six-month plan for 2001 called for the CNS (Corporation for National Service) and the OFBCI to begin to work jointly and incrementally to put charitable choice into practice (Carlson-Thies, personal interview). Purposely absent from this plan was any new legislation that might deliberately or inadvertently undermine or inflame the charitable choice consensus or go beyond what is discussed as the Supreme Court’s neutrality principles. Specifically, the plan had three bipartisan objectives: “studying an implementing existing charitable choice laws, match-funding religious secular or public-private partnerships, and seeding OFBCI counterparts in mayors’ offices across the country,” in Dilulio Jr., John J. *Goldly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

19. Dilulio notes that “having set out to build on bipartisan charitable choice laws that empowered religious groups to partner with government in serving the poor, the debate over the beliefs and tenets language, had turned the Bush faith bill into a clash about religious organizations being somehow coerced by federal law into hiring gays and lesbians,” in Dilulio Jr., John J. *Goldly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

20. Daly observes that “this bill was the House Republicans major legislation in support of the Faith-Based Initiative. Primarily it was a vehicle to expand charitable choice into new program areas including juvenile crime domestic violence, housing, and assistance. HR 7’s charitable choice provisions were more aggressive than existing law in several sensitive areas. It introduced more specific language permitting federal preemption of state anti-discrimination laws under charitable choice, and it weakened beneficiary protections against proselytization. Another change introduced later, of critical interest to religious conservatives, was a provision permitting the executive branch to ‘voucherize’ grant programs without congressional approval, thereby removing constitutional barriers to government funding of otherwise prohibited religious activities and content, on the principle of rotation beneficiary choice quotation. The child care and development block Grant established the first such religion oriented voucher program in the early 1990s, which was never challenged in the courts. In 2002, however, the Supreme Court (in *Selman versus Simons-Harris*) upheld the Cleveland school voucher program that included religious schools [...]” in Daly, Lew, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

21. Gerson, Michael. Personal interview with the author, 12 May 2010.

22. Dilulio Jr., John J., “Afterword,” in Maranto, Robert, Lansford, Tom, and Johnson, Jeremy (eds.). *Judging Bush*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 298.

23. This, we might add, may be seen not only as a reflection of Bush’s growing confidence in his power base, but also of his being an evangelical Christian. While it is true that there have been other evangelical presidents before Bush, the problem (and what distinguishes him from his predecessors) is, as Garry Wills underlines, that “his conversion came late and had a political aspect to it...” Thus, Wills also dryly observes that Bush talks “evangelical talk as no other

president has, including Jimmy Carter...,” in Wills, Garry. *Head and Heart*, New York, Penguin Press, 2007, p. 498.

24. Bush, George W. “The Duty of Hope Speech,” *The Center for Public Justice* [on line], 22 July 1999, <www.cpjustice.org>, (accessed on 6 July 2011).

25. Bush, George W. “Executive Order 13198—Agency Responsibilities With Respect to Faith-Based and Community Initiatives,” *Site of The American Presidency Project* [on line], 29 January 2001, <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=45708>, (accessed on 8 June 2011).

26. Bush, George W. “State of the Union Address,” *Site of The American Presidency Project* [on line], 27 February 2001, <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29643>, (accessed on 8 June 2011).

27. Bush, George W. “Address at the National Prayer Breakfast,” *Site of The American Presidency Project* [on line], 1 February 2001, <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=45721&st=&st1=>, (accessed on 10 June 2011).

28. Bush, George W. “Commencement Address at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana,” *Site of The American Presidency Project* [on line], 20 May 2001, <www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=45893>, (accessed on 10 June 2011).

29. Dilulio, Gerson and Carlson-Thies all agree that Bush began in 2001 with a consensual bipartisan plan that respected religious pluralism.

30. Dilulio Jr., John J. *Godly Republic*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

31. Farnsley II, Arthur E. “Book Review of *Faith-Based Politics: What Congregations Can and Can’t Do*,” *The Christian Century*, 24 August 2004, p. 27.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

34. Bush’s second inauguration provides another very public illustration of this, where religious touches were provided not only in Bush’s speech, but also by performances of a hymn, “God of Our Fathers,” as well as of a song written by the sponsor of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, former Senator John Ashcroft (“Bush Pushes ‘Faith-Based’ Initiative during Meeting with Black Pastors,” *Church and State*, 58.3, March 2005, p. 17). The song, *Let the Eagle Soar*, contains lyrics such as “Let the eagle soar/Like she’s never soared before/From rocky coast to golden shore/Let the mighty eagle soar/Soar with healings in her wings/As the land beneath her sings/ ‘Only God, no other kings’,” in “Bush Pushes ‘Faith-Based’ Initiative during Meeting with Black Pastors,” *op. cit.*, p. 17.

35. Gerson, Michael. Personal interview with the author, 12 May 2010; Carlson-Thies, Stanley. Personal interview with the author, 5 August 2011.

36. Dilulio Jr., John J. Personal interview with the author, 11 May 2010.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Dilulio Jr., John J. *Godly Republic*, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-137.

39. For example, a federal lawsuit (Western District of Wisconsin) by the Freedom from Religion Foundation charged Towey and others with unlawful political activities pursued in violation of the Establishment clause.

40. Wills, Garry, *op. cit.*, p. 502. The bitter disillusionment expressed in White House insider David Kuo’s book, *Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction*, also covers this period. Kuo describes at length and in detail how the West Wing came to cheaply politicize the president’s compassion agenda.

41. In August 2001, the White House released *Unlevel Playing Field*, the administrative audit of federal agencies ordered by the president when he took office. Nonetheless, effectiveness was very limited and, as Gerson and Carlson-Thies both told me in interviews, there was a lot of talk and report writing, but not much action. Despite this lack of effectiveness, at least administratively there was some progress made, as an infrastructure of government agencies was set up and new laws were adopted. In 2007, Richard Nathan provided the following retrospective outlining such progress: “The Bush Administration has ... extended the reach of the

provisions [in Charitable Choice] via executive order to 11 federal agencies. Indeed, the Bush Administration has embarked on an aggressive strategy to use the administrative powers of the federal government ... [and] has created an institutional foundation through the White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives and companion offices in nearly a dozen federal agencies involved in domestic policy and international humanitarian aid. State and local governments have increasingly pursued similar objectives. More than half the states have adopted recent laws that specifically reference faith-based organizations. And, more than half the states have implemented administrative steps to engage faith-based groups as social service providers,” in Nathan, Richard, *op. cit.*

42. Black, Amy E., Koopman, Douglas L., and Ryden, David K. *Of Little Faith: The Politics of George W. Bush's Faith-Based Initiatives*, Washington DC, Georgetown University Press, 2004, p. 197.

43. Dilulio states that within a couple of years after his departure, “White House personnel, including my old office, would be told in no uncertain terms that they needed to be registered Republicans in order to keep working there; but in 2001, that would have seemed impossible,” in Dilulio Jr, John J. *Godly Republic, op. cit.*, p. 117.

44. For a forceful argument of how American culture may be seen as moving dangerously to the right, see Susan George's *Hijacking America: How the Religious and Secular Right Changed What Americans Think*, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 2009. For a criticism aimed more specifically at faith-based policy under both Bush and Obama, see Barry Lynn's *Piety and Politics: The Right-wing Assault on Religious Freedom*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 2007.

45. For an excellent and concise analysis of the characteristics of Obama's pluralism, see Stephen Mansfield's *The Faith of Barack Obama*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2008.

ABSTRACTS

One of the major policy innovations implemented by newly elected George W. Bush was his Faith-Based and Community Initiative. The objective of the Initiative was to create a “level playing field” where faith-based organizations could compete with secular organizations for government funding of social aid programs.

This analysis advances that the timing of 9/11 and its relation to the developments within American government conspired to create substantial collateral damage concerning the effectiveness of the policy. While acknowledging that 9/11 did not instigate debate concerning the policy, the study evaluates how it nevertheless was in a number of ways a catalyst in: 1) the intensification of conflict concerning such policy and 2) the Bush administration's failure to effectively apply it.

In order to show how 9/11 had an influence on the development and execution of the policy, a very short but necessary description of the background of the program leading up to the event constitutes the first part of the analysis. Subsequently, a second part evaluates how 9/11 had an impact on faith-based policy and its performance. The study highlights one of the most important inner-circle players on Bush's faith-based policy team at the time of the attacks, John Dilulio Jr., the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. I concentrate particularly on Dilulio as his case provides a unique and efficient vehicle for illustrating both the chain of events leading up to 9/11 as well as the collateral damage to faith-based policy.

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Mots-clés: 9/11, the Bush administration, the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, religion, social aid

Subjects: The negative impact of 9/11 on the Bush administration's Faith-Based and Community Initiative ; the positive role of John J. Dilulio Jr., the first Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives ; The political exploitation and manipulation of a social aid policy

Chronological index: Les débuts de la présidence de Bush

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