

## George W. Bush Funds Faith-Based Fascism

One of the major vehicles which George W. Bush has used to recruit the foot-soldiers in his state-based religion is his White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Bush created this office in 2002 by Executive Order, after the Congress refused to pass legislation which would permit him to transfer government programs to government-paid private religious entities.

Through this vehicle, the Bush Administration has handed out billions of dollars (\$1.17 billion in 2003 and \$2 billion in 2004), according to its official reports, to church groups and charities which are now beholden to the Federal government. So far, the agencies dispensing these funds are the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, Education, and Agriculture, and the Agency for International Development. The White House claims that up to 10% of all Federal grants (excluding the formula-based grants to states) went to “faith-based organizations” in 2004, up from 8.1% in 2003.

That’s a lot of money for the GOP’s “Get Out the Vote” fund (or, perhaps, “fundeeds”).

President Bush addressed 250-300 representatives of “faith-based organizations” in Washington on March 1, on the eve of the vote by the House of Representatives on a bill which would permit religious organizations receiving job-training grants to make hiring decisions on the basis of employees’ religious beliefs—that is, the bill would exclude religious groups from the anti-discrimination laws enacted under civil rights legislation. Bush threatened, that should the House not pass the bill—“The Job Training Improvement Act,” which Bush is marketing as “charitable choice legislation”—he will continue to put the bill’s provisions into effect, under an Executive Order he issued last year. The Job Training Improvement Act did pass on March 3.

Bush’s speech to those he called “leaders in the armies of compassion” was one long threat to mow down those who refuse to “change America” along his desires. The “culture” of opposition in government that is unfriendly to faith-based organizations will be taken on. Bush said that states and municipalities are dragging their feet on the faith-based front. I told the governors they need to set up faith-based offices, when I met them on Feb. 28, he said.

—Nancy Spannaus

chief coordinator of the Bush national strategy for mobilizing religious mobs and demoralizing minority voters.

### Target: Congress

During the first George W. Bush Administration, Congress was for the most part neutralized. As a result, the blatant

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In 1998, the year after Reed came aboard Enron’s team, Enron lobbyists met with DeLay at his Texas home, and planned with him a national campaign to roll back Federal energy regulations. Enron paid \$750,000 to two of DeLay’s lieutenants—his chief of staff, Ed Buckham—an ordained evangelical minister—and ARMPAC consultant Karl Gallant, who together had formed a private company, Alexander Consulting Group, to run a nationwide crusade for electricity deregulation. The Enron-DeLay arrangement was disguised under the front-group name, Americans for Affordable Electricity. Enron soon hired the DeLay men directly, Buckham for a total of \$370,000, Gallant for \$200,000.

By 2002, Enron and California and thousands of piracy victims were bankrupt . . . and DeLay was crowned House Majority Leader, the wielder of Congressional power without historical precedent.

Buckham, Gallant, and a crew from DeLay, Inc. and The Fellowship continue to run the Alexander Strategy Group as a cosmically connected, nominally private lobbying arm of the DeLay Congressional dictatorship. One Alexander Strategy Group partner, Brian Darling, became a Senate aide—but resigned when he was exposed as the author of the notorious memo on how the Republicans could take opportunistic political advantage of the 2005 Terri Schiavo “feeding tube” case. Republicans had earlier accused Democrats of concocting the memo.

lies that led to the Iraq War, the Abu Ghraib torture policy, and the Ashcroft assault on civil liberties, went essentially unchallenged.

In the Senate, the presiding officer, Vice President Dick Cheney, has been known as “the woodshed”; members who get out of line are sent to him to be whipped.

DeLay has ruled the House of Representatives, installing his own former aide, Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.), as House Speaker in 1999, and making himself Majority Leader in 2002. Known as “the Hammer,” DeLay’s office is decorated with an Old-South-style bullwhip.

- His sponsors created slush funds for secret contributions to be given out to Republican candidates who would be under his sway, and withheld from those who crossed him.
- He took control of the Texas legislature (his candidates getting allegedly illegal corporate campaign contributions that got three DeLay aides indicted), in order to rig Texas Congressional District lines to increase his power in the House.
- The House Ethics Committee repeatedly admonished DeLay, so the Republican chairman of the committee was fired, and two other Republican committee members were kicked out, all replaced by DeLay allies; the House ethics rules were changed to protect DeLay from challenges.
- Democrats have been excluded from the conference