

Georgetown University

The Anatomy of a Public Servant: John J. DiIulio, Jr in The White House Office of Faith-Based  
and Community Initiatives

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“Politics ought to be a search for a remedy.” -Arthur Schlesinger, Jr

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**Preface:**

With this thesis, I hope to provide an in-depth look at an overlooked, but integral actor in the ongoing debate in America over the role of religion in politics. This actor is Dr. John DiIulio, the first and former director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Through an examination of his biography, I hope to demonstrate that his experiences with the urban poor as a criminologist as well as his Catholic re-birth, led to his natural support for the Faith-Based Initiative. I argue that DiIulio's shifting career focuses from crime to religious social services is indicative of a nation-wide shift in politics to reflect the current Fourth Great Awakening. Within this Fourth Great Awakening, Catholics pose to contribute the great moral influence in American culture; however, some of these Catholics' efforts are met with opposition from the more traditional American moral influence, the Christian Evangelical Conservatives. DiIulio, as an evangelical Catholic, is a case study for the tensions between Catholics and the Christian Conservatives, as he was challenged in his office by the compassionate conservatives on moral religious grounds as well in the partisan political realm.

## **Chapter 1 : Introduction**

### **President Bush's Vision of and for the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

In a speech entitled, "Rallying the Armies of Compassion" delivered on January 30, 2001, President George W. Bush said, "America is rich materially, but there remains too much poverty and despair amidst abundance.... In this blueprint, I outline my agenda to enlist, equip, enable, empower and expand the heroic works of faith-based and community groups across America." In an effort to "fundamentally change our country," President George W. Bush created, by executive order, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Giving life to his "compassionate conservatism" promises during the campaign, the establishment of this White House Office demonstrated a commitment to the cause of federal assistance for faith-based social assistance work. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) is designed to break down the regulatory barriers that prohibit federal grant support to religious and community organizations that provide successful service to at-risk youths, ex-offenders, the homeless, hungry, substance abusers , HIV/AIDS patients and welfare-to-work families.<sup>2</sup>

The first director of the new White House Office of Faith-Based and Community

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<sup>1</sup> Olasky, Marvin. "In from the Cold," *World*. (10 Feb. 2001) p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Towey, Jim. Director of the OFBCI "Message from Jim Towey"  
<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/message.html>>

Initiatives was John DiIulio. John DiIulio is a contemporary American public servant who has made his Catholicism an important influence intellectually as well as spiritually in his career. DiIulio's struggle in the OFBCI with the evangelical and conservative Protestant traditions demonstrates the continued challenges that Catholicism faces in the American political psyche. The differences between the two traditions' view of social services for the poor ultimately led DiIulio to be forced to make too many compromises that weakened his position in the partisan White House and led to his resignation only a few months after taking office .

I argue that Dr. John Dilulio's Catholic orientation has some degree of natural alliance with the Compassionate Conservatism that characterizes the Bush White House; however, the complete Catholic Social Justice package was never fully endorsed by the Administration and prompted a great deal of miscommunication that led to Dilulio's resignation from, in E.J. Dionne terms, "an Enlarged heart".

Three important factors contributed to the series of events leading to Dilulio's resignation. The first factor involves a closer look at the political and religious culture of the Fourth Great Awakening. The second factor involves a more in-depth analysis of Catholic Social Justice and how it differs methodologically from its Protestant counterpart "compassionate conservatism." The third factor examines bureaucratic and partisan obstacles faced by Dr. Dilulio as he suffered under the shift of political will for the faith-based initiative.

## **Chapter 2: History of the Movement**

### **OFBCI: Early Interest in a new role for religious social services**

Since the 1960's nearly all social services have been delivered by non-governmental organizations. These are funded on a contractual basis by the US Federal and local government giving rise to a “government-by-proxy” network of private organizations. The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives attempts to re-examine the prohibition of religious organizations from the funding that the government-by-proxy awards. Prior to the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiative, “pervasively sectarian” organizations were not provided with federal funds to carry out social services. This exclusion of religious organizations from federal social service programs is consistent with the traditional American practice of the separation of church and state. Little consensus existed in the government over what “pervasively sectarian” meant; however, a few norms indicated that these organizations were so religious in their mission and service that the two could not be separated.

The primary goals of the White House Office for Faith-Based Initiatives were articulated as a four pronged effort. The first of these four goals is the dissolution of the threshold exclusion of faith-based charities from competition for federal grants. Previously, these organizations were denied on the sole basis of their religious nature. Secondly, the OFBCI seeks to guarantee that the terms of the federal grant contract would not dilute the organization’s religious elements. These guarantees would ensure that a church would not have to remove religious symbols from the rooms in which social services were offered, or

prohibiting religious language to accompany the service. The third prong of the effort endeavors to establish clear guidelines for the grant that will not allow the federal money to be spent on religious practice. This would mean ensuring that the federal money will be spent on social services and not new hymnals. Lastly, the OFBCI seeks to protect the choice aspect of religious liberty that allows individuals in clear conscious the choice to select a religious based social service or a secular alternative. Among these four prongs, the OFBCI consciously balanced the demands of the religious organization with the first and second of its listed goals and with the requirements of the strict constructionists who value the strict separation of church and state.

The Faith-Based and Community Initiatives issue is not unique to President Bush. It originated on the federal level in 1996 as part of the Welfare Reform Act. The “Charitable Choice” provision of the Welfare Reform Act was introduced by Senator John Ashcroft, a member of an conservative and evangelical Christian denomination. It sought to ease restrictions on government funding for faith-based or religious institutions, and allow them to compete equally with other charities for government support. Prior to 1996, religious institutions that provided social services were barred from applying to receive federal grant money set aside to support local charity. Adjustments made in 1996 provided a small window of opportunity for the faith-based charities to receive government monies, so long as the religious, proselytizing features of the organization were kept completely separate from the social services. This was designed with the intent of preserving, ““religious integrity and character of faith-based organizations that are willing to accept government funds’.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Dionne, EJ and John DiIulio. “God and the American Experiment.” *What’s God Got to*

The Charitable Choice legislation proved to be little help; much of the aid it intended to divert to faith-based charities was not used because of government restrictions in areas such as employee discrimination. For example, the Salvation Army was sued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission because its bylaws include a provision that requires all of its employees to be members of a monotheistic, mainstream religion. When the Salvation Army chose to fire a woman who professed to be Wiccan, they violated anti-discriminatory policies protecting federal employees' rights to free expression of religion. The Salvation Army was subject to these regulations because they accepted several federal grants. As a result of the suit, the Salvation Army was no longer allowed to accept federal funding for its projects as long as it maintained its employment restrictions for monotheistic religions only.

A controversial decision by Catholic Charities exemplifies a more commonplace hiring complication when a faith-based charity accepts federal funding. Catholic Charities accepts over half of its financial support for its social services from US Government grants. It controversially decided to only accept pro-life social workers to provide service in their family planning facilities. In less extreme cases, the faith-based community asks that it have the opportunity to hire workers for their social services whose faith or morals are consistent with their ethos. Generally this includes a willingness participate or acceptance of the religious activities of the organization that are related to the service provided. For example, maintaining a prayerful silence during grace at a soup kitchen. These complications aside, the

possibilities that the Charitable Choice legislation introduced into the American political spectrum garnered the attention of Vice-President Gore and the then governor of Texas, George W. Bush in their campaign efforts to provide the American electorate with a better solution to its welfare woes. Both candidates in the 2000 presidential elections sought to remove restrictive regulations prohibiting religious organizations from receiving support for their vital social services.

From the outset, however, it appeared as though President Bush was the more enthusiastic supporter of the movement, at least in its use as a rhetorical stump speech on the campaign trail than Vice President Gore. The Faith-Based Initiative idea also struck a chord with the Republican base of conservative Christians as well as Hispanic and African Americans who typically identify themselves as Democratic voters. Gov. Bush used the faith-based initiative to appeal to the traditionally Democratic base supporters of African Americans and Hispanics and presented the initiative as a cultural issue that demonstrated Republican compassion for the poor. Vice-President Gore possibly embraced the issue in an attempt to neutralize Bush's appeal. Due to the fact that both candidates appeared to have a basic agreement over the issue, the press community did not focus much attention on the faith-based initiative. The lack of media coverage effectively sublimated the issue in public debates.

### **The Catholic Moment**

On the intellectual level, ideas about the partnership between the US government and church charities gained momentum in the 1980's. During the mid-1980's, there was increasing concern that federal welfare schemes were further alienating and isolating the most disadvantaged portions of the population. Reformers observed Church charities to be able to provide the type of personal support that government had been unable to achieve. A group of social reformers became interested in the ways in which Catholic social thought could specifically provide the ideological orientation for a solution to address the, "cultural fragmentation and rampant individualism" that had overtaken American culture.<sup>4</sup> Although some of these reformers were not Catholic, they entertained a healthy respect for the Catholic tradition with its "characteristic emphasis on reasoned public argument grounded in the natural law tradition and its communitarian social philosophy rooted in concern for the common good, might be positioned to make a substantial contribution to the renewal of the nation's moral life and civic culture".<sup>5</sup> These reformers suggest that the Catholic church was to be poised to exert influence in the political arenas, giving rise to a "Catholic Moment" in American history.<sup>6</sup> According to the theory, the Catholic Moment will be a period in American political thinking characterized by the unique aspects of Catholic intellectualism's

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<sup>4</sup> Gould, William J. Jr., "Catholicism and American Politics: A Catholic Moment in American Politics?" prepared for delivery at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Marriott Wardman Park Aug 31- Sept 3, 2000/ Copyright by the American Political Science Association. p. 2

<sup>5</sup>Gould p.3.

<sup>6</sup>Gould p.4.

attention to natural law and God-centered morals as well as its holistic view of history and humanity.

This Catholic Moment is particularly anomalous in American history considering the anti-Catholic sentiment of the past. Catholics only became a force in American politics after the rapid influx of Catholic immigrants around the end of the 1800's. Despite the spike in the number of Catholic immigrants, the population was excluded from mainstream American culture. This condition led to the creation of “Catholic ghettos” and the formation of a Catholic “subculture” comprised of ethnic Italian, and Irish neighborhoods, large parochial educational systems, newspapers, clubs and sports.<sup>7</sup> Catholic leaders often tried to fight the stereotypical nativist insults that claimed Catholic immigrants could not be good Americans. For example, priests would support American values as openly as possible through their support of the prevailing military and foreign policy and encouraging parishioners to join the military forces and perform their patriotic duty.

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<sup>7</sup>Gould p.7.

Peter Steinfel's, *A People Adrift*, examines American Catholicism's development during the immigration. He characterized early American Catholics who arrived on American shores from Europe during the 1800's as having a "prickly awareness."<sup>8</sup> The term was first used by Charles Morris in *American Catholic*. "Prickly Awareness" refers to the contradictions in the American experiment that defined itself according many of the things against which the Catholic Church sought to identify itself. These rejections include Protestantism, Enlightenment rationalism, optimism, liberalism, individualism and democracy that the Catholic immigrants found in America.<sup>9</sup> In effect, American Catholics according to Morris were, "in America, usually enthusiastically for America, but never quite of America."<sup>10</sup> Steinfels argues that the "prickly awareness" muted Catholics ability to contribute to the moral and political dialogue of the period due to their perceived minority status.

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<sup>8</sup> Steinfels, Peter. *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Steinfels p.70

<sup>10</sup> Steinfels p. 70.

After WWII, Catholic veterans became college educated. The GI Bill led to an increase in the number of upper and middle class Catholics. Catholics began to be included in the American “mainstream” although the process was slow. Paul Blanchard wrote a popular book, *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power (1951)*, in which he argued that Catholics opposed religious liberty and were taking cues from Rome. Additionally, the book claimed that Catholics were as dangerous as Stalin’s Communism.<sup>11</sup> John Courtney Murray, S.J. responded with *We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident*, which purported the compatibility of Catholicism and the American form of democracy. Murray’s thesis argued that Catholicism was uniquely positioned to ensure America’s protection against Communism, secularism, materialism and relativism.<sup>12</sup> Steinfels observes that Murray deftly negotiated Catholicism through this “prickly apartness” by asserting that the very aspects of Catholic apartness, which are natural law, and the emphasis upon objective orders of truth would save American moralism and help preserve American freedom.<sup>13</sup>

John F. Kennedy’s election and the demonstrated openness to reform that the Vatican II era ushered. Non-Catholic Americans approved and accepted Catholic Americans as full-fledged, contributing citizens in American society. Vatican II’s direct effects in American culture served to make the Church’s message more palatable to American ideals of freedom and liberty. Steinfels argues that Vatican II shifted the Church’s goal from its concentration on saving lives for the afterlife to a renewed focus on bringing justice and compassion to heal

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<sup>11</sup> Steinfels p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Steinfels p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> Steinfels p. 74.

this world.<sup>14</sup>

The Catholic Moment was the result a century long effort on behalf of Catholic leadership to establish a place in the American public square in which Catholic ideas could be considered thoughtfully as having both moral and political authority. The place that the Catholic began to occupy in the public square had a tremendous impact on the dialogue of duties and moral obligations to the poor due to the unique construction of its social justice ethos. The Catholic Social Justice tradition offered a rival and more comprehensive strategy of care for the poor than the prior exclusive moral authority of Protestantism in American welfare politics.

### **Catholic Social Thought Foundation**

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<sup>14</sup> Steinfels p. 74.

Today, this “Catholic Moment” relies most strongly on its ties with the body of thought known as Catholic Social Thought. This tradition affirms the human person as fundamentally social by nature and unable to achieve her complete fulfillment except in a community context. According to the tradition, the human good is conceived as something realized between people rather than simply within them. In this way, the tradition opposes liberalism which dictates that people form society as a result of self interest.<sup>15</sup> The Catholic community, therefore, adopts the needs of the poor as a need for the entire community. Liberalism excludes those who have little capital to contribute to society, which perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Catholic communitarianism seeks to address the deficiencies of the less fortunate among the ranks because it approaches community in a much more holistic, organic sense.

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<sup>15</sup> Gould, William J. Jr., “Catholicism and American Politics: A Catholic Moment in American Politics?” prepared for delivery at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Marriott Wardman Park Aug 31- Sept 3, 2000/ Copyright by the American Political Science Association.

The definition of Catholic social teaching can not be limited to a single volume. While Catholic social thinking is extensive, this thesis can only hope to examine contemporary applications in social welfare. Even so, “The Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy” composed by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops urges Catholics to recover their sense of self-agency by belonging and contributing to larger society. The Bishops asked Catholics to give all that was necessary to the common good of society and that in return they would enjoy the benefits of living in a society that respects dignity and renews freedom.<sup>16</sup>

In a recent reflection from the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference, the Bishops compiled a list of seven themes that CST seeks to address in its everyday actions: the life and dignity of the human person; the call to family; community and participation; rights and responsibilities; preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable; the dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity and care for God’s creation. The elements that are expressed in the Catholic support for the Faith-Based Initiative focus on these themes. The US Bishops argued that the moral litmus test for Catholics is how the least among us are faring. As a result, the bishops declare that, “every person has a fundamental right to life and those things required by human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities-- to

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<sup>16</sup> Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and The US Economy. Washington DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1986).

one another, to our families and to the larger society.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions” US Catholic Bishops Conference (1999).

Catholic tradition exerts unique influence in the United States because of its consistency with Natural Law. The Catholic Social Tradition use of the moral philosophy, Natural Law, creates an aura of credibility in the American political sphere in a way that religious morality may lack universality. Because Natural Law is distinctly secular, its arguments are not vulnerable to attacks from competing religious denominations and therefore maintain credibility as an agreeable alternative to Scriptural interpretation. Similarly, Natural tenants do not rely faith for to derive their objective truth. To emphasize this point, during the Roman Empire, Tertullian asked, “What has Jerusalem to say to Athens?”<sup>18</sup> His question refers to this special relationship between the great thinkers of Christianity and the Stoics of Greek intellectual, secular culture. This relationship is defined by the attempt of “Catholic theologians are eager to combine what they learn in the Bible with insights gained by other means of human knowledge, specifically through human reason.”<sup>19</sup> Natural law ethics contends that the universe is oriented towards a purpose and that by virtue of reason, humans have the ability to intellectually infer those purposes through observations of nature.

One of the great attractions of Catholic Social thought is its ability to appeal to public reason across denominational and religious lines by virtue the natural law tradition. Cicero’s syllogistic assertion that if creation is good, then reason as part of creation is a good that can help to distinguish the moral world. Catholics use this idea to support their claims that God

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<sup>18</sup> Massaro, Thomas, S.J. *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2000).p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> Massaro. p. 86.

has created the moral law and written it in human experience in a way that can be discerned by reason.

As Catholic Social Ethics developed, it created a system of priorities that stemmed from the idea that all people of good will are aware of and share an overarching principle that Catholics believe constitutes the moral life created by God. The end to be achieved in this life is a relationship with God. However, because Catholics believe that all humans are made in the image of God, it is impossible to separate love of God from love of neighbor. This love requires action in a way that embraces improvement, progress and reform. The resurrection and forgiveness in the Scripture is a powerful motivator for self-improvement, and is easily extended to the community due to the political nature of human existence.

The relationship between the Stoics, Tertullian and the leaders of the Church in the Vatican was forged for the purpose of social justice during the Industrial Revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by the Pope. *Rerum Novarum* (1891) is generally accepted to be the first document issued from the Vatican that deals explicitly with the Church's stance on contemporary social justice issues. This encyclical is the foundation of CST that calls for works of charity to be combined with the search for justice in a way that reverses and prevents the exploitation of the workers in the rapidly changing period during the Industrial Revolution.

*Rerum Novarum* has two implicit sources, creating its matchless perspective and goals for social justice. These goals have been reiterated in subsequent encyclicals that serve as updates to the original. One source the encyclical employs is the Natural Law tradition that has already been discussed. In addition to the emphasis on Natural Law which highlights the

fact that all humans share a common experience, other sources of the encyclical include Scriptural Revelation and traditional theological reflections upon it.

The experience of the Catholic Church as it seeks social justice goals is a significant source for its continued progress. A Catholic Social Justice Theologian, Thomas Massaro, S.J. outlines the process as “see-judge-act” to explain how the Church tries to discern the “signs of the times” in an effort to continue the process of building justice. The Church does this by gathering sociological data about the injustices to human dignity such as hunger, violence and repression. The Church researches the problems of poverty and social decline. After data analysis and certain literal conclusions are drawn, the Catholic tradition reflects upon the social realities in terms of God’s love. In a sense, the Church looks to revelation and the scriptures to assess God’s intentions for humanity and how the reality has strayed. The last stage is the pastoral plan in which all elements of the social ill have been noted, analyzed and reflected upon and a process is developed to address the need in the community.

Catholic Social Thought relies upon the equality among the two sources of the tradition, Natural Law and Scripture. Adherence to only one of the sources is a mistake. For example, a reliance upon only Natural Law dilutes the role of faith in the practice of good works. Additionally, Natural is know as a skeletal ethical system because its guidance is vague and not prone to specific, contemporary distinctions of right and wrong. The same can be said of an exclusive reliance upon the Scriptures that does not explore the ability of human reason to discern its meaningful application in everyday life.

The Catholic Church is a desirable organizing principle for President Bush’s White House as a result of its Christian and Natural Law tradition. Although not thoroughly

scripturally dictated, the Christianity of the Catholic Church gives its methodology at least a frontier acceptance in American society, in a way that Muslim and Hindu traditions may seem to far out of the realm of the experience for the American majority. Its ability, through natural law, to relate to the secular perception and preference of the Founding fathers is another place where the Catholic Church's credibility increases. As a result, the Catholic Church sense of morality is a force to be thoughtfully considered when the government seeks to effect a cautious relationship between church and state.

### **Contemporary American Political Culture**

Contemporary Catholic intellectuals, EJ Dionne and John DiIulio, approach the problems that American confront in social justice issues in a way that is consistent with Catholic Social justice. Particularly, Dionne and DiIulio use Catholic Social Thought to negotiate the debate over the role of religion in the nurturing of the American Experiment. Dionne and DiIulio identify the disharmonious relationship between the religion and public, political life in the American Experiment. It is as if religion seems at times, antithetical to the aims of liberty and equality among all citizens and other times, wholly responsible for the claims of self-improvement that define the collective struggle in the nation. The first group identifies American society as pluralistic and secular in which religion and the state operate separately for the mutual benefit of both and an attempt to end religious civil war forever. The second group sees American traditions in light of the theistic values set forth in the Declaration of Independence in which “the Law of Nature and the Law of God” ensure the sacrosanct of the individual's dignity while it also restrains, through accountability to a higher

Being, the action's of its leaders.<sup>20</sup> The role of religious ethics in governing principles has always been evident; however, religion's ability to support these two divergent ethics is a source of discomfort.

The Twentieth Century appears to be a period in which American religious behavior underwent a transformation in its relationship with political activity. From the early Prohibitionist movement to the social upheaval of the 1960's, religious activism in the political arena steadily decreased from 1900-1990. A recent cache of social surveys reveal a reversal of that decreasing trend. Americans are participating in religious activities in large numbers after a long disassociation. Robert Fogel has dubbed this last part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> as the "Fourth Great Awakening" in American History.

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<sup>20</sup>Dionne, EJ and John DiIulio. "God and the American Experiment." *What's God Got to Do With the American Experiment*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2000). p. 4.

The distinguishing mark of the revival is its tolerance of the spectrum of religious belief and practice. Many of the American devout believers (Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims) are more tolerant of other religious expressions than their antecedents. Even the most secular American citizens are open to entertain arguments and contributions that the faithful believers pose for social reform. The fact that both of the candidates for president in 2000 made some aspect of the “Charitable Choice” legislation part of the campaign indicates a new negotiation between religion and politics in America.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Dionne, EJ and John DiIulio. p. 8-9.

George W. Bush's administration strategy, known as "communitarianism" reflects the increased attention religion receives in the public square.<sup>22</sup> The lynchpin of communitarianism is the belief that secularism and individualism are responsible for the moral decline and social problems facing American society. As a result, it has become a goal for the Bush Administration to enact policies that seek to rebuild American groups of salutary association which include religiously based organizations. *American Atheist* has observed that the trend among think tanks, political scientists and advisors to this Bush administration is a "common cause over issues like the status of religion in American life, violence and sex in the media, and the need to involve churches, corporations and government in the fight to address social problems."<sup>23</sup> Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone* is a seminal text in this philosophy. Putnam's research in neighborhoods and local, face-to-face communities observed a shocking decrease in the amounts of American social capital. One seemingly poignant statistic, collected by Robert Putnam, reveals that between 1980 and 1993, the number of bowlers in the US increased by 10%, while the number of people participating in bowling leagues, decreased by 40%.<sup>24</sup> In effect, people are bowling alone. The number of single bowlers, parents not participating the PTA, and

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<sup>22</sup> Goeriger, Conrad "A Wider Bush Plan for Religious "Communitarianism: Secularism, Individualism Are The Targets In a New Culture War." *American Atheist* (1 August 2001)  
<<http://www.americanatheist.org/supplement/communitarianism.html>>

<sup>23</sup> Goeriger. p. 2

<sup>24</sup> Bellah, Robert, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1986) p. xvi.

fewer voters is a matter of grave alarm for the American society as a whole.

Americans ability to relate to each other and ultimately trust each other has long been a hallmark of our collective identity. Increasingly, Americans' failure to connect with each other is worsening the problems America faces economically, politically and socially. Putnam's idea of social capital is analogous to economic capital in that social capital is the usefulness of personal relationships to achieve ends that can not easily be achieved without help. Impoverished Americans without social capital lack a safety net to help them through difficult times. For example, a person with a large amount of social capital has "networking potential" that may make it easier for them to find a job if suddenly unemployed. This person with social capital would make use of personal relationships to find another job. People without such connections have less social capital and "fall through the cracks" in society.

Don Eberly, deputy director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives noted that he believes that the efforts are "'The Ultimate Third Way'" in the renegotiating of ways to approach social philosophy.<sup>25</sup> The recent enthusiasm for the new method of social analysis is shared by President Bush as a result of his personal experiences. US News journalist Keith Walsh argued, "'Bush, a born again Christian, is said to by friends to believe, despite mixed evidence, that America is 'on the cusp of a religious revival.'"<sup>26</sup> President Bush's enthusiasm for

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<sup>25</sup> Goeriger, Conrad "A Wider Bush Plan for Religious 'Communitarianism': Secularism, Individualism Are The Targets In a New Culture War *American Atheist* (August 1, 2001).<<http://www.americanatheist.org/supplement/communitarianism.html>>.

<sup>26</sup>Goeriger p. 3.

the faith-based initiatives stems from his belief that prayer has a transformative power to combat social ills. President Bush attributed Bush's own decision to stop drinking in 1985, to a conversation with Rev. Billy Graham and his renewed devotion to prayer. These experiences have shaped his approach to social issues and led to his support for organizations that understood that there are both material and spiritual needs for the poor.<sup>27</sup> President Bush's religious enthusiasm is very much a personal issue of spirituality. Developing a direct and personal relationship with God through prayer and conversion is a characteristic practice of Protestant Christianity that is not always emphasized in Catholic practices. The individuality of Protestantism seeks for a radical new relationship with God in the conversion experience. The catholic conversion experiences generally have a more dynamic community element in which the converted seeks not only a relationship with God but also the communion of Catholic believers.

During the election, President Bush was asked who his favorite political philosopher was, Governor Bush responded that Jesus Christ was his favorite philosopher. The reporter then asked why and Bush simply stated "Because he changed my life."<sup>28</sup> This exchange is an example of an archetypical evangelical Christian response that evades standard justifications from reason and instead relies upon faith. Basically, if one is not a Christian, one would not understand why Bush

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<sup>27</sup> Lebowitz, Holly J. "What's and FBO?: Frequently Asked Questions about Faith-Based Organizations" <[http://www.Beliefnet.com/story/64/story\\_6436\\_1.html](http://www.Beliefnet.com/story/64/story_6436_1.html)>.

<sup>28</sup> Dionne, EJ and John DiIulio. "God and the American Experiment." *What's God Got to Do With the American Experiment*. Ed. E.J. Dionne and John DiIulio. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2000). p.7.

thinks Christ is his favorite philosopher and Bush does not find it necessary to explain. This position can make the evangelical Christian ethic difficult for non-believers to support. John Carr, a lay member of US Conference of Catholic Bishops is often quoted to say, "Faith is not a substitute for facts." Perhaps for this reason, the Bush political team sought out Catholic social justice experts like Dilulio whose philosophical and religious tools appeal to a common ground that can be popularly supported through Natural Law.

*American Atheist* draws special attention to the role of the Catholic Church, specifically the Vatican in this "communitarian" movement. Before the Bush Administration adopted the idea, Pope John Paul II worked with Polish citizens to overturn Communist rule with the Solidarity movement. The goal of the Solidarity movement to reinvigorate Polish nationalism to free itself from Communist rule. One of the ways it was able to organize was by asserting the shared values of its dominant religion, Catholicism which had claims to basic rights of the individual to fair labor and self-determination that Communism denied. After the fall of Russian Communism, *American Atheist* believes that the new nemesis for the values of the world-wide Catholic Church was a multi-polar world, "characterized by globalization, the internet, international trade and the erosion of traditional institutions."<sup>29</sup> Bishop Wuerl of Pittsburgh warned, "Heavy emphasis on the individual and his or her rights has greatly eroded the concept of the common good and its ability to call people to

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<sup>29</sup> Goeriger, Conrad "A Wider Bush Plan for Religious "Communitarianism: Secularism, Individualism Are The Targets In a New Culture War." *American Atheist* 1 August 2001. <<http://www.americanatheist.org/supplement/communitarianism.html>>

something beyond themselves.”<sup>30</sup>

A Protestant influence in the communitarian movement is *World Magazine* Editor, Marvin Olasky. *American Atheist* sees Marvin Olasky as a key player in making an American version of “communitarian” movement that has become increasingly popular in the post-Cold War period. He asserts that the private sector, to include faith-based institutions, are better equipped and more successful in the efforts to create a better civil society. This position resonates with state and federal leaders alike. His programs in Texas that include the nationally recognized Teen Challenge have experienced a great deal of success in teen drug and alcohol rehabilitation through use of a distinctively Christian method and ideology.

Marvin Olasky and the work of other religious community organizers generated support in Washington among politicians who sought to reform the federal social welfare programs through Charitable Choice and the Faith-Based Initiative. Olasky was particularly influential in Bush’s conception of communitarianism, which culminated in the creation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Its first director, John Dilulio, came from this rapidly developing movement in America that was most closely politically associated with the Republican party principle of “compassionate conservatism” which dominated both houses of Congress. Dilulio described himself as an “evangelical Catholic” and Democrat who had made friends with the compassionate conservatives.

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<sup>30</sup> Goeriger p. 1.

These terms, “evangelical Catholic” and “compassionate conservative” result from a process of hybridization among religiously motivated government leaders. “Evangelical Catholic” and “compassionate conservative” appear oxymoronic; however, those who identify themselves as one of these types of religious political actors do so for a reason. Evangelical Catholics use the term to describe their experiences with prayer and God in terms of a more personal and mystic experience than that which characterizes Catholic practice. Evangelicism is associated with the versions of Protestantism that are more conservative politically, and thus more apt to associate political issues with moral, religious justifications. Compassionate conservatives desire to infuse warmhearted concern for the poor into economically conservative politics. Both of these terms’ use reveals a process that seeks to moderate disparate views in the hopes of creating a more accommodating and tolerable religious political culture. Moderation of this sort is not new in the history of American politics. Nonetheless, the motivations behind this desire for conservatives to earn the perception of “compassionate” and for Catholics to appear more “evangelical” is more than political lip service when it actually serves to create new conversation about the role of religion in the American government. This conversation was started by those scholars who have observed the 4<sup>th</sup> Great Awakening, the “Catholic Moment” and the crisis of American community in Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*. American politics is seeking an expression that is more religiously inclusive.

The Bush appointed director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and

Community Initiatives, Dr. John J. Dilulio, Jr. is an interesting case study for this new culture among the religiously motivated government leaders. This culture is one in which ideal leaders are less divided among partisan and denominational distinctions and have a more universal political appeal. As the first director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, John Dilulio's professional career reads like the story of a liberal social democrat courting conservative Republicans (to varying degrees of success and failure). Dilulio earned much respect from both sides of the aisle. Early in his career, Dilulio collaborated with William Bennett to address the problems faced by urban youth. His resulting thesis was a conservative manifesto that predicted a bleak future of "superpredators" if change was not achieved in the prison system. His research attracted favorable attention from Republicans who campaigned upon crime issues. During the late 1990's, Dilulio reformed his ideas about the state of social services for America's most disadvantaged at the same time that the new breed of Republicans coming out of the Texas prison reform movement (among these then Governor George W. Bush) were reaching similar conclusions. These reformers had a new vision for the future of social service in which religious organizations would play a key role.

In an essay entitled, "Supporting Black Churches", John Dilulio supports the Faith-Based Initiative and the work being done in the community by churches in the inner-city with predominantly black congregations. Dilulio debates this political issue with categorically Catholic social ideas infused with the literal use of the Scripture characteristic of evangelicals:

People who are nervous about religion-church-state relations should know that faith-based outreaches benefit poor unchurched neighborhood children the most... if these churches are so willing to support 'the least of these'. Surely they deserve the human and financial support of the rest of us- corporations, foundations, and churches; and where appropriate, government agencies.<sup>31</sup>

John DiIulio's leadership and philosophies are of particular interest for me. He has specific ideas about the body of social justice philosophy known as Catholic social teaching and its potential role as a cure for the nation's social ills. His faith in the ability for both church and small community organizations to change society with the help of government support is a highly controversial proposition that endures criticism from the entire political spectrum.

DiIulio's intellectual influence of Catholic Social teaching pits his religious motivations in stark contrast to the fundamental and evangelical influence of the intellectual founder of the "Compassionate Conservative" movement, Marvin Olasky. For the purposes of contrast, I will review and outline Olasky's contribution to the creation and work of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. I plan to prove that within the Faith-based Initiative movement, DiIulio and Olasky are foils and Olasky's ideas enjoy a favored position in the current Bush administration that ultimately created a situation in which DiIulio could no longer be

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<sup>31</sup> DiIulio, John. "Supporting Black Churches." *What's God Got to do With the American Experiment*. Ed. E.J. Dionne and John DiIulio. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2000). p.127.

an effective leader.

### **Chapter 3 : Biographical/ Bibliographical Sketches**

#### **Marvin Olasky : “Compassionate Conservatism”**

The Republican principle of “Compassionate Conservatism” is the invention of Marvin Olasky, one of Bush’s most influential advisors for the faith-based initiative. “Compassionate conservatism” defines a political philosophy that entrusts social services to the compassion of the church, or faith-based groups provide care for both the material and spiritual needs of the individual through prayer that accompanies aide to the poor and needy. The conservative elements of the initiative derive from the fact that faith-based social service organizations will receive government funding for some of the services and share the burden of welfare with the government.<sup>32</sup>

Marvin Olasky is a foil to John DiIulio and the traditional Catholic Social Model of justice. As a self-described evangelical and “compassionate conservative,” Marvin Olasky approaches American social welfare vehicles differently from the traditional welfare supporters, Democrats. Olasky’s welfare approach does not make use of Natural Law and traditionally and historically Democratic, New Deal principles associated with Federal social welfare. As an evangelical, Protestant Christian, Olasky placed a primacy in personal experience. Whether it be personal experience with God or with successful endeavors to cure

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<sup>32</sup> Lebowitz, Holly J. “What’s and FBO?: Frequently Asked Questions about Faith-Based Organizations” <[http://www.Beliefnet.com/story/64/story\\_6436\\_1.html](http://www.Beliefnet.com/story/64/story_6436_1.html)>.

societal problems, Olasky's tradition avoids a holistic, historical approach. Extensive research data and historical interpretation are of less value in Olasky's justifications than his own experiences in social service and relationship to the Scriptures. This methodology contrasts the New Deal Democrats sense of responsibility to the poor with which many Catholics find to be consistent with their religious belief. The welfare system prior to the reforms in 1996 did have a Catholic approach in the sense that it sought consistency with its mission that was started during FDR's administration. This mission centered around the belief that all Americans were entitled to a basic level of subsistence and education to be provided, when necessary, by the Federal Government. The Welfare system had a distinctly rights-centered, entitlement approach that is largely absent from "compassionate conservatism." Olasky dismisses this sense of entitlement in favor of framing the issue of assisting the poor in terms of Christian moral responsibility and charity.

Olasky first came into contact when then Governor of Texas, George W. Bush read his book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* in 1993. Conservative think-tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Bradley Foundation, funded the publication. More importantly at the time, this book was noted by Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich in a speech to the incoming Congressional freshman in 1994 saying, "Our models are Alexis de Tocqueville and Marvin Olasky. We are going to redefine compassion and take it back."<sup>33</sup> Olasky's *The Tragedy of American Compassion* argues that all government

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<sup>33</sup> Grann, David. "Where W. Got Compassion." *New York Times Magazine* (12

funded public assistance programs are doomed to failure because the only form of charity that will work is that which

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September 1999).

is, “directly personal, requires the able-bodied to work, and includes explicit spiritual counseling.”<sup>34</sup> Using anecdotal evidence that narrated the success of the faith-based charities and contrasting these stories to negative descriptions of the government programs, Olasky attempts to prove that the Federal system of services to the needy deprives them of personal connections. Taxation and federal funding eliminate compassion from the equation by removing the personal component of direct interaction between giver and receiver. Olasky points out that compassion’s Latin roots are translated as “suffering with.” Specifically at issue for Olasky is the reality that welfare recipients only receive their checks and food stamps in the mail without coming in contact with anyone who could help them to restructure their life and end the circle of poverty. Olasky directly attributes this form of anonymous care to faults in the bureaucratic system. The disconnect that a bureaucracy creates eliminates the desired effect of helping the person out of poverty.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> King, Michael. “The Last Puritan: Meet Marvin Olasky, Governor Bush’s Compassionate Conservative Guru.” *The Texas Observer* (14 May 1999) <<http://texasobserver.org/showAuthor.asp?AuthorID=9>>.

<sup>35</sup>King p. 2.

*The Tragedy of American Compassion* refutes the conservative tendency towards a Darwinistic read of welfare that understands the poor as the “hapless losers in the modern jungle”; argues that welfare should be totally dismantled.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Olasky contends that the needy should be offered a Christian hand of solidarity and opportunity.<sup>37</sup> Olasky’s critics believe that he relies on the right-wing stereotypes of the poor as underclass, “shiftless drunks and addicts, derelict fathers and irresponsible teenage mothers, able-bodies men who just don’t want to work.”<sup>38</sup> He makes no mention of the working poor, who earn minimum wage or less and fail to be able to live on that income. Instead, Olasky characterizes the poor as he did in a 1995 interview, “...the victims and perpetrators of illegitimacy and abandonment, of family non-formation and malformation, alienation and loneliness; but they are not suffering from thirst, hunger or nakedness, except by choice, or insanity or parental abuse.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> King p.2.

<sup>37</sup> King p.4.

<sup>38</sup> King p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> King p. 4.

### **Olasky and Dilulio Differences**

Dilulio withstood serious criticisms of his job performance from the founder of Compassionate Conservatism, Marvin Olasky. Dilulio's credentials from the beginning were a target of Olasky's criticism of him. Prior to joining the Bush camp, Dilulio worked with Vice-President Gore's campaign as Gore was constructing his own version of the faith-based initiative. Olasky has ever since challenged Dilulio's credibility saying, "the attempt to solicit liberal allies appeared to drive the whole process."<sup>40</sup> Olasky claimed that Dilulio's liberal efforts alienated core Republican constituencies and, "conservative Christians did not fight to keep it [The House Bill

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<sup>40</sup> Horrock, Nicholas M. "Bush to Push Faith-Based Initiative." *United Press International* and *The Washington Post*. ( 29 November 2002). <<http://upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20021129-051337-4212r.html>>.

for Faith-Based Initiatives] alive.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Horrock p.1.

Olasky next attacked Dilulio's performance as Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in January 2003 over the way Dilulio used the word *proselytize*. Olasky pointed out that *proselytize*'s entomological roots are traced back to 1679 when it was intended to mean the induction or coercion of a person to convert. Olasky believes that proselytizing in this sense is something that Christianity opposes because the free expression of faith is negated if conversion is coerced.<sup>42</sup> Olasky mourns the current use of the word by liberals who extend the definition of proselytize to include any mention of God from an organization that provides social services. He blames Dilulio for promulgating this liberal interpretation of proselytize that has had the effect of making the faith-based initiative unpalatable to the majority of Americans sensitive to the separation of church.

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<sup>42</sup> Olasky, Marvin. "The Buzz: No more Misuse of Force" *World* 18. 3. (25 Jan 2003). <[http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/01-25-03/opening\\_2.asp](http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/01-25-03/opening_2.asp)>.

The controversy over proselytization stems from an interview that Dilulio gave to Peter Jennings on ABC's World News Tonight in which he said, "I certainly wouldn't be a part of the initiative if I thought for a minute we were going in the direction of funding groups that were going to proselytize."<sup>43</sup> Olasky reported that Dilulio, "Thereafter regularly said that the Bush administration opposed participation in the faith-based initiative by religious groups that offered Bible-based teachings as well as material help to the poor."<sup>44</sup> In painting Dilulio as opposed to including the spiritual needs of faith-based charity in his work at the OFBCI, Olasky effectively undercut Dilulio's attempts to appear genuine in the eyes of the conservative Christians whose support is integral in the process for the OFBCI's policy goals. In Olasky's article, he claims, "Now, judging by remarks President Bush made last month and conversations with administration officials, White House staffers who use the word proselytize at all will use it in the accurate, restricted sense."<sup>45</sup> This quote is a public chastisement of Dilulio. Allegations of being too liberal is a serious accusation in this Republican and conservative White House. Olasky indicates that he has the ear of the President ensuring that his views are respected above that of the then current Director. There is no doubt, that this controversy over Dilulio's supposed liberal interpretation of proselytize was an embarrassment to Dilulio that served to erode the perception of a coalition of support for the issue.

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<sup>43</sup> Olasky, Marvin. "The Buzz: No more Misuse of Force" *World* 18. 3. (25 Jan 2003). <[http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/01-25-03/opening\\_2.asp](http://www.worldmag.com/world/issue/01-25-03/opening_2.asp)>.

<sup>44</sup> Olasky p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Olasky p. 1.

### **Dr. John J. DiIulio Biographical Sketch**

Marvin Olasky's criticism emanates from DiIulio's moderate political views. As a card-carrying Democrat, DiIulio values social welfare. However, his past as a criminologist who advocated longer prison sentences and his new enthusiasm for evangelical African American churches places him in the good graces of conservative Republicans. DiIulio's

political positions are hard to define in terms of partisan politics because he clicks with neither the urban Democratic positions that one would anticipate from his upbringing, nor the conservative Republican stance that he sometimes finds himself aligned.<sup>46</sup> For example, while he strongly supports tougher, longer prison sentences, he does so without supporting capital punishment, as is consistent with Catholic Social Justice theory articulated by Pope John Paul as the “seamless garment”. He believes that elements of the welfare system are at fault for the plight of poor children today, while at the same time he agrees with African Americans who believe that the system’s structure ignores their needs.

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<sup>46</sup> Stafford, Tim. “The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches” *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999) p.34.

Before he arrived in the George W. Bush White House, John J. DiIulio, Jr. had achieved national recognition as a criminologist and political scientist. He is the author of more than a dozen books on public management issues, faith-based social problems, criminal justice and government reform such as *No Escape: The Future of American Correction, 1991*; *Body Count: Moral Poverty... and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs*, with John P. Walters and William J. Bennett, the former education secretary and drug czar, 1996; *Improving Government Performance: An Owner's Manual*, 1993; *Medicaid and Devolution: A View from the States*, 1998; and *What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment?*, 2000, co-edited with Washington Post national columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr.<sup>47</sup> DiIulio was educated at the University of Pennsylvania and received a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has held positions on the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton. He is the founder of the University of Pennsylvania' Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, senior counsel at the Center for Public Management at the Brookings Institute.

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<sup>47</sup> Meyers, Mary Ann. "John DiIulio to DC" *Univ of Penn Almanac* 47.21 (6 February 2001).

Dilulio began his career in politics during his years as the campaign advisor for his father's bid for sheriff in Philadelphia. Seeking a coalition with the city's first black mayoral candidate, Charles Bowser, Dilulio first came in contact with his city's African American community. Dilulio describes the experience, "Pretty much what I had known about the city's African-American population was cast in terms of problems- problems of drugs, problems of crime, problems of poverty. We went to black churches in the city and although a lot of it was rankly political, I saw some of the most healthy, vibrant communities I'd ever seen in my life..."<sup>48</sup> Since then, Dilulio's most significant career accomplishments have centered on creating social change for American urban communities through, "gospel centered churches, and faith-based ministries. He is preaching this message not only to white evangelicals, but to foundations, corporations, think tanks, parole officers, mayors and anybody else who will stand still to listen."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Stafford, Tim. "The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches" *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999) p.34.

<sup>49</sup> Stafford p. 35.

After John Dilulio graduated from college, he contributed to the political scene as an academic, specifically as a criminologist examining prison reform. The phenomena of the national crime wave of the 1970's and 1980's prompted much political and intellectual debate. One of Dilulio's first publications sought an explanation for the spike in crime by studying incarcerated individuals. His book, *Body Count: Moral Poverty and How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs* (co-authored with the former education secretary William J. Bennett) attained national attention. While working as an unpaid advisor to the famous Riker's Island prison in New York, Dilulio met young inmates whom he has described as having, "hardly a flicker of human emotion...they seemed eerily disconnected from any reality beyond themselves."<sup>50</sup> Increasingly, Dilulio was disquieted by the number of hardened criminals he saw in the prison system. In one interview with a prisoner who was serving a life-term, the inmate claimed, "I was a bad-ass street gladiator, but these kids are stone-cold predators." this gave rise to Dilulio's characterization of the urban American criminal as "superpredator".<sup>51</sup> Concern for the superpredators became the major thesis in Dilulio's book, *Body Count*. Infused with Catholic Social Justice theories which argues for the great responsibility of the entire community to care for its children, Dilulio conjectured that these criminals were raised in communities of moral poverty in which the youth face "unrelenting abuse and

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<sup>50</sup> Meyers, Mary Ann. "John DiIulio Gets Religion" *The Pennsylvania Gazette* 96.1 (October 1997). p. 6.

<sup>51</sup> Meyers, "John DiIulio Gets Religion" p. 3

neglect””.<sup>52</sup> He defined this poverty as, ““the poverty of being without loving, capable, responsible adults who teach you right from wrong.””<sup>53</sup> Dilulio’s work in prison reform concluded that imprisoning offenders does reduce crime. He argued against the positions that claimed that prisons were over crowded with nonviolent offenders who should be in halfway houses or on parole. Dilulio observed that most inmates commit a series of violent felonies and early release increases their ability to repeat these offenses to the community.<sup>54</sup>

The attention that the Superpredators idea received from the media attracted criticism of Dilulio for what liberal critics denounced as a particularly craven and conservative view of the American penal system. He now regrets having used the term because he feels that it suggested that he and Mr. Bennett, “disavowed kinship

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<sup>52</sup> Meyers, “John DiIulio Gets Religion” p. 3

<sup>53</sup> Meyers, “John DiIulio Gets Religion” p. 3

<sup>54</sup> Stafford, Tim. “The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches” *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999) p.35.

with the worst juvenile offenders.”<sup>55</sup> Instead, DiIulio’s goal was always to root out the causes of the injury to these juveniles’ development to ensure that never would his prediction that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century waves of violent crime would be committed by drug-dealing youth who do not fear incarceration.<sup>56</sup> DiIulio strongly believes in the possibility of rehabilitation, and more importantly prevention.

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<sup>55</sup>Meyers, Mary Ann. “John DiIulio Gets Religion” *The Pennsylvania Gazette* 96.1 (October 1997).

<sup>56</sup> Meyers, “John DiIulio Gets Religion” p. 4.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century began, Dilulio realized that his predictions for the successive increase in the national crime rate had not occurred. He attributes the prevention of this contemptible situation to the tireless efforts of community based organizations. Dilulio's specific attention has been drawn by the nearly 65,000 black churches that are, according to Dilulio, "outperforming many secular alternatives in terms of primary and secondary crime prevention"<sup>57</sup> In an effort to increase the ability of these churches to serve the nation's at-risk youth, Dilulio worked to create PRRAY (Partnership for Research on Religion and At-Risk Youth) which is designed to help faith-based organizations overcome the obstacles of financial limitations. This was Dilulio's baptism in the efforts that led him to his position in the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Dilulio claims his concerns for the problems facing urban youth and penal system reform led his research to convincing data that refuted his bleak predictions of the Superpredator. Dilulio, as a sociologist, examined neighborhood make-ups in an attempt to correlate them with crime statistics. This research rediscovered a Harvard study from 1985 by economist, Richard Freeman claiming that young, urban, African American males were 50% less likely to become involved in crime if they

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<sup>57</sup> Meyers, "John DiIulio Gets Religion" p. 4.

attended church regularly.<sup>58</sup> A similar study by David Larson of the National Institute proved that convicted felons who participated in Prison Fellowship experienced a 66% lower recidivist rate.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Stafford, Tim. "The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches" *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999) p. 35.

<sup>59</sup> Stafford p. 34.

The statistics that Dilulio came across in his research motivated Dilulio to conduct his own longitudinal study. Dilulio followed the progress of 1,000 at risk youth from low-income, single parent families who were members of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. The study showed that these children were 46% less likely to use drugs, 27% less likely to start drinking, 33% less likely to commit assault, and half as likely to skip school.<sup>60</sup> Dilulio concluded that, ““The evidence is compelling that the difference between at-risk youth who make it and those who don’t is often a single nurturing, capable adult who is there for the child on at least a predictable, part-time basis.””<sup>61</sup> These conclusions are consistent with Catholic Social Justice findings that assert the importance of a nurturing community of support to raise children. The combined influence of the statistical data and Dilulio’s religious social justice tradition continued to be evident in his professional writings throughout the next decade of his career.

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<sup>60</sup> Stafford p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> Stafford p. 38.

Prior to joining the Bush Campaign as an advisor, John Dilulio wrote a review for *Public Interest* of Charles Glenn's *The Ambiguous Embrace: Government and Faith-Based Schools and Social Agencies*. In the review, Dilulio agrees with Glenn that faith-based social services provide a more nuanced standard of care for its recipients because it cares for both the material and spiritual elements of needs for the individual.<sup>62</sup> However, Dilulio's enthusiasm for the idea was tempered by his assertion that, "At this stage, the relative effectiveness of more strongly faith-based programs remains an informed hypothesis, not a settled fact".<sup>63</sup> Dilulio may have written his article with the awareness of Putnam's study that indicated the decline in American social capital. The decrease in Americans' willingness to engage in face-to-face relationships will limit the number of potential volunteers. Dilulio expressed concern in the article that there may not be, "a stable base of religious people to volunteer in the poorest reaches of American society."<sup>64</sup> Dilulio postulated that one way to overcome the obstacle was for the government to demonstrate its support and

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<sup>62</sup> Neuhaus, Richard John. *First Things: The Journal of Religion and Public Life: The Public Square* (June/July 2001). pg 67-88.

<sup>63</sup> Neuhaus p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> Neuhaus p. 77.

appreciation for the charity of individuals, “public funds will be mobilized to match private investments”<sup>65</sup> Awarding funds to organizations who help the poor may serve as encouragement leading to more good work.

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<sup>65</sup> Neuhaus p. 78.

Culminating on Palm Sunday in 1996, Dilulio's relationship with his faith and his career prompted him to call himself a "born-again Catholic" and to devote his life to reversing the misfortunes that ail American inner-cities.<sup>66</sup> Dilulio was well-aware that this rebirth would change his life forever; he aggressively pursued those changes as he resigned from the Brookings Center for Public Management so that he could devote more attention to PRRAY. Dilulio wrote in the introduction to William Buckley's *Nearer My God: An Autobiography of Faith*, "Nothing raises secular elite hackles, suspicions, and whispers quite like a well-educated, well-positioned person expressing deep religious faith without temporizing or apologizing for it."<sup>67</sup> Even though Dilulio may have believed that his new found religious vigor would make him unpopular, he soon found a group of colleagues in the same year (1996) who were committed to support the "Charitable Choice" amendment to the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.

One of John Dilulio's mentors in his belief in the success of black urban churches' social services is Rev. Benjamin Smith, a Pentecostal Pastor of Deliverance Evangelicalistic Church in Philadelphia. In an interview with Billy Graham's *Christianity Today*, Dilulio's support for the work of the black Pentecostal Churches reflected his spiritual rebirth, "I know that the most volunteers in this country are people of faith. Most charitable dollars are church dollars. I know all that. But that's not the biggest asset of the Christian community. The biggest asset of the

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<sup>66</sup> Stafford, Tim. "The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches" *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999) p. 38.

Christian community is Christianity.”<sup>68</sup> Dilulio favors the tough-love approach that these spiritual leaders provide for those who benefit from their social services. Dilulio calls it :

the spiritual outreach approach. It’s like a martial arts approach. It takes all the negative force that you bring and flips it around. How? It says to the kid, ‘It may be true that you had nobody, but let me tell you something, God loved you, even when you didn’t know. When the world hated you, God loved you. And I am going to tell you something, I love you, and I’m there for you.’<sup>69</sup>

Dilulio’s proposed solution to assist the inner city churches meet the demand of their community is to appeal to all Christian Americans for help. Dilulio contends that the past 40 years have shown that numbers of impoverished Americans is decreasing everywhere except in the cities. To Dilulio, this demonstrates that the problem of poverty is solvable and he thinks that a coalition of religious leaders are the actors to do it. Dilulio imagines a Christian coalition of Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, mainline, evangelicals and Pentecostals and others meeting several times a year to plan how to materially support the work done by inner city churches to provide help to poor.

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<sup>67</sup> Stafford p.34

<sup>68</sup> Stafford p. 38

<sup>69</sup> Stafford p. 36.

Controversially, DiIulio designates white evangelicals as the leaders of the coalition because he believes that white evangelicals not only have the material resources but also the spiritual resources that compliment the spiritual mission and heritage of the inner city ministers.<sup>70</sup> Because most black churches are religiously conservative, their mission often has more in common with the ethos that governs the spirituality of the suburban, predominantly white and sometimes affluent evangelical churches. The reality of the situation is that the urban churches are relatively poor churches, yet carry out more social services and reaching more people than suburban churches. In effect, the poor are helping the poor. DiIulio suggested that all suburban churches need to help out with this situation and sees a natural coalition of religious leaders. However, he assigns special preference to the relationship between the suburban and urban churches of the evangelical faith due to their spiritual similarities.

#### **Chapter 4 : DiIulio takes Office**

##### **Principles of DiIulio's leadership**

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<sup>70</sup> Stafford, Tim. "The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches" *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999).

As Dilulio took the office of director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, in February 2000, he claimed three major aims: to increase charitable donations of time and money through tax breaks; to make it easier for religious charities to apply for tax dollars; and to promote the increase of public-private partnerships like those he observed in inner-city Boston.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> “Compassionate Conservatism takes a bow”. *The Economist* Vol. 358 Issue 8207(1 February 2001). p 29.

The perception among leaders involved in the earliest stages of the faith-based initiative concept was that Dilulio was one of the most respected and uncontroversial leaders of the movement because he could appeal to the entire spectrum of support, across ideological lines. Former Presidential nominee, Gary Bauer, commented, “I have a great deal of confidence in him... these are things that transcend politics, that go to the core of some of the issues that our nation faces.”<sup>72</sup> Evangelical leaders noticed that Dilulio overcame many of the barriers between white evangelicals and their inner city, predominantly African American counterparts in a way that assured his credibility with both. Furthermore, sociologist Tony Campolo observed, “He has earned the respect of people in the corporate community who are willing to put up big bucks. He has also earned the respect of activists.”<sup>73</sup> Perhaps it is best put by Chuck Colson, who said, “[Dilulio] doesn’t fit into any evangelical pigeonholes” because of his Catholicism, which shields him from the negative perception of evangelism in American electorate even though Dilulio’s message adheres very strongly to the idea that conversion is central to change.<sup>74</sup>

Dilulio has nonetheless strives to include Catholics in the support for the faith-based initiative. In an address to Catholic ministers in March of 2001, Dilulio assured the audience that as a Catholic, the administration’s agreement to work according to the Catholic social principle of subsidiarity encourages him. Dilulio goes on to say

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<sup>72</sup> Stafford, Tim. “The Criminologist Who Discovered Churches” *Christianity Today* 43.7 (14 June 1999). p. 36.

<sup>73</sup> Stafford p. 38.

<sup>74</sup> Stafford p.34.

that as he interprets subsidiarity in the Catholic Social thought he sees it play out in the faith-based initiative as a chain of support. First, and individual in need should seek out family for assistance and then neighbors and their parish. From that context, the individual should seek out larger community and local government assistance. Only in the most extreme cases should a person have to resort to the “long-distance call” to the federal government for assistance.<sup>75</sup> Dilulio sees the principle of subsidiarity in the Catholic Social principles as it encourages individual responsibility as well as balancing the collective responsibility by the community.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> “Success, not Nit-Picking, called key to faith-based initiatives” *America Magazine* 184. 9. (19 March 2001). p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> “Success, not Nit-Picking, called key to faith-based initiatives”.p. 4.

Nonetheless, the principle of subsidiarity that Dilulio uses here has several divergent interpretations which can lead to a tense relationship between the responsibility of the government, community and the individual. The principle of subsidiarity defines a strategy that provides charitable assistance to individuals in need. It argues that the poor are morally entitled to assistance from a variety of actors starting first with the family and gradually growing in size and scale to the federal government. Important in this sequence is the gradual enlargement of the service agency. Subsidiarity believes that which is conducted on the local level is best. Larger societal structure should be utilized only when the most basic fail. Dilulio is attempting to couch the idea in terms of Catholic Social Tradition. The tradition articulated by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops understand rights as, “We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable...Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities- to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.”<sup>77</sup> However, Dilulio seems conflicted in letting this be the controlling influence and having the pressure of the Republican legislative goal of privatizing welfare and disassembling the federal

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<sup>77</sup>US Catholic Bishops Conference. “Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions” (1999).

mechanisms.

Upon first glance, the principle of subsidiarity seems consistent with both Catholic Social teaching and the Republican aims of minimizing the role of the Federal government. The principle was first laid out by Pope Pius XI as a statement against excessive government that characterized the fascist, Nazi and Stalinist periods of Europe. Pope Pius's writing were not doubt influenced by the work of President Lincoln who wrote extensively about federalism and separation of powers in the months leading up to the Civil War. The principle organizes itself around some of the theories that President Lincoln put forward that basically argued that which could be done on the local level is better than trying to supercede it. CST affirms that there is an obligation to help people who are unable to help themselves. The first and best delivery system would ideally be the family, then the community and then larger sectors of organized society. The pragmatism is that the government should not be entangled in problems where other, closer actors are potentially able to do more good. The Faith-Based Initiative, as endorsed by Dilulio operates on this principle. It believes that the government should do what it can to assist local efforts to solve the problems that mire individuals in poverty who are in need of social services.

The principle of subsidiarity that Dilulio laid out in his address to the Catholic ministers is evidence of this conflict. He must know that it is rare that families in crisis poverty jump immediately to federal handout. People in crisis poverty usually exhaust the already strapped resources that are available to them from their friends and family. Dilulio's comments made it appear as though poverty is an individual problem, which is an idea in contradiction with Catholic Social Thought, although it is

consistent with the Republican Party line. Individuals do play a responsible role in poverty; however, to Catholics, there is a threshold that once crossed, requires the community's help. Because DiIulio is forced into the uncomfortable position of being able to subscribe to some of the themes of the Catholic Social Tradition and not others by virtue of the fact that he is employed by Republican conservatives who hope to disassemble the welfare state, he loses credibility in the full expression of subsidiarity.

### **Critique of John DiIulio's Performance in the White House**

During the short time Dr. DiIulio served as Director of the OFBCI, he oversaw the passage HR7, a House of Representatives Bill that sought to adjust the language of the various cabinet offices to allow small community and faith-based organizations to compete for federal grants. The bill was by no means bi-partisan. It was composed by Republicans and excluded many of the ranking Democratic party leaders on the issue from input. DiIulio struggled for its passage, often testifying alone on Capitol Hill without support from the White House Legislative Affairs.

Also while in office, DiIulio oversaw audits of the major Cabinet Office like the Department for Housing and Urban Development. The audit looked to make suggestions to the various agencies about how to rewrite the language of bylaws concerning the activities of faith-based organizations. Most importantly, DiIulio made nearly daily appearances at prayer meetings and related conferences to raise the profile and explain the goals of the faith-based initiative.

As John J. DiIulio stepped down from his position as the Director of the White House

Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on August 17, 2001, he did so amid great controversy. He claimed that his departure was for health reasons, “‘I’m a big fat guy who hasn’t taken care of himself. More than a few of my vital signs are telling I have to get more vital. And commuting to Philadelphia is not exactly what the doctor ordered’.”<sup>78</sup>. He continued in that interview with *USA Today* to say that he would like to continue his work with the Faith-Based Initiatives with the help of Senators Lieberman and Santorum.

Interestingly, in light of the events that took place just after this interview, DiIulio said, “‘We have great leadership in President Bush and Sen. Lieberman, their hearts are pretty much as one.’”<sup>79</sup> Events immediately surrounding his retirement seemed to indicate the opposite of these statements, leading many to believe that DiIulio left because of his frustration with the direction of the office or as a result of a forced retirement due to the perception of poor performance. Perhaps the truth lies in an explanation that incorporates both of these aspects. The commentary by liberal, conservative and mainstream politicians that his departure sparked helps to illuminate some of the intricacies of his departure from the White House Office.

DiIulio had accepted the position in the White House on a conditional basis. He agreed to join the brand new office only days after the President’s inauguration in an effort to help it get off the ground. He said in the beginning that he had no intention to stay much longer than six months, and as he left, little mention was made that he was following his own predicted course. Despite the countless number of comments that he gave upon his

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<sup>78</sup>Conn, Joseph. “DiIulio Departs” *Church and State* 54.9 (Oct 2001) p. 13. AND Benedetto, Richard “Lieberman may be Bush Faith Initiative’s best Hope” *USA Today*. (9 March 2001).

<sup>79</sup>. Conn, Joseph. “DiIulio Departs” *Church and State* 54.9 (Oct 2001). p. 14.

resignation, only one seems to have mentioned that his exit was a timed event: ““ I’ve always said that I agreed to stay for six months, to help launch the initiative, help mobilize people who would not be in traditional friends and allies. I feel like I have run this race.””<sup>80</sup>

However, the race metaphor, seems to suggest that DiIulio’s resignation was coming at a time in the short history of the OFBCI when challenges seemed to exhaust its director.

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<sup>80</sup> York, Bryan. “DiIulio Exits.” *National Review* (17 August 2001).

As reported by the *United Press International* in late November, 2002, some debate argued that DiIulio was being offered as a scapegoat to the conservative Republicans by the administration in response to many of the setbacks the OFBCI endured in its first few months. DiIulio announced his resignation was on the same day that the one-year report on its progress was released to the public. The Office bore criticism from the very constituency – conservative Republicans – that it sought to appeal to in its mission. In the weeks leading up to DiIulio’s departure, the program faced several major setbacks. One of the biggest, according to UPI, was the criticism from liberals and conservatives alike when the administration caved to the separation of church and state lobbyists to reduce the federal funding to religious organizations for their secular services. Drafts of that law were roundly seen by liberals and conservatives as a failure by the Office to do as it had promised.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Horrock, Nicholas M. “Bush to Push Faith-Based Initiative.” *United Press International*. Nov 29, 2002. p.2.

The constitutionally conservative publication, *Church and State*, reported that DiIulio left as a result of his own inability to deal with the criticism that the federal program received from critics who believe that the federal funding is an unconstitutional entanglement of church and state relations. Citing an interview with Cox News in which DiIulio said, “‘ I hate the nonsense that goes on here. We had every possible criticism from every possible side. Left, right, all sides,’” *Church and State* draws attention to the claims by the opponents of the federal funding that are especially critical of the way DiIulio attempted to justify his departure.<sup>82</sup> A quote from the Executive Director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, *Church and State* establishes, at least in part, that DiIulio’s frustration has much to do with the faults of the program premises, and DiIulio’s particular personality faults: “‘ Most people whose ideas are criticized by ‘all sides’ would probably think that their ideas are the problem, not that everyone else is wrong. DiIulio prefers to condemn honest disagreement as ‘nonsense’ and then head out of town.’”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Horrock p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Horrock p. 2.

*Church and State* also reported that the internal White House politics had a role in DiIulio's exit. From the start, DiIulio was seen to have been at a disadvantage in the White House inner circle of advisors, which is dominated by the religious right, because he was not only a Democrat, but a Catholic as well. This disadvantage became increasingly paralyzing, as DiIulio's public statements about the direction of the OFBCI set it on a track that may have been seen as hostile to the Christian conservatives. Throughout his time in the White House, DiIulio would make statements that angered the Religious Right. One particularly public statement that outraged these religious conservatives was, "Bible thumping doesn't cut it..." when asked about the OFBCI's possible funding for proselytizing.<sup>84</sup> He went on to criticize "predominately white, exurban, evangelical and para-church leaders" for their failure to comprehend the needs of inner city social service programs.<sup>85</sup> The subtlety was not lost on Jerry Falwell, who upon the hearing the news of DiIulio's resignation said; "John DiIulio got into trouble the first day in office because he didn't know the clientele. I would hope President Bush gets someone who knows the faith-based community and doesn't leave anyone out. Anyone will be an improvement on John DiIulio."<sup>86</sup>

A scholar from the Hudson Institute, a conservative think tank, was similarly critical of the way that DiIulio alienated the Religious Right, "He has taken what could have been a triumphant issue and marched it smack into quicksand."<sup>87</sup> As a result, this article seems to

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<sup>84</sup> Horrock p. 5.

<sup>85</sup> Horrock p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> Horrock p. 5..

<sup>87</sup> Horrock p. 6..

indicate, White House Advisors eventually pushed DiIulio out of his leadership role in the strategy meetings because of his liberal politics on the Faith-Based issue, which prompted his departure. Marvin Olasky was among those who were hypercritical of the ways in which DiIulio steered the OFBCI. In a later article in *World* magazine (his own periodical publication), Olasky wrote, ““Under the leadership of John DiIulio last year, the attempt to solicit liberal allies appeared to drive the whole process.””<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Olsen, Ted “Former Faith-Based Initiative Head John DiIulio Blasts Bush” *Christianity Today* (12 February 2002).

This conspiracy idea has found at least some level of support with DiIulio's supporters within the Faith-Based Initiatives community. Rev. Eugene Rivers, in an interview with the *Boston Globe*, accused the White House operatives of having secretive meetings that pandered to the interests of the Christian conservatives to the exclusion of black evangelicals and other minority groups. According to Rivers, DiIulio represented the voice of the inner city minorities to whom a bulk of the funding should be ear-marked: "The president's staff, behind his back, seeking to placate the white religious right, sought to undermine professor DiIulio's initiatives to bring the inner cities within the purview of the Bush administration... with John DiIulio's departure, the Bush administration has formally told the black and brown of the inner cities to go to hell."<sup>89</sup> Rivers' emphasis on the race issue in the OFBCI and DiIulio's exit created the impression that the program's new direction that coordinates with the Christian conservatives will be the ruin of the good intentions of the program, "a signal that the faith-based office will just be a financial watering hole for the right-wing white evangelicals."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Conn, Joseph. "DiIulio Departs" *Church and State* 54.9 (Oct 2001). p.2.

<sup>90</sup> Conn p. 2

### **DiIulio in his own words**

After his departure, one of DiIulio's first public statements was with *Esquire* magazine. This was an interesting choice for this academic and intellectual, considering its recent reputation as an entertainment and lifestyle magazine for men. DiIulio contributed a seven page letter to the journalist for use in an article he was writing about the senior White House advisor, Karl Rove. With that letter's help, reporter Ron Suskind helped to paint DiIulio's departure from the Office as resulting from a rift between DiIulio's idealistic good nature and the plotting evil of Bush's chief of staff, Karl Rove. It furthered the claims that DiIulio's exit was the result of a conspiracy by the inner circle of Bush advisors. DiIulio's liberal ideology was regarded as harmful to the goals of the administration and unappealing to white Christian conservatives; DiIulio's letter was also significant because it marked one of the first times a member of Bush's White House raised critical concerns over its policies.

In general, the Bush White House is considered to be a very tightly monitored and controlled atmosphere in which little disagreement with the President's decisions are ever heard for the public record. DiIulio's letter not only voices disagreement, it also hurls insults at the way in which the White House is run. Several quotes from the letter are particularly

damaging. Without citing the entire document, here are a few of the seminal passages:

Every modern presidency moves on the fly, but, on social policy and related issues, the lack of even basic policy knowledge, and the only causal interest in knowing more, was somewhat breathtaking... near-instant shifts from discussing any actual policy pros and cons to discussing political communications, media strategy, et cetera.... This gave rise to what you might call Mayberry Machiavellis - staff, senior and junior, who consistently talked and acted as if the height of political sophistication consisted in reducing every issue to its simplest, black- and white terms for public consumption, then steering legislative initiatives or policy proposals as far as right as possible.<sup>91</sup>

DiIulio goes on to blame these sorts of policies as, "...Very disheartening to this old, Madison-minded American government professor," and argued that these policies are the reason why the faith-based issue is failing.<sup>92</sup> Claiming that Rove, "winked at the most far-right House Republicans, who, in turn, drafted a so called faith-bill that... satisfied certain fundamentalist leaders and Beltway libertarians but bore few marks of compassionate conservatism... Not only that, but it reflected neither the president's own previous rhetoric on the idea nor any of the actual empirical evidence."<sup>93</sup> These statements appear to indicate that DiIulio's departure was not as amicable as the health-related and other personal reasons he may have cited in other press releases. In an article that appeared in *Nation* reporter Joe Conason noted that DiIulio's phrasing, which included, "'so-called compassionate conservatism,'" demonstrates his "resounding disillusion" with the President Bush's faith agenda.<sup>94</sup> Conason notes that he believes President Bush is incapable of meeting the goals on

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<sup>91</sup> DiIulio, John "The DiIulio Letter" *Esquire* (24 Oct 2001). p. 1-7.

<sup>92</sup> DiIulio, letter p. 1-7.

<sup>93</sup> DiIulio, letter p. 1-7.

<sup>94</sup> Conason, Joe. "Where's the Compassion." *Nation*. 227.7 (15 September 2003). p. 22.

which he campaigned to uplift the poor because of his choice to surround himself with advisors who are, “so thoroughly and ruthlessly...pious conservatives.”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Conason p.23.

The publicity that this letter received has remained the most important commentary on John DiIulio's resignation. Nearly every major media source reported on the letter as soon as Suskind released it. The White House did not make an official comment, although an unnamed senior official did report to the *Washington Post* that, "The People who know how this president does business will be able to separate fact from fiction."<sup>96</sup> Byron York from the *National Review* characterized the lack of an official statement from the White House in response to the DiIulio letter as a "deep freeze"<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> Olsen, Ted "Former Faith-Based Initiative Head John DiIulio Blasts Bush" *Christianity Today* (12 February 2002).

<sup>97</sup> York, Byron. "The DiIulio Dilemma" *National Review* (4 December 2002). p. 24.

DiIulio's statements appeared to be extremely unpopular with the White House. Perhaps the White House contacted DiIulio directly and demanded a retraction. It is also possible that DiIulio recognized the egregious mistake he had made by speaking so candidly on his own. In either case, DiIulio's apology was described in the same *National Review* article as a "full retreat."<sup>98</sup> Ron Suskind, the *Esquire* journalist had this to say: "[DiIulio] was publicly executed. He was blinking SOS from the deck of the Pueblo. They made him commit political suicide."<sup>99</sup> DiIulio's statement was, "My criticisms were groundless and baseless due to poorly chosen words and examples. I sincerely apologize and am deeply remorseful. I will not be offering any further comment, or speaking or writing further on any aspect of my limited and unrepresentative White House experience or any matters or persons related thereto."<sup>100</sup>

One would predict that a retraction of this magnitude would signal the end of DiIulio's credibility; however, it has not had that effect. Instead, the media and the political insiders seem to understand that DiIulio's letter to *Esquire* is a commentary on the ways in which the Terrorist attacks of September 11 have made critique of the White House a particularly dangerous undertaking. DiIulio entered and left the Bush camp before September 11, 2001; however, his critical review surfaced in the post-September 11 environment,

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<sup>98</sup> York p. 25.

<sup>99</sup> Conn, Joseph. "Religious right, Politics have Undue Influence at White House, ex-faith czar DiIulio Charges" *Church and State* 56.1 (Jan 2003),p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> York, Bryan. "DiIulio Exits." *National Review* (17 August 2001). p. 3.

making his critique seem not only outdated but also irrelevant, dangerous and seditious.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> York p. 3.

*Salon News*, an online publication, titled their coverage of DiIulio's letter to *Esquire* magazine as, "Bold Words from a Wobbly Man."<sup>102</sup> *Salon News*' Joan Walsh endorsed the rapidly developing characterization of DiIulio as a disillusioned do-gooder who lost to the Republican political machine, "In Ron Suskind's latest *Esquire* opus...the former director of Bush's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives comes off as the administration's rumpled conscience...hired to put the compassion in 'compassionate conservatism'- until he belatedly, painfully realized it was just a campaign slogan and went back to academia, sadder but wiser... and then he bravely unburdened himself in the pages of *Esquire*."<sup>103</sup> The article does criticize DiIulio, although not for opposing the Rove and Bush White House, but for his espousal of their power in the first place in addition to his recanting of his honest statements in *Esquire*. Walsh indicates that DiIulio left the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives as a matter of conscience once he realized that the work he was putting onto the project was not helping the poor as much as it was funding the pet projects of the conservative Christian lobbyists. His retraction of his comments to Suskind cast shadow on his ability to be a man of good conscience.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Walsh, Joan "Bold Words from a Wobbly Man" Salon.com, News Service (5 December 2002) <[http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2002/12/04/diulio/index\\_np.html](http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2002/12/04/diulio/index_np.html)>.

<sup>103</sup> Walsh p.1.

<sup>104</sup> Walsh, Joan "Bold Words from a Wobbly Man" Salon.com, News Service (5 December 2002) <[http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2002/12/04/diulio/index\\_np.html](http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2002/12/04/diulio/index_np.html)>.

### **Brookings Institute Assessment : Tenpas Report**

A few commentaries on DiIulio's job performance while in the office exist. In a report prepared for the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, Brookings Scholar and University of Pennsylvania academic Kathryn Dunn Tenpas evaluates some of the challenges that John DiIulio faced in the embryonic stages of the OFBCI. She labels the challenges as more institutional problems that are representative of the classic mistakes made in organizational processes. The first problem she outlines was the shift in priorities. During the campaign, the faith-based issue seemed to be much more popular with the American public than it proved to be post-inauguration. As a result of the election dispute, Bush's administration sought to create an agenda that was as harmonious as possible with American public opinion. The establishment of the office was announced in January as President Bush was inaugurated, and was scheduled to open in February. Unlike most presidential agendas, President Bush's first

hundred days lacked the benefit of the organizational planning that takes place normally in the period between the election and inauguration. The formation of the office was a rushed affair in an attempt to “do something” that Americans supported bi-partisanly, because it was a subject of agreement between both candidates in the general election. In many ways, the OFBCI was forced to open its doors before it had time to really organize itself. Even though the faith-based project was once on the top of Bush’s list of priorities, it dropped rapidly as it met resistance with the public.<sup>105</sup> Instead, President Bush pursued tax cuts with more vigor, hoping that by the first summer the White House could create a window of opportunity for the faith-based initiative.

Secondly, Tenpas points out that DiIulio suffered from a lack of autonomy in matters of budgetary authority, staffing and development, and execution of political strategy.<sup>106</sup> Soon after his arrival, DiIulio made it clear that his preferred leadership style for the OFBCI was a “go-slow” and consensus building approach.<sup>107</sup> Instead, the Republican majorities on Capitol Hill sought to push their version of the charitable choice bill through as quickly as possible, HR 7, the “Community Solutions Act of 2001”, alienated many moderate Democrats who may have supported a similar act of legislation had they had some input. Tenpas argues that this was a mistake that failed to allow the greatest strength of DiIulio’s leadership to be capitalized upon. As a Democrat, DiIulio’s bi-partisan appeal could have

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<sup>105</sup> Tenpas, Kathryn Dunn. “Can an Office Change a Country?: The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, a Year in Review” A report for the PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life: July 2002, Updated October 2002.

<sup>106</sup> Tenpas p. 10

<sup>107</sup> Tenpas p. 8

created a much larger, “valuable resevoir of goodwill and defused the harshest opponents.”

<sup>108</sup> HR 7's passage was supported by the President, as it sought to ease the difficulties that faith organizations had in competition for federal social assistance grants. The bill also included a tax gift for regular charitable donors.

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<sup>108</sup> Tenpas. p. 12

The HR 7 Bill's passage was never an assured conclusion. Its rejection would have been a huge embarrassment for the President, who had made the faith-based issue a pet project and also would have made the future of the OFBCI extremely questionable. Its rejection was nonetheless a very real threat due to the lack of a natural coalition to support it. Tenpas characterized the opposition to HR 7 to be, "so broad as to defy generalization."<sup>109</sup> Strict constitutionalists opposed the bill on the grounds that it violated the separation of church and state. Religious groups such as the Baptist Joint Committee, the American Jewish Committee and the United Church of Christ feared government tampering with issues of faith in their churches. The *New York Times* reported that 850 members of these clergies signed a petition, "saying they opposed the president's initiative because they wanted 'to keep government out of the churches, temples, synagogues and mosques.'"<sup>110</sup> Civil Rights groups feared the possibility of federally sponsored employment discrimination which had been an issue before with organizations like the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities.

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<sup>109</sup> Tenpas p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> Tenpas p.10.

DiIulio's job was made more difficult, according to Tenpas, because of the lack of coordination within the White House. In a well-run West Wing, legislative affairs, communications and public liaisons would streamline the White House message to ensure that their support for a presidential priority resonated within the halls of Congress throughout the debate on HR 7. Instead, DiIulio's appearances in Capitol Hill hearings were solo efforts without the seeming support or assistance from legislative or political affairs. As DiIulio was being left out of major policy briefings and decisions, he would often find his attempts to promote the program challenged and finally disregarded by Karl Rove. Rove's priority throughout that first year in office was to strengthen the reelection coalition by pumping up the conservative base of the party. This required Rove to reorganize the presidential legislative priorities in such a way that education and tax cuts dominated, leaving the OFBCI in the cold. DiIulio was faced with the difficult position of seeking Congressional support for a bill that defied bi-partisan agreement. *Washington Post* reporter, E.J. Dionne put it best as he explained, "[The Faith-Based Initiative] is in deep trouble because every move the administration makes to appease the idea's opponents weakens support from its likely allies."<sup>111</sup> Liberal supporters demanded assurances that the federal funds would not be used

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<sup>111</sup> Dionne, E.J. "The Dwindling Armies of Compassion," *The Washington Post* (13 July 2001) p A21.

for proselytizing while potential conservative supporters wanted to be sure that the those liberal assurances did not affect the spiritual missions of the faith-based organizations.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Tenpas, Kathryn Dunn. “Can an Office Change a Country?: The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, a Year in Review” A report for the PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life: July 2002, Updated October 2002 p 11

A fourth difficulty that DiIulio's leadership in the OFBCI faced was the result of inflated expectations, according to Tenpas. During the campaign, Bush had gained a new set of core supporters for his faith-based initiative, who exerted "unrelenting pressure" and reduced the chances of a moderation of expectations.<sup>113</sup> According to Tenpas, the White House received direct requests from churches and other charitable organization for funding for their programs. The swift actions that the president took after his inauguration with the immediate executive orders seemed to invigorate this constituency; however, the lack of knowledge by the public at large about the actual bureaucratic effects of the rhetoric created an untenable situation for DiIulio as he had to mediate the public's dissatisfaction and the West Wing's abandonment.

As the debate on HR 7 raged on in Congress, there was a leaked memorandum to *The Washington Post* from the Salvation Army that reportedly said that the White House was committed to the protection of charities from gay rights statutes.<sup>114</sup> HR 7 was pulled off the floor the very next day, and only reintroduced after the White House insisted that it was not involved in the Salvation Army's request. Eventually the bill was passed on July 19, 2001; however, it had exhausted all of the political consensus capital that the issue had. The President was forced to lobby for the bill that the House had devised without prior conference with the OFBCI. DiIulio had hoped that the first version of the bill would originate in the Senate as a bi-partisan bill with the Democratic support of Sen. Lieberman and Sen. Clinton. However, because HR 7 came from the high polarized House of Representatives, the

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<sup>113</sup> Tenpas p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Tenpas p.11

possibility for bi-partisanship was quashed.

### **Peer Assessment and Commentary: Stanley W. Carlson-Thies**

In a recent lecture, Stanley W. Carlson-Thies who served under DiIulio in the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Issues as Associate Director of Law and Policy and has since left the office, Carlson-Thies had several observations about the challenges that he and the Office faced and resulted in the apparent failure. The first he observed was the phenomena of “here one day, gone the next”. Carlson-Thies recognized that there was a tremendous challenge to effect change in the bureaucratic agencies’ view on funding religious organizations. The laws were terribly complex and poorly written. The OFBCI sought to audit and make the appropriate changes; however, Carlson-Thies believed that the cabinet offices were slow to take the project seriously because they believed it to be a short term concern that was only going to last as long as the Bush administration was in power or popular. There was a great deal of professional stalling by the Cabinet offices.

A close look at the text of the actual provisions that were changed as a result of the

Cabinet re-interpretation of the role of faith-based charities in social services before and after the audit by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives helps to identify the fundamental shift in the way that FBOs are perceived by the government agencies. Although the changes were very slow, I argue that they are now substantial in these Cabinet offices such as the Housing and Urban development, Health and Human services, Department of Justice, Education and Agriculture. For example, regulations by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1998 noted that, “An increase in number of States and local government have been successful in producing cost-effective low-income and moderate housing by working in partnership with the private sector, including non-profit community development corporations, community action agencies, neighborhood housing services corporations, trade unions, groups sponsored by religious organizations... and other tenant organizations.”<sup>115</sup> These findings by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reveal that small community and faith-based organizations are believed to be beneficial in providing affordable housing and that the US government ought to continue to build partnerships with these listed groups to included religious organizations. However, in 1998 when the findings were published there were no official means by which to make these alliances. These findings were soon contradicted by the now superceded regulations of the HOME Act that stated, “HOME funds may not be provided to primarily religious organizations, such as churches, for any activity including secular activities. In

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<sup>115</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Title II of the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act* [as amended through December 31, 1998] Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998, SEC. 202. [42 U.S.C. 12721] Findings.

addition HOME funds may not be used to rehabilitate or construct housing owned by primarily religious organizations...in particular there must be no religious or membership criteria for tenants of the property.”<sup>116</sup> These restrictions are evidence of the contradiction within HUD over the role of FBO’s in achieving affordable housing for low-income Americans. On the one hand, they recognized in 1998 that FBO’s are useful; however their regulatory guidelines prohibit their assistance to these organizations. The OFBCI worked to identify and ultimately rectify these contradictions. In September of 2003, the Federal Register indicated that the OFBCI was at least somewhat successful in loosening the government restrictions for FBOs. Part 92 of the HOME Investment Partnerships program includes funding to be made available to faith-based organizations, “Organizations that are religious or faith-based are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in the HOME program. Neither the Federal government nor a State or local government receiving funds under HOME programs shall discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization’s religious character or affiliation.”<sup>117</sup> The regulations go on to say that the organizations that are funded by HOME may not use the funding to engage in inherently religious activities such as worship, instruction or proselytization. Those activities must be offered in separate time or location than the services provided. In addition to maintaining its independence in terms of mission and expression of religious beliefs, the

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<sup>116</sup>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *HOME Regulations: Religious Organizations*. Washington, D.C. :Government Printing Office, 1998. 24 CFR 92.1- 92.257.

<sup>117</sup>“Rules Regulations Part 92- HOME Investment Partnerships Program 92.257 Faith-Based Activities.” *Federal Register*. Vol. 68. Issue 189. (30 September 2003).

organizations who accept funding are not required to remove religious symbols from the space designated for the services. The FBO's are prohibited from withholding their federally funded services from individuals on the basis of religious belief.

The changes in the Federal regulations as a result of the audit and subsequent recommendations by the OFBCI were a hard fought and slow process. Carlson-Thies identified the arduous process as decelerated by "the downside of presidential support". Social reforms backed by the President became partisan issues and it thus alienated many of its natural supporters from the traditional Democratic base such as African Americans. The issue became exclusively identified with the president, and thus made it easy to discard. Christian conservatives doubted the viability of the efforts of the OFBCI on the grounds that any involvement between the church and state would weaken the sanctity and morality of the Church's message. Alternatively, African American churches were suspicious of this seemingly Republican attempt to buy their sympathy and that any support for a Republican act of legislation is a total loss. The difficulty with the issue being identified so strongly with President Bush made the attempts for change a partisan issue. As Director of the OFBCI, DiIulio has hoped to be a-political, the topic failed to be discussed on the basis of its pure merits. Rather, the debate of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative as a tool to examine and re-write bureaucratic rules became extremely partisan and political.

## **Chapter 5 : Conclusion**

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr is famously quoted as saying, “Politics ought to be a search for a remedy.” I believe that an assessment of Dr. John DiIulio’s career thus far is the story of his personal search for a remedy to the failure of America to help sustain a nurturing community in our inner cities. His informed political opinions are representative of a new type of American progressivism, that is a sophisticated ideology developed by serious scholarship of the philosophy of religion, spiritual expression and politics. His Catholicism adds a dimension to his work that is representative of a flashpoint in American politics which seeks to ask the question about how much religion matters in politics. John DiIulio is a contemporary American public servant who has made his Catholicism an important influence intellectually as well as spiritually in his career. As a result, DiIulio argues that ideas and religious spirituality matter a great deal and enjoy a rightful place in politics, seeing as they are the motivators of it. Related to his spirituality, is DiIulio’s well developed sense of the importance of community in American culture. The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives potentially offered a vehicle for DiIulio’s philosophies; however, his

experiences in the OFBCI failed to achieve his and the administration's high expectations.

Dilulio's struggle in the OFBCI with the evangelical and conservative Protestant traditions demonstrates the continued challenges that Catholicism faces in the American political psyche. As I observe, there are three important factors that contributed to the series of events that led to Dilulio's resignation. The first factor involves a closer look at the political and religious culture of the 4<sup>th</sup> Great Awakening. The second factor involved a more in-depth analysis of Catholic Social Justice and how it differs methodologically from its Protestant counterpart Compassionate conservatism. The third factor examined bureaucratic and partisan obstacles faced by Dr. Dilulio as he suffered under the shift of political will for the faith-based initiative.

The differences between the two traditions' view of social services for the poor ultimately led Dilulio to be forced to make too many compromises that weakened his position in the partisan White House and led to his resignation only a few months after taking office. Washington Post columnist and friend of Dr. DiIulio expressed the tension between DiIulio and other Bush advisors as one of foundations. President Bush locates his view of services for the poor in the suburban Protestant example in which poverty cycles and its related issues are markedly more sanitized than the view that DiIulio had developed in his years as a criminologist and in his work with urban black churches. The fact remains that urban churches provide more services for more needy people with less money than their ex-urban counterparts. While both types of churches employ Christian charity as their governing principle, its expression can be represented on a spectrum

of responses. In a sense, the future of the OFBCI was restricted by a social services language barrier, DiIulio spoke urban, African American values, while President Bush and other Christian conservative Republicans spoke suburban values.

DiIulio's political alignment; however, has always been a stumbling block in his career. His experiences in the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives is a case and point of the problems that one faces when they straddle the partisan line. DiIulio failed in his attempt gain the acceptance of the Christian conservative right, despite his best efforts to make his Catholicism appeal to the shared Christian moral responsibility to the poor. DiIulio went as far as renaming his spiritual practice to reflect his solidarity with conservative Christians as he renamed himself an "evangelical Christian".

While Dr. John Dilulio's Catholic orientation has some degree of natural alliance with the Compassionate Conservatism that characterizes the Bush White House; however, the complete Catholic Social Justice package was never fully endorsed by the Administration and prompted a great deal of miscommunication that led to Dilulio's resignation from, as E.J. Dionne stated, "An Enlarged heart".

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