

city. All told, the AFL-CIO includes some 13 million workers. For labor—which now represents a mere 9 percent of the private work force—to get larger and stronger, says Lerner, the organizational structure must be changed, so that there are only 10 to 15 unions, all fo-

cused on dominating particular industries, labor markets, and sectors of the economy.

“By focusing workers on changing conditions in an industry, not just fighting their individual employer, unions start to create the conditions that allow unions to win.”

SOCIETY

Faith-Based Facts

“Debunking Charitable Choice: The Evidence Doesn’t Support the Political Left or Right” by Mark Chaves, in *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Summer 2003), Stanford Graduate School of Business, 518 Memorial Way, Stanford, Calif. 94305-5015.

The Bush administration has championed “faith-based initiatives” to increase the flow of government dollars to grassroots religious organizations that help the needy, arguing that their charitable efforts are more intense and more effective than government programs. Yet, these advocates say, faith-based nonprofits often get short shrift when public funds are given out.

The reality is very different, argues Chaves, a sociologist at the University of Arizona and principal investigator in a study of national religious congregations. There’s very little discrimination against religious groups in the competition for government grants and contracts. “In a few cases, overzealous bureaucrats have demanded that Catholic hospitals remove crucifixes or the Salvation Army refrain from using the word ‘salvation,’” according to Chaves. But over the decades, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of grants and contracts have gone to religious organizations, large and small. Catholic Charities gets about 60 percent of its funds from government sources, and the Salvation Army about 20 percent.

Nor is the typical religious congregation deeply involved in aiding the downtrodden,

Chaves points out. “Only six percent of congregations have a staff person devoting at least quarter time to social service projects.” Clergy, according to time-use studies, spend minimal hours on community activities of any sort. And in 80 percent of the congregations making an effort, no more than 30 volunteers are involved over the course of a year.

Advocates of faith-based initiatives claim that, in President George W. Bush’s words, “faith can move people in ways that government can’t”—and opponents fear that that might happen with government support. But “transformed souls and religious conversions” are hardly likely, says Chaves, when even churches, synagogues, and mosques heavily involved in providing social services seldom integrate their “clients” into their congregations.

Usually, congregations simply address individuals’ immediate needs—for food (33 percent of congregations have food-related projects), housing (18 percent), or clothing (11 percent). And when congregations and other religious groups seek to do more than that, they often must turn to government agencies and secular nonprofits. They are not an alternative to that world, Chaves says. They are part of it.

Help for the Mentally Ill

“Leaving the Mentally Ill Out in the Cold” by E. Fuller Torrey, in *City Journal* (Autumn 2003), Manhattan Institute, 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

When President George W. Bush’s Commission on Mental Health issued its report this past July, hardly anybody seemed to notice. Maybe that was because of the endless

platitudes that filled the report, suggests Torrey, a physician and coauthor of *The Invisible Plague: The Rise of Mental Illness from 1750 to the Present* (2002). Or maybe the report’s po-