

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-

litical correctness put people off. But the study was at least partly redeemed by offering “a hint” of how to make progress.

The Bush commission’s “aversion to unpleasant truths,” Torrey says, was frequently on display. While calling for a campaign to “reduce the stigma” of mental illness, the commission made no mention of that stigma’s chief cause: “untreated mentally ill individuals committing acts of violence,” including 1,000 homicides annually, or more than four percent of the national total. Some 35 percent of the nation’s homeless people and 16 percent of the inmates in prisons and jails are mentally ill.

The commission likewise emphasized the need for mental health “consumers” to choose their own treatments, ignoring the fact that 50 percent of all schizophrenics and manic depressives aren’t even aware that they are sick. The commission also ignored the “proven effectiveness” of mandatory-treatment laws. Arrests of mentally ill individuals in New York state have declined by 85 percent since such legislation was enacted in 1999.

The nation’s mental health system is “frag-

mented, disconnected and often inadequate,” the commission noted, much as the first presidential commission on mental illness did in 1961. Yet in 1997 alone, the nation spent \$71 billion on treatment, about two-thirds of it through the federal Medicare and Medicaid programs whose administrators, according to Torrey, lack adequate knowledge of which local programs work well enough to deserve funding.

But almost in passing, the commission pointed the way forward, says Torrey, in urging that Washington give the states more flexibility in spending federal aid money for people with mental illness while seeking improved accountability and results. Yes, the states performed abysmally in this field in the past, but that was because federal programs beginning in the 1960s unwittingly created massive incentives to “deinstitutionalize” the mentally ill. Experimental programs in a half-dozen states could serve as a first step. That approach set the stage for welfare reform, Torrey says, and it would do the same for repair of the mental health care system.

That Enlightenment Buzz

“Caffeine and the Coming of the Enlightenment” by Roger Schmidt, in *Raritan* (Summer 2003), Rutgers University, 31 Mine St., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

“Short, O short then be thy reign/ And give us to the world again!” That’s the great Samuel Johnson, flinging his defiance at sleep during one of his famous nocturnal excursions, in 1753. The storied man of letters is nearly as famous for his vast capacity for late-night reading and carousing as for his literary genius. In Johnson and others of his day, those capacities owed more than a little to the arrival on the scene of a chemical substance: caffeine. And not just their capacities. Schmidt, a professor of English at Idaho State University, thinks the arrival of coffee and tea in Europe around 1650 had something to do with the birth of the Enlightenment.

Sleep in the pre-caffeine era was different in quantity and character. In 1630, a sermonizing John Donne told the king of England that sleep was “shaking hands with God,” reflecting the general view that slumber opened the door to contact with

the divine. Schmidt says that in the days before caffeine—and advances in lighting and mechanical clocks, which also came along in the mid-17th century—people slept for eight hours, often punctuated by a waking interval of an hour or so that established a more intimate connection to the world of spirits.

By Johnson’s time, however, sleep seemed almost a sin. In 1728, clergyman John Law denounced it as “the poorest, dullest refreshment of the body,” one that produced either “insensibility” or “the folly of dreams.” He excoriated the Christian who chose to “enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep, rather than be early at his devotions to God.” A few years later, Benjamin Franklin famously reminded slugabeds that time is money. In 1798, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, advised his followers that six