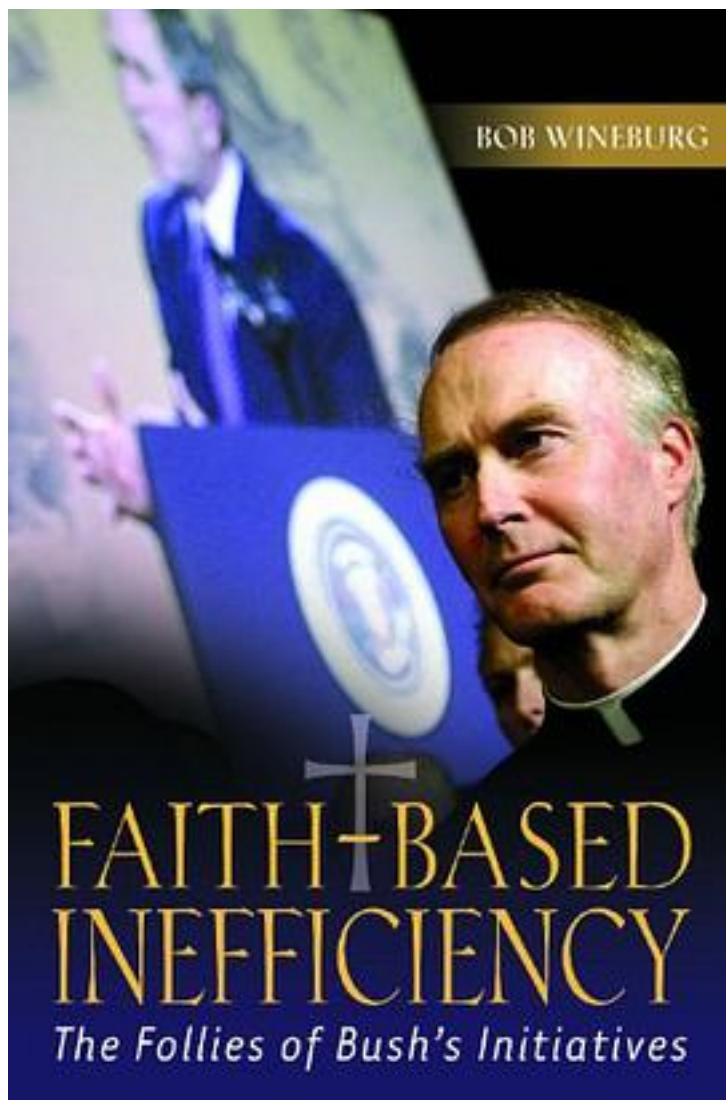


Faith-based Inefficiency



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This work argues that President Bush's 'Faith-Based Initiatives' are a cover for the Right's ideological offensive. On January 29th 2001, President George W. Bush established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Its stated mission was to fight society's ills by "rallying the armies of compassion" inside America's churches. Yet, argues the author of this book, beneath the compassionate camouflage lies a five-star war plan to demolish government programmes, mobilise and increase the size of the evangelical Christian voting block, shift government money to churches and other Faith-Based organisations in the conservative-led culture war, and develop a smoke screen of convincing media images and baffling words to confuse detractors. The largely understated relationship between the plans' politics and its service delivery has been overlooked, until now. The author untangles the web of motives and complex activities in this newest dimension of the ongoing culture war to capture America's soul. The author identifies the parties - religious extremists, social engineers, and politicians - and shows how they influence and work within this field to further the agenda of the core constituency of 'Compassionate Conservatism'. This analysis clearly explains this initiative and exposes the naivety of the Administration's approach to fixing the serious and complex problems of persistent poverty. In addition, the author illustrates through first-hand examples what is required for effective services and shows how local communities can develop plans to produce more skills for coping with local problems. He addresses complex issues like worker displacement, illiteracy, child abuse, substance abuse, and prison reentry while offering workable options for small churches to participate in partnerships with government and other local nonprofits to prevent, solve, and manage such problems. It focuses on a controversial issue in contemporary U.S. politics. It uncovers the shortcomings and biases of the Bush Administration's Faith-Based Initiatives. It is written by an "insider" with intimate knowledge of the policies, players, and practices. It offers a framework for a better approach to this important policy area.

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