

September 9, 2005

Mr. Tony Perkins and Ms. Kathy Athearn
Family Research Council
801 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Perkins and Ms. Athearn:

Thank you for responding to my letter of August 25.

As you may remember, I had written in regards to your fund raising letter from earlier that month and asked why the Family Research Council did not work on issues related to poverty reduction – a clear goal of all Christians - and had chosen instead to focus on gay marriage, opposite to hate crimes legislation, and other divisive issues.

You wrote in your return letter that FRC is concerned about poverty and drew attention to your 1996 support of the welfare reform bill (do you really have to go back to 1996 to find an example?). Welfare roles have fallen since that time. But shouldn't the goal of welfare reform been a reduction in poverty? Sadly, poverty has risen the last four years in a row (since the Bush economic plan was enacted) and because of the welfare reform bill you supported millions are left without any safety net. Most churches opposed the welfare reform bill on the grounds that it abandoned the poor. Jesus teaches us not to abandon anyone.

Many churches, as you pointed out, have opened social service programs over the recent years (and that is good news). I used to run the largest homeless family shelter in Portland, Oregon. The shelter was housed in a United Methodist church and was supported by donations and volunteers from over 20 different congregations, schools, and community groups. Unfortunately, because of federal cutbacks in housing and other government assistance programs many families now live on the streets. We were often forced to turn away families with children on cold winter nights and received no government money because there is so little money available and so many agencies that need it.

In short, your advocacy has failed and more and more people live in poverty each day. But you'd never know that from the FRC agenda. Actually, it is quite difficult to distinguish your agenda from that of the most rabidly conservative and partisan Republicans in



No matter who
you are
or where
you are
on life's journey,
you are
welcome here.

God is still speaking,

