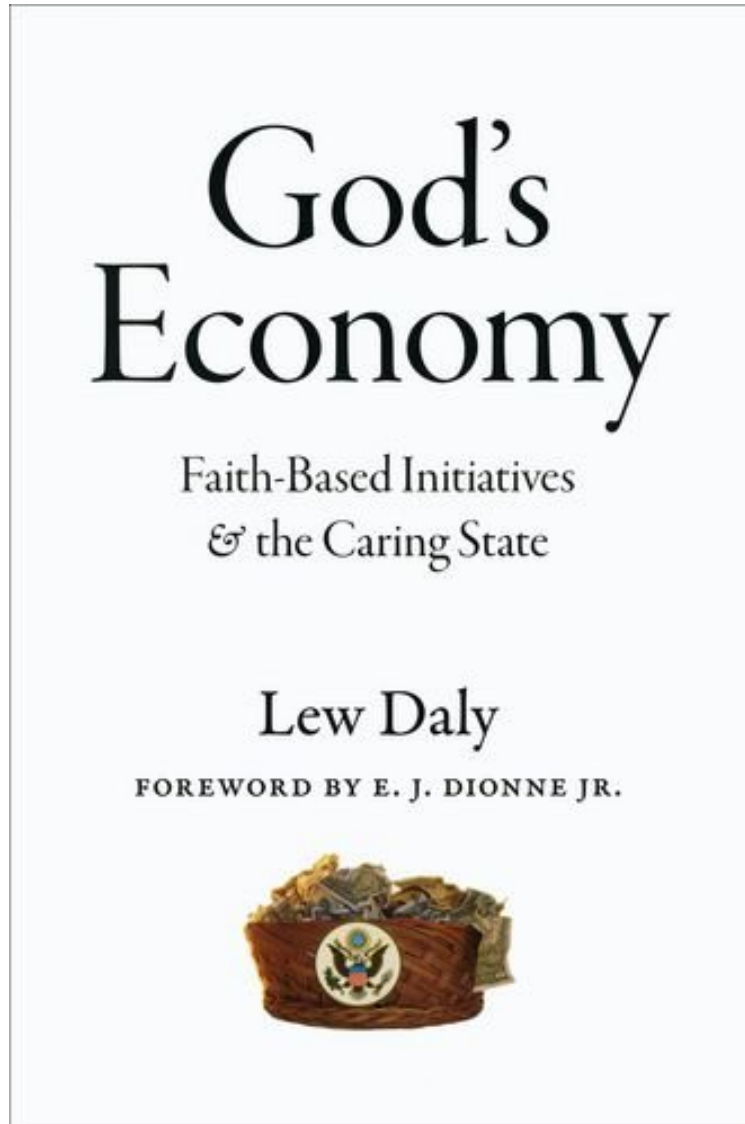


(Read free ebook) God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State

God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State

Lew Daly

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Lew Daly : God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A new starting point for communitarian political thoughtBy firstlightloverLew Daly is a think-tank scholar known for his writing on religion and social policy, but with God's Economy: Faith-Based Initiatives and the Caring State, he has made a genuinely profound contribution to American political thought. This beautifully executed volume combines the detailed scholarship of an academic monograph with

the strong argumentation and voice of a public essayist. Washington Post writer E.J. Dionne provides a richly detailed Foreword that helps to contextualize Daly's achievement in the broader tradition of Christian social thought. This is an absorbing work with detailed arguments that reward close attention, and, as several of the uniformly glowing jacket endorsements suggest, it is difficult to categorize on the political spectrum. On the one hand, it is a work about social policy and church-state law, with a relatively conservative constitutional outlook on controversial issues such as faith-based hiring rights in federally-funded social aid programs; yet, unlike other conservative critics of "strict separationism" in social aid programs, Daly puts the destructive, "state-like" powers of big business and other market institutions at the center of his family- and faith-centered critique of American liberalism. In the first half of the book, drawing on a detailed comparative policy history of church-state conflict in public welfare systems, Daly reveals important parallels between the "subsidiary" welfare states of Christian Democratic Europe (particularly in Germany and the Netherlands) and America's "faith-based turn" in welfare reform since the mid-1990s. "Subsidiarity" is part of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, and the cornerstone, Daly argues, of a Catholic theory of the state which aims to support society's natural structures of help and recovery, beginning with the family, without distorting or usurping their self-governance, structure, and purposes as given by God. In the realm of social services this takes the form of extensive contracting with faith-based providers, combining generous public subsidies with strong protections for both the religious liberty of welfare clients and the religious autonomy of faith-based providers. Daly convincingly demonstrates the striking parallels between the Christian Democratic approach and George W. Bush's faith-based initiative, and indeed the transatlantic intellectual connections that played a formative role (if well behind-the-scenes) in the development of Bush's efforts beginning in 1995. Daly's comparative policy history alone is a major contribution, but he goes further by exploring the legal and political theory of subsidiary welfare systems in the second half of the book. What he finds in this tradition, reaching back to nineteenth-century Counter-Enlightenment and Anti-Revolutionary thought, is a vision of public justice in which both political and economic liberalism (and the institutions of the welfare state and the free market) are seen as philosophically and politically united against the family and the community. This older, more radical critique of liberalism, Daly argues, helps us see that restoring distressed communities cannot stop with simply limiting the role of government, as long as economic power continues to have free rein. To the contrary, it is precisely the conservative responsibility of the state to intervene against the market in defense of the family, enforcing the rule of what Daly (following Otto von Guericke) calls "the social law." In a powerful Afterword, Daly explains the contemporary significance of these communal law ideas, which are the intellectual DNA, he argues, of a new legal and policy framework designed to protect the family as a natural, sovereign structure in the liberal market order. He further argues that new alliances between economic progressives and social conservatives could transform national politics in the future.

President Obama has signaled a sharp break from many Bush Administration policies, but he remains committed to federal support for religious social service providers. Like George W. Bush's faith-based initiative, though, Obama's version of the policy has generated loud criticism from both sides of the aisle even as the communities that stand to benefit suffer through an ailing economy. *Gods Economy* reveals that virtually all of the critics, as well as many supporters, have long misunderstood both the true implications of faith-based partnerships and their unique potential for advancing social justice. Unearthing the intellectual history of the faith-based initiative, Lew Daly locates its roots in the pluralist tradition of Europe's Christian democracies, in which the state shares sovereignty with social institutions. He argues that Catholic and Dutch Calvinist ideas played a crucial role in the evolution of this tradition, as churches across nineteenth-century Europe developed philosophical and legal defenses to protect their education and social programs against ascendant governments. Tracing the influence of this heritage on the past three decades of American social policy and church-state law, Daly finally untangles the radical beginnings of the faith-based initiative. In the process, he frees it from the narrow culture-war framework that has limited debate on the subject since Bush opened the White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001. A major contribution from an important new voice at the intersection of religion and politics, *Gods Economy* points the way toward policymaking that combines strong social support with a new moral focus on the protection of families and communities.

From Publishers Weekly Eight years after President George W. Bush began federal support for faith-based social services, the program is still contested by both the right and the left. Daly, a senior fellow at Demos, a nonpartisan public policy think tank, offers the current economic crisis as a good reason why President Obama should redouble efforts to more fully embrace it. His dense, scholarly review of the history of faith-based initiatives, which he traces to 19th-century German and Dutch welfare systems, may be the most comprehensive and evenhanded to date. Daly charts the evolution of the First Amendment's establishment clause from strict institutional separation of church and state to one that emphasizes equal treatment for religious and secular service providers. Daly is convinced that faith-based social service providers offer the best moral standards for protecting families and communities, though it is clear he is referring mainly to Christian providers. In pluralistic 21st-century America, where people of no particular faith are the fastest-growing segment of the religious landscape, it's not clear that the public is ready to trust religious

institutions more than secular ones. (Dec.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Bold yet balanced, *Gods Economy* will confound liberals and conservatives alike. By harnessing neglected insights from Catholic, Calvinist, and other overlapping traditions of reflection on authentic social pluralism, Dalys book offers to put both the market and the state back where they belong in the service of the plural communities in which people learn to love, serve, and even worship. Incisive, informed, and inspiring, this is public philosophy that packs a practical punch. Much needed in places high and low, *Gods Economy* takes the vital discussion of mediating institutions and faith-based initiatives three long steps forward. Daly is an exemplary guide."