



Faith, Hope, and Jobs: Welfare-to-Work in Los Angeles (Religion and Politics series)

Stephen V. Monsma

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A front-burner issue on the public policy agenda today is the increased use of partnerships between government and nongovernmental entities, including faith-based social service organizations. In the wake of President Bush's faith-based initiative, many are still wondering about the effectiveness of these faith-based organizations in providing services to those in need, and whether they provide better outcomes than more traditional government, secular nonprofit, and for-profit organizations. In *Faith, Hope, and Jobs*, Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper study the effectiveness of 17 different welfare-to-work programs in Los Angeles County—a county in which the U.S. government spends 14% of its *entire* welfare budget—and offer groundbreaking insight into understanding what works and what doesn't.

Monsma and Soper examine client assessment of the programs, their progress in developing attitudes and resources important for finding self-supporting employment, and their experience in finding actual employment. The study reveals that the clients of the more explicitly faith-based programs did best in gaining in social capital and were highly positive in evaluating the religious components of their programs. For-profit programs tended to do the best in terms of their clients finding employment. Overall, the religiously active respondents tended to experience better outcomes than those who were not religiously active but surprisingly, the religiously active and non-active tended to do equally well in faith-based programs.

Faith, Hope, and Jobs concludes with three sets of concrete recommendations for public policymakers, social service program managers, and researchers.

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