

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910780862203321
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Titolo	Saving America? [[electronic resource]] : faith-based services and the future of civil society // Robert Wuthnow
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, N.J., : Princeton University Press, c2004
ISBN	1-282-45866-3 9786612458668 1-4008-3206-3
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (374 p.)
Disciplina	361.750973
Soggetti	Church and social problems - United States Church charities - United States Church work with the poor - United States Civil society - United States Federal aid to human services - United States Social service - United States - Religious aspects
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [333]-347) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- List of Tables -- Preface -- 1 Why "Faith-Based"? Why Now? -- 2 Congregation-Based Social Services -- 3 Congregations as Caring Communities -- 4 Religion and Volunteering -- 5 Faith-Based Service Organizations -- 6 The Recipients of Social Services -- 7 Promoting Social Trust -- 8 Experiencing Unlimited Love? -- 9 Public Policy and Civil Society -- Methodological Note -- Notes -- Select Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	On January 29, 2001, President George W. Bush signed an executive order creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. This action marked a key step toward institutionalizing an idea that emerged in the mid-1990s under the Clinton administration--the transfer of some social programs from government control to religious organizations. However, despite an increasingly vocal, ideologically charged national debate--a debate centered on such questions as: What are these organizations doing? How well are they doing it? Should they be supported with tax dollars?--solid

answers have been few. In *Saving America?* Robert Wuthnow provides a wealth of up-to-date information whose absence, until now, has hindered the pursuit of answers. Assembling and analyzing new evidence from research he and others have conducted, he reveals what social support faith-based agencies are capable of providing. Among the many questions he addresses: Are congregations effective vehicles for providing broad-based social programs, or are they best at supporting their own members? How many local congregations have formal programs to assist needy families? How much money do such programs represent? How many specialized faith-based service agencies are there, and which are most effective? Are religious organizations promoting trust, love, and compassion? The answers that emerge demonstrate that American religion is helping needy families and that it is, more broadly, fostering civil society. Yet religion alone cannot save America from the broad problems it faces in providing social services to those who need them most. Elegantly written, *Saving America?* represents an authoritative and evenhanded benchmark of information for the current--and the coming--debate.
