



# **God and Government in the Ghetto: The Politics of Church-State Collaboration in Black America (Morality and Society Series)**

*Michael Leo Owens*

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In recent years, as government agencies have encouraged faith-based organizations to help ensure social welfare, many black churches have received grants to provide services to their neighborhoods' poorest residents. This collaboration, activist churches explain, is a way of enacting their faith and helping their neighborhoods.

But as Michael Leo Owens demonstrates in *God and Government in the Ghetto*, this alliance also serves as a means for black clergy to reaffirm their political leadership and reposition moral authority in black civil society. Drawing on both survey data and fieldwork in New York City, Owens reveals that African American churches can use these newly forged connections with public agencies to influence policy and government responsiveness in a way that reaches beyond traditional electoral or protest politics. The churches and neighborhoods, Owens argues, can see a real benefit from that influence—but it may come at the expense of less involvement at the grassroots.

Anyone with a stake in the changing strategies employed by churches as they fight for social justice will find *God and Government in the Ghetto* compelling reading.

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