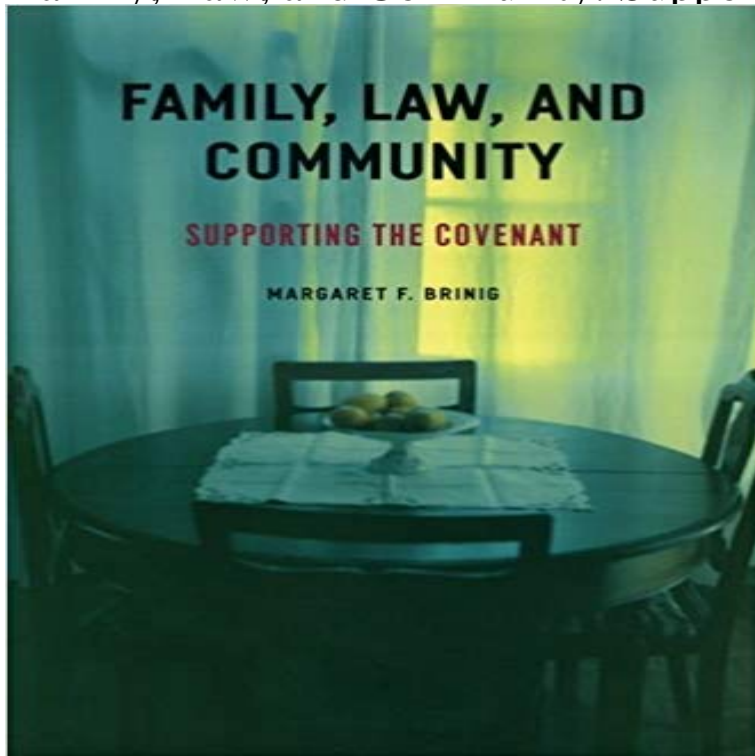


# Family, Law, and Community: Supporting the Covenant



In the wake of vast social and economic changes, the nuclear family has lost its dominance, both as an ideal and in practice. Some welcome this shift, while others see civilization itself in peril but few move beyond ideology to develop a nuanced understanding of how families function in society. In this provocative book, Margaret F. Brinig draws on research from a variety of disciplines to offer a distinctive study of family dynamics and social policy. Concentrating on legal reform, Brinig examines a range of subjects, including cohabitation, custody, grandparent visitation, and domestic violence. She concludes that conventional legal reforms and the social programs they engender ignore social capital: the trust and support given to families by a community. Traditional families generate much more social capital than nontraditional ones, Brinig concludes, which leads to clear rewards for the children. Firmly grounded in empirical research, *Family, Law, and Community* argues that family policy can only be effective if it is guided by an understanding of the importance of social capital and the advantages held by families that accrue it.

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Family, Law, and Community: Supporting the Covenant. By Margaret F. Brinig. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 288p. \$49.00. ISBN, 9780226074993. Social Science

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