

That realization was arguably as important as *Brown* in advancing equality for African Americans” (131).

After his baseball career, Robinson continued his civil rights activism, advocating for antidiscrimination legislation and fighting racial discrimination in business and sports. Smith acknowledges that Robinson’s political stance was not easy to categorize. Robinson read in Scripture an emphasis on personal responsibility, leading to a distrust of welfare programs and a preference for Republican politics. Smith additionally demonstrates that Robinson’s endorsement of Richard Nixon made him somewhat of a pariah among younger civil rights activists. Nonetheless, Robinson’s contributions to sports and society remain invaluable. “We have a long way to go to eliminate discrimination,” Smith avers, “but inspired by his Christian faith, Jackie Robinson moved our society forward, and his life continues to inspire progress toward racial equity” (218–219).

This book is an essential resource for historians and scholars interested in the intersection of religion and sports in the United States. The extensive documentation alone makes it an exceptional book, but at its core, Smith’s examination of the various facets of Robinson’s private and public faith life opens into a compelling history of American sports, politics, and religion in the mid-twentieth century.

Arthur Remillard
Saint Francis University
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***City of Dignity: Christianity, Liberalism, and the Making of Global Los Angeles.* By Sean T. Dempsey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. 224 pp. \$45.00 cloth.**

City of Dignity offers a textured history of liberal Christianity in Los Angeles. The book makes its aim and arguments clear: mainline Protestants, Catholics, and progressive Black congregations banded together under a shared “vision of social justice rooted in the defense of human dignity and a preferential option for the poor and marginalized, the sick and the refugee, the hungry, and the homeless, as well as a global perspective that frequently framed local issues in terms of a global human rights agenda” (2). Dempsey persuasively demonstrates that Christian leaders (mostly clergy) from the 1940s to the 1990s mediated between the city’s most disenfranchised and its political and economic powerhouses. Dempsey carefully threads the needle in suggesting that his book is not a complete counternarrative to the host of systemic injustices that have plagued the city, but the main players in his book offered a different, dignified way forward. Stories of their successes and limitations in the arenas of civil rights, human dignity, and labor animate this book. Dempsey’s book is sweeping, covering many progressive religious organizations and movements.

The book begins with Jesuit priest George Dunne, after his return from years of missionary work in China. Dunne spearheaded and lead efforts in the 1940s to end segregation and uplift the dignity of labor. Chapter 2 demonstrates Dempsey’s strengths in urban history and religious currents of the 1960s, as the chapter weaves together a

history of the religious forces in 1964 that defeated Proposition 14, which sought to undo the Rumford Fair Housing Act. Passed a year earlier, the Rumford Fair Housing Act prohibited discrimination in the housing market. This, perhaps more than any other issue, according to Dempsey, proved to be “the single greatest catalyst to the development of interdenominational and interfaith alliances in the city” (37). Chapter 3 details the discrete and overlapping histories of Black, Latino, and gay community organizing, showing how an “insistence on the empowerment of the marginalized” shaped Christianity in the city. Chapter 4 straddles the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on the “global church” mission of the Interreligious Council of Southern California to transform discourses and practices that targeted individuals with AIDS and immigrants. In chapter 5, Dempsey traces Los Angeles’ designation as a city of refugees and sanctuary city, amidst the refugee crisis from El Salvador and Guatemala. Finally, chapter 6 begins after the acquittal of four Los Angeles Police Department officers who mercilessly beat Rodney King, a time in which riots and unrest called city leaders to a reckoning of race relations and economic imperatives. In this chapter Dempsey shows how the liberal Christian establishment in Los Angeles, in a major departure from precedent, turned to neoliberal market-based solutions to cool down tensions and create opportunities for Blacks and Latinos.

City of Dignity covers an era that has captured the attention of the twentieth century historians across various fields and subfields. Most broadly, this book brings together in seamless conversation the fields of urban history and American religious history. The basic contours of changes to the religious landscape in the post-World War II period are well known by scholars of American religion, but such generalizations have long (for decades now) begged for intimate urban histories to describe these changes. This book answers questions such as: who are the particular groups and power players in engendering change for marginalized populations in the urban centers? And this book offers a clear and decisive answer in large part due to its careful examination of key archival sources from collections including: Southern California Ecumenical Council Archives (at Fuller Theological Seminary); ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives Los Angeles; the papers of notable civil rights minister Thomas Kilgore (at the University of Southern California); John LaFarge S.J. Papers (at Georgetown University) and Catholic Human Relations Council Collection CSLA-27 (at Dempsey’s home institution, Loyola Marymount University).

Recent literature has traced the conservative transformation of southern California, part of a larger trend of scholarship focused on the rise of the Religious Right. While still acknowledging this shift in historiography, Dempsey’s book offers nearly six decades of countervailing liberal Protestant Christianity and the importance of these traditions even while numerically on the decline. *City of Dignity* contributes importantly to recent books that trace Los Angeles’ religious history: Mario T. Garcia’s *Father Luis Olivares, a Biography: Faith Politics and the Origins of the Sanctuary Movement in Los Angeles* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018) and the volume edited by Richard Flory and Diane Winston, *Religion in Los Angeles: Religious Activism, Innovation, and Diversity in the Global City* (Routledge, 2021), a volume to which Dempsey contributed a chapter.

Furthermore, this book contributes to smaller (but just as vitally important to know) history of the religion and immigration. Here, Nicholas Pruitt’s *Open Hearts, Closed Doors: Immigration Reform and the Waning of Mainline Protestantism* (New York University Press, 2021) and Melissa Borja’s *Follow the New Way: American Hmong Refugee Resettlement Policy and Hmong Religious Change* (Harvard University Press,

2023) make for fine pairings with Dempsey's overall book but especially with chapters three through five. On the history of intersections between religion and human rights, Gene Zubovich's *Before the Religious Right: Liberal Protestants, Human Rights, and the Polarization of the United States* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022) offers a complementary study.

On a final note: the book's accessibility lends itself to a broader readership, too. It would not only work quite well in undergraduate classrooms, but it would also seem especially appropriate for organizations in Los Angeles seeking to advance the rights of immigrants, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, and other progressive religious groups. Today, Angelenos can still feel the effects of the history told in this fine book.

Lloyd D. Barba
Amherst College

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***American Catholic Schools in the Twentieth Century: Encounters with Public Education Policies, Practices, and Reforms.* By Ann Marie Ryan. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022. xiv + 180 pp. \$70.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.**

“The phenomenon of the *Catholic public school*,” Ann Marie Ryan writes, “was one of the unique configurations in American Catholic educational history” (1). Catholic public schools, a term with which I was not familiar, are simply Catholic elementary and secondary schools that have been changed and/or shaped by public policy. When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that private schools had a right to exist in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), it also supported a 1923 ruling (*Myer v. Nebraska*) that required these schools to accept some regulation from the state. Although these two court cases are not the focus of the book, *American Catholic Schools in the Twentieth Century* examines the process by which Catholic schools either agreed to accept some state rules and standards, or voiced their disagreement over measures church leaders believed were being imposed upon religious schools.

Ryan describes her work as primarily an “educational history [not religious or institutional history] focused on the interactions between Catholic and public schools and the question of how public educational policy, instruction, and reforms affected Catholic schools in the United States” (8). In addition, she examines the role played by the National Education Association (NEA) in lobbying against the existence of and funding for Catholic public schools, as well as the ways in which the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) attempted to “resolve” some of the issues that had arisen when various factors, including those related to personnel and finance, led Catholic and public schools to find ways to share resources during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (20). Other topics considered in this larger discussion, include state policies related to educational measurement and their impact on Catholic schools; the relationship between the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC) and the NEA; a critical analysis of the 1965 ESEA; and a discussion of