



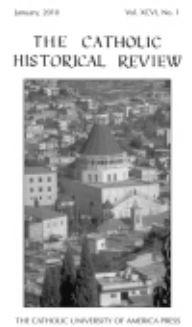
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Sacramento and the Catholic Church: Shaping a Capital City
(review)

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The Catholic Historical Review, Volume 96, Number 1, January 2010,
pp. 177-178 (Review)

Published by The Catholic University of America Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cat.0.0581>



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Miller's internal conflicts did not end with his spiritual rebirth, for the increasingly enthusiastic mass meetings were strongly influenced by the new measures revivalism that he disapproved of as a Calvinist who had a "rational" approach to determining God's will. Miller was also swept along somewhat unwillingly by pressure to specify the exact date that the Apocalypse would take place. After the "great disappointment," he was torn between Himes's efforts to mitigate the damage by institutionalizing the movement as an evangelical church and his own sympathies for the more radical leaders who claimed that the "door" to heaven had been closed behind the true believers in 1844.

One minor shortcoming of the book, at least from a Canadian perspective, is that Miller appears to enter an undifferentiated and uncertainly located geographical void when he crosses the forty-fifth parallel to visit his two sisters and preach, which he did no less than six times between 1835 and 1849. Lower Canada is confused with Upper Canada in a couple of cases, but the fact remains that this thoroughly researched and well-written study can be recommended to anyone interested in what the author identifies as "the most significant popular millenarian mass movement in American history" (p. 233).

Simon Fraser University

J. I. LITTLE

Sacramento and the Catholic Church: Shaping a Capital City. By Steven M. Avella. [The Urban West Series.] (Reno: University of Nevada Press. 2008. Pp. xviii, 368. \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-874-17760-2.)

Marquette University's Steven M. Avella, in *Sacramento and the Catholic Church: Shaping a Capital City*, has expertly united two seemingly diverse historical genres: urban and church history. In nine chronologically and thematically arranged chapters, Avella has written a narrative that engages readers as he deftly chronicles civic and church events in California's capital city. The monograph, while making a significant contribution to the literature, also sets a new course for historical writing in the future.

The stated purpose of the book, to examine the interplay between the city of Sacramento and the Catholic Church as an illustration of how religion helps to sustain urban communities, has been fully satisfied. It illustrates how Catholicism and the city influenced each other in their civic, cultural, and political aspects, as the two institutions grew and matured simultaneously. Both Sacramento and the Catholic Church emerged in the wake of the 1849 Gold Rush and the achievement of statehood in 1850. Avella demonstrates how the construction of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral was a benefit for both Church and city. It was purposely constructed near the state capital, making a distinctive mark on the city and contributing to its cultural advancement. For example, the cathedral's art and stained-glass windows were admired by all. Many non-Catholics contributed financially to this effort. The arrival of religious congregations of women aided the Church, but additionally their

establishment of schools and hospitals was a boon for the city. Avella describes how Catholics participated in urban renewal through the construction of a meeting hall that served both church and city functions. He writes, "The [Catholic] response mirrored more powerfully than ever the close cooperation between Church and city" (p. 148). During the Great Depression, Catholics cooperated with city officials to assist those in need. During the rise of suburbia after World War II, new churches, which served as centers for community activities, were built in these burgeoning communities. In his final two chapters, Avella shows how the Church and the city partnered in meeting the needs of an expanding Latino community and fighting the growing problem of homelessness. Aptly and accurately he concludes, "The Catholic Church has played an important role in Sacramento's evolution" (p. 277).

Avella's narrative tells an interesting and engaging story that clearly draws connections between the civic and Catholic aspects of the city's history from 1850 to the present. Only in chapter 4, where he discusses ethnic minorities, does the author fall somewhat short in clearly demonstrating the connection between Church and city and their mutual influences. Still, the essential message and purpose of the monograph is not only manifest but also clearly communicated to the reader.

As with his many earlier contributions to the historical record, Avella's latest effort demonstrates a high level of scholarship that can be enjoyed by many different constituencies. The book is exhaustively researched through numerous archival repositories and essential secondary sources. This volume, while useful to scholars of religion or urban history, can also be of great benefit and enjoyed by any engaged reader. Californians and residents of Sacramento would find a special affinity for this book.

Avella has woven a story that both engages and informs his readers. Clearly his rather unique approach to the combination of Church and urban history has worked well. Most probably, using this monograph as a model, other scholars will follow suit.

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New Women of the Old Faith: Gender and American Catholicism in the Progressive Era. By Kathleen Sprows Cummings. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2009. Pp. xviii, 278. \$45.00. ISBN 978-0-807-83249-3.)

Historians of American women's history in the Progressive Era have documented the extensive and multifaceted contributions of Protestant and secular women who used gender ideology as a way to expand their educational, social, and political influences. For many, the quintessential "New Woman" per-