

drawn from the ranks of Catholic working women who used the day nurseries, as well as those who did paid work for the settlements and nurseries, remind us that late-nineteenth-century papal documents and other prescriptive literature denouncing women's work outside the home were addressing a complex reality that could not be controlled by hierarchical authorities. Work in the settlement movement was, for many Chicago Catholic women, a steppingstone in the direction of professional social work and other government employment. Even the Camp Fire Girls troop sponsored by the settlement at Old St. Mary's might be seen as a major achievement in making real girls and their genuine needs and aspirations visible in a parish system that was all too comfortable with idealized discourse about Catholic womanhood.

Skok's narrative makes a major contribution to our evolving understanding of Catholic institutional and social history from the turn of the twentieth century through the Depression. Graduate students seeking dissertation topics would do well to read her book and explore the appendix and footnotes. Much remains to be done.

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Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906–46. By **Nancy Marie Robertson**. *Women in American History*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007. xviii + 283 pp. \$45.00 cloth.

While many Americans today may view their local Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) as little more than a fitness facility, the national YWCA and its local affiliates have been vibrant arenas for women's work for social change and for religious development from its founding (from the merger of a number of existing women's Christian organizations) in 1906. By the 1920s it had become "the third-largest autonomous American women's organization" (3) and its membership, from the outset, consisted of black and white women in city associations and student groups. At the same time that the national YWCA could claim some diversity in its membership, it was also the case that local associations in the North and the South were segregated, generally accomplished through the establishment of separate branches. And yet, at its national convention in 1946, the YWCA adopted the "Interracial Charter" by unanimous vote, committing to "pioneer in an interracial

experience that shall be increasingly democratic and Christian" (163). Robertson's work traces the organization's uneven movement toward this moment, focusing on how the notion of "Christian sisterhood" functioned in varied ways for white and black YWCA women and how they struggled over the implications for "race relations" of the claim to a shared religious commitment. Because she places the development of the white leadership's national and local policy with regard to participation by African American women at the center of her study, much of the discussion concerns unraveling white women's views about the relationship between religion and race. This is not to say, however, that Robertson does not devote attention to black YWCA women's understandings of these same issues. Indeed, she achieves a remarkable balance across the book, demonstrating the multiple positions across the two groups as well as contention over the best way to live out "Christian sisterhood" within them.

Robertson begins by tracing the development of the national YWCA and the struggles over the emerging "race policy," which resulted in the establishment of a system in city associations in which separate branches for African Americans could be formed but which would be subject to control in a variety of ways by a "central" (white) association. She continues to examine the expansion of YWCA work during World War I and the increased opportunities for participation and leadership that war work afforded black women in the organization. Robertson then explores the organization's explicit engagement with politics and international affairs following the war, growing out of an emerging sense of "Christian citizenship" among its leaders that led to the endorsement of the Federal Council of Churches' statement on the "Social Ideals of the Churches." In this period, the national leadership faced challenges by African American YWCA women who sought to hold on to the small gains they had made within the organization during the war years and from student and industrial associations that promoted a change in the Y's membership criteria from requiring membership in an evangelical church to emphasizing the individual's affirmation of a religious commitment. In both cases, sectors of the broader Y community called on the organization to apply its public political stance to its own membership and local affiliates, with varying success.

It was, Robertson argues persuasively, attempts by the Young Men's Christian Association in the 1920s to expand its work to include women and girls that motivated the YWCA to defend itself as a Christian women's organization. In doing so, the YW reaffirmed itself as a socially engaged organization, over against the more conservative YM, and embraced its interracial character more fully. It is here that Robertson begins to open up the events and influences that would eventually lead the national YWCA to take an explicit stand on integration. Robertson's final two chapters explore

the YWCA's increasing attention to its own practices with regard to race and the process through which the national association adopted the "Interracial Charter." She concludes with an epilogue in which she explores the difficulties the organization faced in implementing the ideals of the charter.

Robertson's work is well-researched, and she demonstrates great command of a complicated story that involves a national organization and local affiliates. Her insightful analysis would have benefited from attention to a number of additional areas, however. Because Robertson's focus is on the development of national policy, the book gives little sense of the culture and activities of the YWCA that promoted such intense dedication on the part of these women to its work. In addition, I wanted to know more about how the national association conveyed its ideals to the local membership, which she could have accomplished through an analysis of publications and attention to group activities and programs. Finally, a more explicit engagement of the category of "race" would have added texture to Robertson's thoughtful discussion. The book is concerned with white and black women, but a broader discussion of how these women theorized race, not only in relation to their own groups and interactions between the two, but also with regard to other racialized groups, would have been useful. Robertson chooses to emphasize, instead, the language the women themselves used, but this decision would have been made more meaningful by attempting to unpack the peculiar terms specific to the era—"race consciousness," "racial adjustment," even "the race problem"—and doing so would have helped place the work in the broader context of recent studies on the co-constitution of the categories of religion and race in American history. Despite these minor limitations, this book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of American Protestant women's religious history and to interactions between black and white women in this important independent women's organization.

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*African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a
Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement.* By David

Maxwell. Oxford: James Currey, 2006. xv + 253 pp. \$26.95 paper.

The rise of pentecostalism as a global phenomenon has encouraged a similar growth in academic books on the subject. Africanist church historians and