

Contending with modernity - Catholic higher education in the twentieth century

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Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century

Catholic colleges came under fire for having poor educational outcomes, too many competing and underfunded schools and too much emphasis on morality.

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In practice that means coming to terms with the rich but tainted history of Catholicism within Western culture, with its diverse philosophical schools, with its vast contemporary global presence, and, not least, with the actual teachings of the Church.

Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century

When read in conjunction with George Marsden's recent account of the progressive secularization of Protestant universities in *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* 1994, Gleason's work suggests cautionary and even alarming conclusions for American culture. Yet, as Gleason's analysis suggests, a whole cluster of social and cultural attitudes lurks beneath the discursive surface-views about social status, about political affiliation, about gender and the stained-glass ceiling of the Church. Certainly the abandonment of the philosophy of St.

Books in Review: Contending with Modernity

And theological dissent is rife. As Gleason moves into the post-World War I period, a central theme comes into view: the gradual emergence of Neoscholasticism on the American scene, its nesting in Catholic colleges during the difficult time when many were making the transition to being full-fledged universities, the tacit and often grudging respect accorded it in wider intellectual circles, and its sudden, puzzling collapse in the fifties and early sixties.

Contending with modernity: Catholic higher education in twentieth century America.

The accession of Neoscholasticism was due to its adoption in the late nineteenth century as the official philosophy of the Catholic Church; it was seen as an intellectual inoculation against secularism and liberalism by the conservative popes of the time who seemed set on anathematizing the modern world. *Contending with modernity: Catholic higher education in twentieth century America*.

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The rise of the natural sciences also necessitated changes in Catholic curricula and, as well, increased the need for funds. What has happened, in Canada as well as in the States, is that the philosophy unifying Catholic higher education has been traded in for a variety of philosophies, most of them not reconcilable with Catholic faith. In this book, Philip Gleason offers the first comprehensive study of Catholic higher education in the twentieth century, tracing the evolution of responses to an increasingly secular educational system.

Contending with Modernity

In Part Two, Gleason turns to ideological challenges.

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