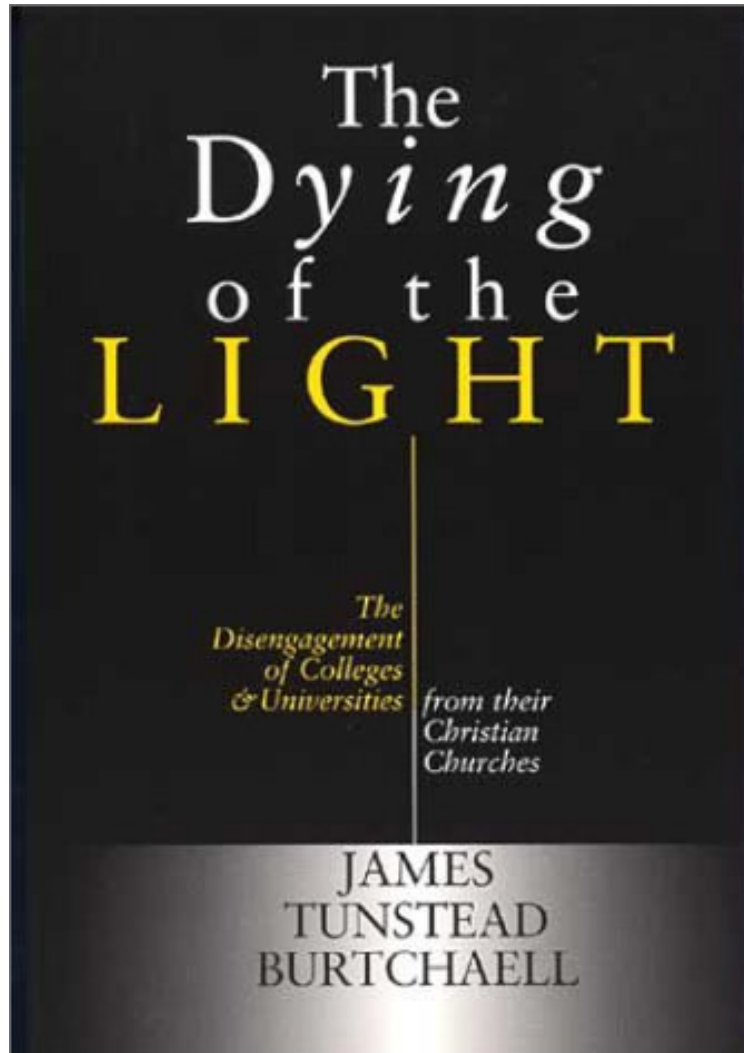


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The Dying of the Light

James Tunstead Burtchaell

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James Tunstead Burtchaell : The Dying of the Light before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dying of the Light:

39 of 39 people found the following review helpful. Encyclopedic Micro-History of College SecularizationBy John P. Rooney"The Dying of the Light" by Fr. James Tunstead Burtchaell. This is an enormous book, some 868 pages long. Fr. Burtchaell deals with the secularization of the Christian colleges, which, as with Harvard and Yale, changed from a church-started, church-supported institution into secular, non-sectarian schools. His method is to pick one, two or three institutions in the particular denomination and deal with the history of the changes from a religious school into a

secular institution. Fr. Burtchaell has a chapter for the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics and Evangelicals. The author's irony borders on humor once in awhile, as when he wonders why the Presbyterians found it so difficult to report the number of attending Presbyterians to church boards, but now find it so easy to report to the Federal government the racial make-up of the student body, down to the last Samoan. In the preface, Fr. Burtchaell notes that the reader will probably go directly to the section dealing with his/her religious affiliation. I did, but mainly because I was working on an MA thesis on Catholic colleges in the United States. I would recommend this encyclopaedia work to any one truly interested in the recent wave of secularization of church-related colleges in the US. Many details and stories from around the nation make this an interesting micro-history....0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Accurate History, Relevant WarningBy John EidsmoeAn outstanding book! Fr. Burtchaell includes a chapter on my alma mater, St. Olaf College, from which I graduated in 1967. I know his description of St. Olaf's slide into apostasy is accurate, because I remember the events he narrates happening while I was there.THE DYING OF THE LIGHT is a warning to Christian colleges and universities of all denominations that if they lose the Christian distinctives upon which they were founded, they will be like salt that has lost its savor.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Provides Great InsightBy MJThis book is a great resource for gaining insight on how many of our colleges and universities were founded for providing religious training for their students...and how far they have deviated from the original purpose.

James Tunstead Burtchaell, who has extensive experience in American higher education as both a teacher and an administrator, provides case studies of seventeen prominent colleges and universities with diverse ecclesial origins - Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic, and Evangelical. Using published and archival sources as well as firsthand interaction with each institution he covers, Burtchaell narrates how each school's religious identity eventually became first uncomfortable and then expendable, and he analyzes the processes that eroded the bonds between school and church.

.com The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches, by James Tunstead Burtchaell, charts the history of 17 American colleges and universities that were founded by Christian denominations. Burtchaell's history shows that each school abandoned its religious roots for remarkably similar reasons. The modern conflict between Christ and culture, he argues, resulted in widespread capitulation by Christians to prevailing secular standards of knowledge. The Dying of the Light offers no advice for contemporary Christians who seek to do faith-based scholarship. "The failures of the past, so clearly patterned, so foolishly ignored, and so lethally repeated, emerge pretty clearly from these stories," he writes. "Anyone who requires further imagination to recognize and remedy them is not up to the task of trying again, and better." Burtchaell's book is lively, readable, and long (more than 800 pages). The author has done his homework so well that when he lays down his gauntlet, the reader's natural response is to rise to his challenge. --Michael Joseph Gross