Clarion Review

Education

America's Best Colleges! Really?

John A. Howard
CrossBooks
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★★★★☆
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John A. Howard is an astute, learned man. A decorated World War II soldier, one-time president of a California college, and later president for seventeen years of Illinois's Rockford College, Dr. Howard has accumulated a lifetime of valuable experience. Well into his ninth decade, he continues to uphold his lifelong faith in traditional Christian and family values.

Speaking as an educator who served as a college president during the social upheaval of the 1960s, Howard contends that American colleges were critically damaged by the insurrection and mores of that era, and he offers a thoughtful presentation of his beliefs in *America's Best Colleges! Really?* The book is his answer to the voluminous texts currently published with the intent of attracting students to various colleges in the United States. In it, Howard defends his perspective on what he maintains is of the utmost value in any educational institution: its "concept of knowledge for the benefit of mankind."

Howard never wavers in his assertion that "faith in God as a supreme and omniscient being" is essential to life and ultimately to the successful pursuit of higher education in America. He claims that it is disdain for religion, specifically the belief that "human judgment should prevail over God's judgment," that has caused belligerence and disrespect in the United States, destroying not only the potential rewards of higher education to the individual and society, but also the very foundation of civilization in general.

Blaming the "moral anarchists" of the 1960s, whom he claims lacked "the graces of truthfulness, open-mindedness and restraint," Howard contends that sexual promiscuity, drug use, the abandonment of traditional family values, and, more importantly, society's tolerance of these negative influences, have destroyed the manners and morals essential to the nation's

doctrines of democracy. In light of such an “absence of moral authority” within the country as a whole, Howard argues that institutes of higher learning can no longer support their original purpose of imparting the essential standards of knowledge in a way that truly benefits either their students or mankind in general.

Howard is a strong, principled writer with a consciously conservative perspective. His views on the long-term cultural effects of the 1960s are thought-provoking, and his analysis of the changes in American education is well documented and worth consideration. Some will concur with the theses he presents, and others will vehemently disagree. Either way, *America’s Best Colleges! Really?* is an extremely well-written book, and few will be unaffected by what Howard has to say.

Cheryl Hibbard