On Campus

Reawakening a Faith-Based Liberalism

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Progressives in this country could learn to articulate their values more effectively by appreciating that religious thought formed important tenets of American liberalism. That's what scholars said at a conference hosted by the American Studies program on February 10. John Winthrop's sermons, for instance, called on Puritans to care collectively for the needy, and many civil rights activists saw their work as an act of Christian piety.

Washington Post columnist E. J. Dionne said in his keynote address that conservatives wrested control of public discourse in America when the civil rights movement's moral clarity was eclipsed by the issue of abortion, which alienated many people of faith.American Studies director Andrew Delbanco kicked off the day's program by quoting Alexis de Tocqueville:"[I]ncredulity is an accident; faith is the only permanent state of mankind." Liberals, Delbanco said, "need to work with that truth, rather than struggle against it."



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