

# Unanimous Vote Reappoints President Mullen

MELISSA HODDE

President Shirley Mullen will serve another four-year term at Houghton College, thanks to a unanimous vote from the Board of Trustees in October. The college celebrated her reappointment with a reception in the Campus Center on Friday the 26th. In her speech acknowledging the board's decision, Mullen emphasized her role at the college as cooperative. Students and faculty from a range of departments, multiple honors programs, and several student organizations as well as staff members serving in key roles at Houghton attended in a show of support and appreciation for the president. Former and current SGA presidents Sergio Mata ('19), Hannah Sievers ('20), and Shaphan Hestick ('19) made an appearance, along with Vice President of Student Life Bill Burrichter and Vice President for Advancement and External Relations Karl Sisson. Despite the high concentration of credentials at the gathering, the casually festive air retained in the chic little bowls of custard and earnest clusters of conversation kept the event accessible to any students wandering by.



In preface to President Mullen's speech acknowledging the reappointment, Sisson opened the reception with a reflection on her relationship with the staff and the campus as a whole. While he drew a chuckle for referencing the president's sometimes intimidating love of poetry and deep thinking, he expressed his admiration for another side of Mullen's personality and ethos with a much more serious tone. "Just a few

months ago, we finished up our president's staff meeting," Sisson told the crowd, "and for the second time that day Shirley pulled me aside after the meeting and said, 'Are you okay?' She sensed that day - no one else did - that something was hanging over me. And that's what you need to know about this lady. She cares intimately, not only about this college but about each and every one of you, and I'm living proof of

that. So I'm grateful for you, and your love and your care. . . . Shirley, thank you."

The president's speech is recorded below, with minimal omissions for brevity:

"We do need to do more celebration here at Houghton, and as I said to Betsy when she asked if it was okay to do this, 'I really don't like to be the center of attention, that is not me at all, but I do believe we need to celebrate more at

*Houghton and the way I view this appointment, this is really not about me: this is about what we're doing together at Houghton. We at Houghton College are committed fully to what I sometimes say is the audacious idea that a Christian Liberal Arts education is more relevant than ever in the 21st century, and we here at Houghton - faculty, staff, students - are doing everything we can to demonstrate to the world that that conviction is true. And part of this, of course, is continuing to develop programs that people understand. . . . So there's a translation task we sometimes have, and those of you who are in missions feel that very deeply, all of you in the academic side feel that deeply, because some of what you love so passionately is not necessarily what incoming students and their parents are thinking, 'Oh yes, this is what I want my child to study at Houghton. So this translation task, this task of making this timeless mission relevant to the 21st century and understandable to the 21st century is so critical. And then as each of you know because I say it in different contexts, the*

See **MULLEN** page 2

# HOUGHTON HEADS TO VIENNA

ANNA SCHILKE

Twenty students and one German-speaking professor will enter the Toronto airport on November 16th, headed towards a week-long adventure. Their destination is a city that has produced hundreds of the world's most famous figures, among them Mozart, Goethe, Freud, and the Hapsburgs. It is a city home to palaces, theatres, and cathedrals; it is a city named for an old Roman town thousands of years ago. It is a city called Vienna.

It is also a city that attracts many, many visitors. According to the Austrian government, over fourteen million people stay at least one night each year, and tourism is only expected to rise. For the twenty Houghton students joining the masses, however, the journey to the city began long before hostel bookings or flight confirmations. The trip is part of a larger class taught by Professor Meilander, which examines the city during the turn of the century.



COURTESY OF FULLER SEMINARY

"The cool thing about the Vienna class," said Skylar Hillman '20, "is that it combines so many different things. There's

psychology, history, political science, and even art." Another member of the class, Elijah Tangenberg '20, agrees, remarking

that the structure of the class is similar to that of the London Honors program in its interdisciplinary focus. "The London

Program was a look into the wider Western society... the Vienna class examines a particular city at a particular time with similar methods," he stated. "Having a concentrated focus on just a single city brings the concepts that I've been taught earlier closer to home."

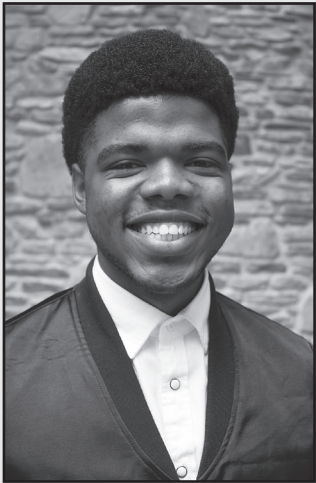
Before their departure next Sunday, the class will cover a variety of writers and creators - some familiar names, and some more obscure. "We've read Sigmund Freud, Hugo Von Hofmannsthal, and Arthur Schnitzler," noted Kayla Simmons '20, "and the whole semester we've been working through Stefan Zweig's memoir The World of Yesterday, which covers his life during the turn of the century and gives a really good picture of Viennese life in the period we're covering and the periods after."

The trip is designed to complement the readings and illuminate the class, but is open to student not enrolled in the class as well. Students will visit some of Vienna's most iconic sites, including the Vienna Secession

See **BATES** page 2



# International Perspectives //Guyana



SHAPHAN HESTICK

Guyana, a quiet English-speaking nation on the South American coast, is the place I call home. Guyana sits proxemic to the Atlantic Ocean, and being six feet below sea-level, is characterized by an extensive swampy coastal environment dominated by mangrove forests. These lands, prized by the Dutch settlers that came to the country for agriculture, were drained and sea defenses were constructed to hold the ocean at bay. The masterful Dutch infrastructure incorporated systems of canals and cokers (or drainage valves), allowing settlers to control

the flow of the ocean waters inland. Unfortunately, the English who succeeded the Dutch in control of the country, filled in several major canals. The land, once more, was left vulnerable to flooding.

Today, the Guyanese coastal sea defenses still show evidence of Dutch occupation. Giant granite slabs form the seawalls and jetties which form the first line of defense. The remnants of the old mangrove forests stand just behind these walls of stone were designed to catch the oceanic spill over from high tides. These forests, home to aquatic bird species and crabs, naturally created a buffer zone between the seawalls and the towns that line the coast. The Guyana meteorological and oceanographic communities strongly agreed that the preservation of these forests were essential to the preservation of the peoples who lived by the sea.

Their position was influenced by three major considerations. First, the communities living closest to the ocean still primarily subsist on agriculture; the removal of the mangroves would cause the inundation of their land with salt water that would kill

crops. Second, the local and global projections of weather phenomena in and around the Caribbean all point to new weather extremes: there is an expected increase in the number of hurricanes and their severity. Without mangroves to maintain soil structure, extreme weather is guaranteed to cause extreme erosion. Finally, the scientific community recognizes the ecological value of the faunal biodiversity of the mangrove forests. The consensus is that the collapse of the mangrove ecosystem has dire implications for the people living by the sea.

Sadly, the campaigns to preserve the mangrove forests have not been successful. Without legislation to enforce the care of this precious ecosystem, some sections of the old mangrove forests have been clear cut for salt-resistant timber. As a result, the projections of the scientific community have been manifesting since 2013. Bird species have been migrating away from their old refuges. More and more often, high tides have resulted in seawater climbing over the seawalls and into the nearby rice and sugar cane fields.

In March of this year,

outside of the country’s monsoon season, the seaside towns near where I grew up, experienced waves as high as fifty feet. These waves were devastating in their force and in the sheer volume of water that they launched over the seawalls. Thousands of (U.S.) dollars in damages were done to public infrastructure, agricultural animals and crops, and private commercial and domestic property. Patients in the local hospitals needed to be transported, while technicians struggled to salvage supplies, machinery, and medication. The communities, once shocked by coastal overtopping, are now in the process of adjusting. Many

are looking towards the reforestation of the area, as well as the reinforcement of the seawalls. However, communities on the Guyanese coast have come to acknowledge that in light of the changing realities of life by the ocean, collective and comprehensive environmental stewardship is vital.★

*Shaphan is a junior majoring in Political Science, International Development and Environmental Biology*



MULLEN from page 1

life that we live together here is only possible because every person on the campus - faculty, staff, and students - is being for one another a teacher and a learner. And so, as I said at the beginning, this vote of confidence from the board is really a vote of confidence for what we are doing together, and what excites me about this is that it’s a very, very strong mandate to keep doing what we’re doing, and if there’s anything our office can do to support you in your part of this work, you let us know because what Karl said so kindly I want to be true, I want everyone on this campus to know how much our office cares, not just about our mission and what you’re doing for the mission for Houghton College but that it’s you that’s doing that, and we want to be supportive of you as well the work you’re doing for the mission.”★

VIENNA from page 1

Building, the Cathedral of St. Stephen, and the Belvedere Palace. They also have some free afternoons to explore the parts of the city that aren’t directly relevant to the curriculum; to wander and enjoy the unique culture of a city which is thousands of years old. Simmons is excited to explore the various art museums Vienna has to offer, and Tangenburg already has plans as well. “Coffeeshop culture,” he said enthusiastically. “I can’t speak German...I can order coffee and that’s about

it....so I probably won’t be talking about Goethe with any locals.” Still, Tangenberg is looking forward to mixing with a culture that dates back further than Houghton College. “Vienna has always had an extremely vibrant coffee shop culture because of the lack of salons” he said. “Instead the middle class intellectuals would gather at local coffee shop, and the Viennese are extremely proud of it.” Students in the Vienna class look forward to learning more about their upcoming experiences in the information meeting on Saturday the 3rd.★

CHRIS CILENTO

You pass it every time you drive out of town- at the corner of Tucker Hill Rd and Rt. 19 is the



Courtesy of Houghton College Archives



Courtesy of Ravenworks Studios

## Houghton’s Hidden History

original site of Houghton College, or Houghton Seminary as it was first called. In late January of 1883, Willard J. Houghton sent letters to all the pastors in the Lockport Conference to “meet at the Houghton Creek Church Feb. 1, 1883” to discuss the matter of opening a school. On Feb. 3rd of that year the first donations began pouring in. It was not long before donations totaled \$6000 and included the 11-acre parcel of land on which the school would be built. On April 21, 1883, the Houghton Wesleyan Methodist Seminary charter was signed. Houghton College was on its way to existence. On August 20, 1883, ground was broken and construction began. The building was dedicated “to God and the cause

of sanctified education.” By this time \$12,000 had been donated for the purpose of founding the school. September 15, 1884, saw the first classes begin. Even though the building was not yet complete the school opened with a staff of one principal, three teachers, and 70-80 students. Assurance was given that that Houghton Seminary would “combine moral and mental culture.” In an ironic twist, the “Solid Rock” upon which Willard J. Houghton sought to build the school, turned out to be quicksand and the building eventually began to sink. However, new land was obtained not far away where the college is currently located. The old seminary building was torn down and rebuilt as Fancher Hall using many of the bricks from “Old Sem.”

Today, not much is left of Old Sem except mouldering foundations. Looking more like a dystopia than the venerable foundations of this institution, the site has been left to nature. Overrun with weeds, moss, prickly vines, and decades of neglect it is challenging to get to, much less find. However, it is worth the effort to follow the original drive up and around the hill to the site. Just be sure to wear sturdy clothes and shoes as the thorns and soft ground make it a demanding, but gratifying hike.★



# Spiritual Reflections

MORGAN SMITH-

I have on my shelf a book called *Every Moment Holy*, a collection of liturgies for parts of our lives that we don't often recognize as God-breathed. One of my favorite pieces is "A Liturgy for Those Who Have Not Done Great Things for God." It opens with a series of questions from the petitioner: *How many times have I been told, O Christ, by well-meaning people that it is my destiny and my charge to go into the world and do great things for you? How many times in response have I prayed earnestly, asking that you would bring such things to pass – that you might use me mightily for the work of your kingdom? How many times have I waited expectantly, and waited, and waited, and waited, for that great thing? And how many times have I felt then the gradually settling weight of disillusionment, of disappointment and confusion, when no great thing materialized, when no moment of call or clarity was ever manifest at all?*

The petitioner continues: *In the confused afterglow of those*

*receding anticipations, I am always faced again with the unglamorous reality of my own life: of my ongoing failures simply to love well the people around me, and of my own omnipresent struggle even to desire and pursue a path of righteousness and obedience in my own small daily choices and habits. I am faced again with the same litany of tired, old temptations towing their attendant shames, and in such times I am left, O Lord, wondering if I somehow missed your call completely, and whether I might just as well abandon this pilgrim path entirely, for I fear that you must see me as I see myself: unfit for any service to you, or to your people, or to this world.*

I often find myself thinking and praying such things. God's plans for our lives – and the unimaginable bigness of these plans – is a favorite theme for sermons and devotionals. It has made several recent appearances in Houghton chapel services. And while all these well-meaning people are not exactly wrong, their messages usually leave behind more doubt

and frustration than inspiration. Their "great things" don't look very much like my life, or even the hopes I have for my future, and I still struggle with the daily business of loving God with all that I am and my neighbor as myself. I suspect that in all this I am not alone.

Later in the liturgy, an intercessor prays over the petitioner a prayer of grace, humility, and liberation. ... *God does not judge us unfit for service, for we are clothed in Christ's own righteousness; God's measure of our greatness has never been our own. God asks of us only attentive and faith-*

*ful service, a daily shepherding of gifts and tasks and relationships in justice, love, and peace. ...*

This is right. For surely God can and will accomplish great and glorious things through God's creatures. But God's measure of greatness is not the world's. Most great kingdom work is done by unimpressive people – like you and me – working in unimpressive places. God's kingdom is a kingdom of many small, long obediences in the same direction.

I'll leave you-all with this poem-portrait by Ursula Askham Fanthorpe:

*There is a kind of love called maintenance  
Which stores the WD40 and knows when to use it;*

*Which checks the insurance, and doesn't forget  
The milkman; which remembers to plant bulbs;*

*Which answers letters; which knows the way  
The money goes; which deals with dentists*

*And Road Fund Tax and meeting trains,  
And postcards to the lonely; which upholds*

*The permanently rickety elaborate  
Structures of living, which is Atlas.*

*And maintenance is the sensible side of love,  
Which knows what time and weather are doing  
To my brickwork; insulates my faulty wiring;  
Laughs at my dryrotten jokes; remembers  
My need for gloss and grouting; which keeps  
My suspect edifice upright in air,  
As Atlas did the sky. ★*

# WORD ON THE STREET



"I'm registered to vote, but I don't pay attention to politics. . . "  
**-Abby Taylor, Senior**

"This is so bad, but I'm gonna tell you the truth, I am 19 years old, I just turned 19 this week, and I just applied to vote, so I will not be voting in this election, because I applied to late. Also I don't pay attention to politics because, I'm gonna keep it real, I don't care."

**-Jessica Meija, Sophomore**



"I'm really not involved as I'd like to be with the whole situation and election... I havent put a lot of time into thinking about different candidates."  
**-Jared Hobson, Senior**

## What are your thoughts on the upcoming election?

"Oh God . . . I hope everybody votes for the right reasons!"

**-Lexi Wilkas, Senior**



"I've been so deep into school lately I haven't really had time to delve into this topic and get myself into politics like I should have... I think it's really important that we all vote and get involved."

**-Rhett Perkins, Senior**

"Well to be honest, I've been doing homework and when I check my phone, I just check my email and my texts, so everything just revolves around my school work and my academics."

**-Shannon Johnson, Sophomore**





# Ortlip Gallery Showcases Houghton Alum’s Artwork

MARY TYRELL

The Ortlip Gallery is a place that encourages Houghton art students and empowers them to imagine their future as mature artists by showcasing pieces of all different media. The gallery shows each student a glimpse of their own artistic potential as it is realized. This November, however, the gallery will take a moment to pause and look back on the rich, prolific career of Houghton College’s own Roselyn Danner through its Roselyn Danner Legacy Exhibition.

Roselyn Danner is a 1984 alum of Houghton College and has been active in the local community for over 50 years. She has been specifically influential in advancing the Houghton College art program, directing and instituting the Ortlip Gallery as it is today and continuing to manage, grow, and expand the college’s art collection. The exhibition will feature paintings, drawings, and illustrations from Danner’s prolific career. The exhibition will also honor the impact that she has had with the future generations of artists. This is notable in her impact and the encouragement that she has provided in fostering the creative vision of her own grandchildren, Christopher Danner ‘19 and Hannah Jennings Murphy ‘14. Both graduates of Houghton College, their work will be displayed alongside her own. Christopher Danner ‘19 was able to share recollections and stories of the abilities that his grandmother has passed on to him and the unique way of observing and examining the world around them. Driving in the car with his family, Christopher was asked about the color of the trunk of a passing tree. “It’s brown,” he answered. He was told to look closer, and upon doing



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICIA TAYLOR

The Ortlip Gallery will feature the art of Roseyln Danner, such as this peice titled *Honesty*.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALICIA TAYLOR

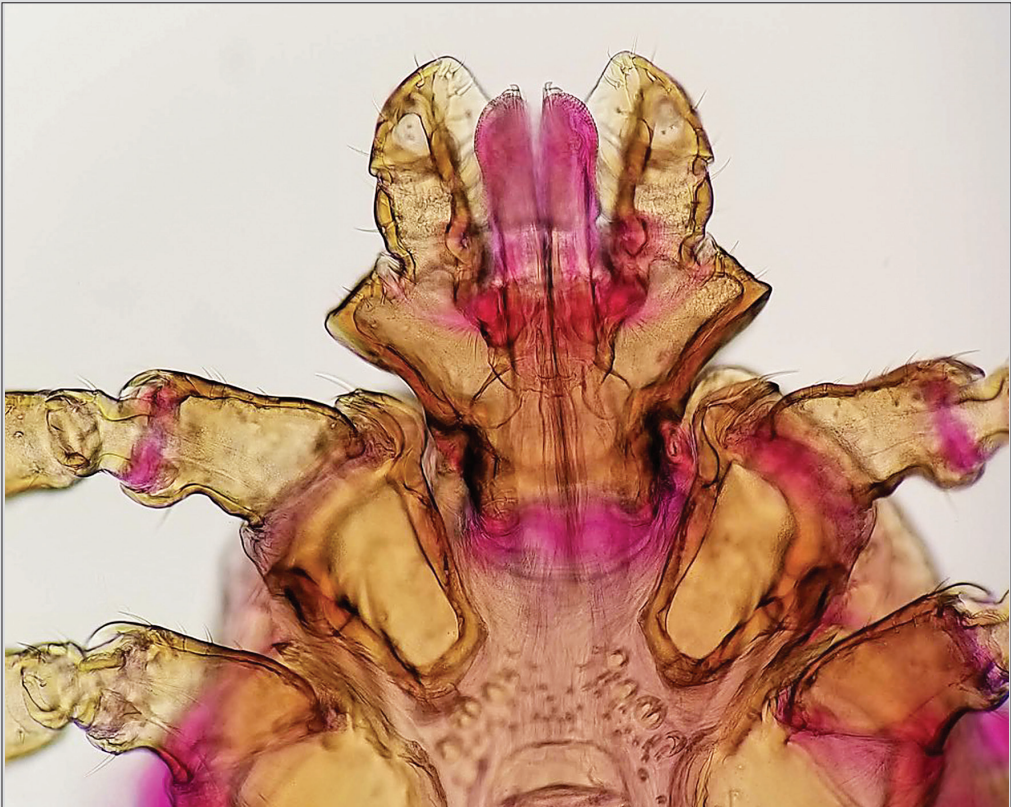
The Ortlip Gallery will also feature the art of Danner’s grandchildren, including Christopher Danner’s piece titled *I Will Not Play Again*.

so was amazed by the colors he found; not just brown, but greens and greys and even a shade of pink. This is just one example. Danner also shared of the “art lessons” that he and his cousins would learn from their grandmother when they were young, and the special way that she nurtures and encourages their skills and pursuit of beauty to this day. On Friday, November 2nd from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Center for the Arts there will be a reception for the Roselyn Danner

Legacy Exhibition. This reception, along with this exhibition that will be open Monday - Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., as a way to honor her skill and the influence that she has had, and continues to have, over the artists that she has helped to shape and mold. The reception will also serve to celebrate the hardwork and dedication that Roselyn Danner has devoted to Houghton College. ★

Photo  
of the  
Week

HOUGHTON  
BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT





# Meilaender Delivers Faculty Lecture

KYLA NIES

On Thursday, October 25th, Dr. Peter Meilaender delivered his faculty lecture entitled “Why You Should Learn a Foreign Language: Confessions of a Homebody Traveller.” Faculty Lectures are a long standing tradition at Houghton in which Professors from all departments are invited present their current work in their field of study or simply on a topic which they are passionate about. Speakers in the past have presented on everything from Michelangelo to Antibiotics to the role of Organists in Worship. For his presentation, Dr. Meilaender gave his argument for why students ought to learn at least one or two foreign languages.

Dr. Meilaender opened by explaining that in the past decade, enrollment in all foreign languages at the University level has declined to its lowest level since the 1960s. This phenomenon is evidenced on our very own campus by the merging of the foreign language department with Intercultural Studies and the decline in foreign language courses offered.

At this point French, German, Hebrew, and Greek are offered on rotating schedules at beginner levels, compared to even just two decades ago when Houghton offered more foreign language classes at various levels and multiple foreign language majors and minors.

This decline in enrollment might suggest that there is no longer value in studying foreign languages. Dr. Meilaender argued that this is not the case. Learning foreign languages is important for University students because, in the words of Austrian Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, “the limits of my language means the limits of my world.” When we are only fluent in our own language, our world is limited to our own country and culture. Dr. Meilaender anecdotally explained his own experience of this phenomenon, as student who originally had no interest in other countries or cultures, but who learned German upon meeting the woman who is now his wife and discovering the positives of German culture and engineering. Today, Dr. Meilaender reaps the many benefits of being able to fully engage both American and

German culture, which would be impossible if not for his fluency in German. Students can do the same because language is a prerequisite for learning about a culture.

Not only is “learning a foreign language an admission pass to another cultural universe” but it is one of the bests way to understand English grammar, is practical in jobs, and translation increases one’s facility for the use of language. With these reasons in mind, Dr. Meilaender proposes a vision in which each student is fluent in at least one language, preferably two (one modern language and one classical language.) This vision is not totally unrealistic considering the many tools at students disposal like Duolingo and Babbel, which offer quick language acquisition options or self-designed minors which provide an option for students desiring more academic fluency.

Dr. Meilaender concluded with the argument that learning a language can also be considered deeply Christian. According to the Bible there will be a day where people from every nation, tongue, and tribe will gather before the throne of God and wor-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOUGHTON

Professor Meilaender of the Political Science department gave a faculty lecture on the importance of learning a second language.

ship him together. This means that in heaven we might all be able to understand one another “but,” to use Dr. Meilaender’s concluding words “there is no reason that we should not get a head start now.”

The lecture was received well by students and faculty. Many students, like Junior Emily Allen, attend and “appreciated Dr. Meilaender’s lecture and his whimsical approach to the serious topic of the life-changing effects of learning a foreign language.”

Similarly, Dr. Sarah Derck, a foreign language professor herself, thought “Dr. Meilaender’s lecture today was winsome and insightful” and she “particularly appreciated the connections he drew between learning a foreign language and entering that culture.” The next lecture will be by Dr. Anna Pettway on November 15th at 4:25, entitled “#Existingwhileblack: The Psychological Burden of Anti-Black Racism.”★

# New Music Education Professor Comes to Houghton

KAYLA SIMMONS

Dr. Sara Massey has joined the Music Department this semester as Assistant of Music Education. A native Texan from the Gulf Coast, Dr. Massey has lived all around the South, from Mississippi to Alabama to North Carolina. She continues in the tradition of her father, who was a Professor of Education at the University of Alabama, and she studied Music Education and Elementary Education at Baylor University. Dr. Massey went on to receive her masters and doctorate from University of North Carolina at Greensboro, as well as completing a doctoral study at University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Massey has enjoyed her time at Houghton so far. “I want to say it’s a God thing,” she said about her position at Houghton. “I feel so validated as far as the kind of things that the music department needed, they needed a music edu-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOUGHTON

Dr. Sara Massey is Houghton’s new Music Education Professor.

cator,” she continued. “It’s so great to feel like my gifts really serve a very needed function here.”

She cited Richard Foster’s book Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home as an impactful read in her life, and expressed interest in movies such as The Zookeeper’s Wife and La La Land. Her musical tastes tend towards Steven Curtis Chapman, and other

artists such as Kyle Matthews and Ken Medema.

As a Music Education Professor, Dr. Massey noted that “there are plenty of people that are good musicians that don’t understand the dynamics of how to teach it, and that’s what they [the Music Department] were looking for, and that’s what I am.” She discussed the importance of “discovery learning” as part of the

learning process. “I often tell my students, ‘Don’t ever ever tell a student something they can discover for themselves,’” Dr. Massey said.

She also stressed the importance of accommodating all types of learners at all levels. “Everybody’s in a different place, so how do you create a learning experience that takes into account an auditory learner, a visual learner, a kines-

thetic learner, and a learner that has lower cognitive functioning and a very accelerated learner?” she asked. “Everybody learns in different ways, how can you recognize that as you’re creating your teaching episodes?”

Music is an especially important conduit for universal communication, according to Dr. Massey. “Hearing is the first sense that develops, at four months in a mama’s womb, so you experience music before essentially anything...[and] listening is the last sense to fade.” She notes that music is accessible and impactful on lives “from the lowest functioning people to the highest functioning people,” and that music can be a personal or communal experience: “Just one person can participate in a musical experience, or thousands of people, [such as at] concerts.” She emphasizes the profound impact of music in today’s culture, and how it touches the lives of many. “Music permeates society,” said Dr. Massey. “Even if you would not call yourself a musician, it’s part of your existence.”★



# Sovereign Grace and Human Depravity: Good News?



TIM PASCHALIS

DAVID BOWERS

“The chief end of man,” the Westminster Shorter Catechism declares, “is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” I believe that is true, but how does one glorify God? It’s a phrase we throw around without much understanding. I would suggest that people glorify God chiefly by *enjoying him*. If I’m right, then it is critical that the Church identify and combat those things which harm our ability to enjoy him. Here, I want to uncover how pride does that. I also want to propose that the twin doctrines of

human depravity and God’s sovereign grace can help combat a significant source of that pride.

Pride harms our ability to enjoy God by crowding out our vision of God’s all-satisfying, joy-giving beauty. It replaces that with a vision of our own profoundly unsatisfying beauty. So even though we were created to savor the pleasures abundant at God’s right hand and to experience fullness of joy in his presence (Psa. 16:11), many try to satisfy their hearts with the inferior joys found in pride and self-reliance. The well-worn quote from

identify and combat every source of pride.

A common source of pride is the belief that the human heart is able to desire and pursue God. It is easy to see why many Christians believe this. We all, to some degree, want a sense of agency in our lives. It’s natural. But natural and healthy are not synonymous. “God, and God alone, is fit to take the universe his throne,” Steve Green sang, and all God’s people said amen. But it’s easier said (or sang) than understood. We’re happy to affirm that God is sovereign over suffering. We’re happy to

agency for our salvation in ourselves, it strips from God the glory that is rightly his.

To combat this source of pride, I offer two complementary doctrines. The first is the doctrine of human depravity. This doctrine is, unsurprisingly, avoided by most of us. It is deeply unsettling to be told that apart from Christ we are “dead in our trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Our hearts rebel against the idea that “there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God” (Rom. 3:10). Who wants to confess that they are by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3)? To avoid this, we misconstrue Ephesians’ language of being dead in sin to mean that we can desire and pursue God, even if only a little, without being already resurrected by the Spirit. But we can’t avoid it if we’re to effectively minimize our pride. The more clearly we see the vast expanse between our depravity and God’s holiness, the more awe-inspiring will be his act of salvation. Understanding our depravity will produce a heart with no room for pride.

The second doctrine is that of God’s sovereign

grace. This is the teaching that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws them (John 6:44). We contributed nothing to our regeneration. The Spirit gives us rebirth according to the good pleasure of the Father and we cannot affect it (John 3:8). The Spirit alone can make the glory of God in the face of Christ appear so attractive that we can’t help but place our faith in him. This leaves no room for our own agency in salvation. The more we understand this doctrine, the less our pride will limit our ability to glorify God.

Together, these two truths – human depravity and sovereign grace – undermine our pride. We often minimize these doctrines because they can cause discomfort or fear. But they shouldn’t. Rather, they should be one of the deepest sources of all-pervading joy, which in turn will enable us to glorify God by enjoying him forever. ★

*David is a Sophmore majoring in Intercultural Studies with concentrations in Linguistics and PreMed*

“...We often minimize these doctrines because they can cause discomfort or fear...but we shouldn’t...”

St. Augustine’s Confessions is apropos: our hearts are indeed restless until they rest their affections on God. Pride makes that impossible; we cannot enjoy God fully when any of our attention is on ourselves. To glorify God as we ought, then, we must

affirm that God is sovereign over whom we marry. But our salvation often isn’t considered when we work out the implications of God’s sovereignty. In our pride, we would rather maintain agency there. But when our pride places any of the

# Memes: Nonsense is Nothing New



TIM PASCHALIS

GABI SHEELEY

In the future when people cast their gaze back in time to analyze our generation, memes will undoubtedly be one of the flagship artifacts of our culture. First of all, what is a meme? Of course, most of us will just know. We’ve seen them, we’ve shared them, we’ve created them – new relationships exist because of them. However, despite their prolificacy, coming up with a way to define a meme is actually quite difficult.

Most results from a quick search roughly explain memes as pieces of media that spread for humorous or political/social commentary purposes via the internet. Different sources cite different “pieces of media” among the first memes, including Pepe the Frog (2005), the Hamster

Dance Song (1998), or the Dancing Baby (1996). Some people claim a meme has to send a message, but if so, what message is communicated by the Hamster Dance Song? Or Johnny Johnny memes? Certainly some memes send clear messages, especially those featuring the classic bold white text, but clearly some of them do not – at least not in any easily recognizable way. I was amused to find that the Wikipedia page on memes includes a subsection on “dank” memes, which describes them as pieces of media that are “so nonsensical that they are hilarious.” And what about “meta” memes – yet another subgenre of memes that are in some way self-aware and self-referential. It was when I was introduced to this baffling subgenre of memes and tried to make sense of what was happening before my eyes that I first started thinking about some of the striking similarities between our culture’s memes and the artistic/communicative expressions of other eras.

During the interwar period of the early 20th century a new movement in art and philosophy called Dadaism emerged as a kind of artistic anarchy or anti-art. Where previous art movements sought to create beauty, the Dadaists created aesthetically offensive images. Where others wanted their art to have a great purpose, the Dadaists pushed the boundaries of what was required to be meaningful. Where others looked at Dada creations and

figures, and, also by Duchamp, a parody of the Mona Lisa where the famous woman is featured with a mustache and goatee. Classy. I dare you to look up this “painting.” It gets even better. But this was exactly the kind of nonsensical twisting of traditional values that the anti-bourgeois, anti-institutional, anti-art Dada movement was aiming for. Although, like memes, some Dada art was decidedly more serious, aiming for a sarcastic commentary

of memes today is a ubiquitous part of popular culture.

However, I am suspicious that there are a few significant similarities between us and the Dadaists, despite the one hundred years between us and the revolutionary advent of the internet. In the same way that avant-garde Dadaist conceptual art pushed the boundaries of beauty and meaning, our own forms of expression leave some people confused. It is ridiculous. We love the nonsensical. We love expressions that don’t take themselves too seriously. We love badly animated videos of semi-human creatures doing ridiculous things. We love memes. They don’t have to be meaningful. Part of us loves them even more if they are not. Like sideways urinals self-referentially commenting on the power of art, if memes like the Dancing Baby and Johnny Johnny have any meaning at all, it is to comment on the power of the medium: the internet itself.

So if you like dank memes, maybe you will like some Dadaism as well. And, as a side note, while you’re in the art gallery, perhaps you can take a quick gander at other kinds of art. Don’t be surprised if you see other sides of ourselves reflected in parts of the past. ★

*Gabi is a Senior majoring in Intercultural Studies and English*

“...We love the nonsensical. We love expressions that don’t take themselves too seriously...we love memes”

cringed, asking, why? the Dadaists responded with an avant garde, why the heck not?

Most famous and perhaps most representative of the Dada movement is a, uh, “readymade” sculpture by Michael Duchamp, created by turning a urinal on its side,

against the war, a different strain of the same social/political angst also led to the subgenre of art whose only message, if it contained any at all, was directed at the medium itself. Why make a urinal into a sculpture? Precisely because it doesn’t make sense. The audience wouldn’t know what to do with it, but ultimately, that is the very reason they would love it

So are memes the same as dada art? No, there are several important differences. We do not have a manifesto or great studios, and I doubt any of us are intentionally antiestablishment when we share memes. Dadaism was a movement (ironically) of an artistic, intellectual elite, while the sharing

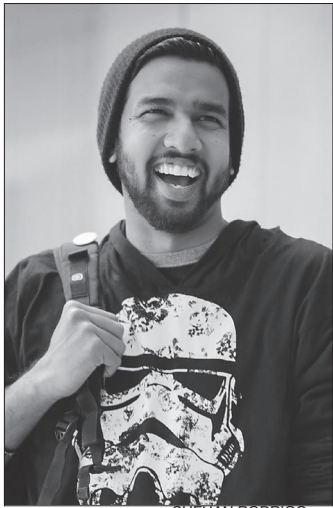
“...the Dadaists pushed the boundaries of what was required to be meaningful...”

Unsurprisingly, our generation is not the first to enjoy ironic, nonsensical humor and self-referential forms of expression.

and entitled “Fountain.” Other Dada works include collages of magazine and newspaper clippings, industrial scrap twisted into semi-human



# It's Not You, It's God



SHEHAN RODRIGO  
Edited by: Joshua Mason

“Lately, God has been revealing to me that we are just not right for each other. I think we should break up”. This seems to be a recurring theme in multiple conversations I have overheard in the past couple of years, as many of my well-meaning—but grossly mislead friends—uttered these words to justify putting an end to their relationships abruptly. Each time I heard those words been spoken, it fanned into flame a skirmish within me on whether or not I should write the following words.

So here it goes:  
Dating practices differ drastically from one culture to another, as does the definition of the word ‘dating’. I became increasingly aware of this as I made the transition from my home in Sri Lanka to Western New York. Back home, for most people, dating simply means one is in an ‘exclusive

relationship’ with another person; you are either formally dating or you’re not. Here in America, terminology tends to be more nuanced—which is a nice way of saying it’s confusing. For this article, when I say ‘dating’ or ‘relationship,’ I am referring to an exclusive commitment between two people. While the behavioral patterns surrounding dating changes and evolves over time, I feel the purpose of dating is still at its core, the same: finding someone to spend the rest of one’s life with.

Prayer should be of the highest importance in the daily life of those who claim to be Christians, especially when it comes to important decisions such as dating and marriage. Yet many well-meaning (sometimes) Christians are misusing God’s name when they attribute the reason for the break-up to be divine inspiration. As I see it, one of the biggest problems in telling someone “God told me to break up with you,” is that it calls into question that person’s character, worth and spiritual standing. It’s easy to tell someone that “God said so,” but the underscored implication the other person hears is: “God doesn’t feel that you are good enough for me.” I just don’t think that this is fair or, theologically accurate. Claiming that God divinely inspired one’s decision to end a relationship sends the other into a frenzy of self-doubt where they question what about their lives is so terrible that God himself would decide to intervene in this situation.

Surely God is not the author of convenient break-ups.

The Bible doesn’t really have

any examples of dating, because most modern courting methods didn’t exist during biblical times. However, what the Bible is clear about, is love. As Christians, we are to love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34); honor one another (Rom. 12:10); and not become unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14). Christ-like love doesn’t fall through suddenly. It doesn’t give-up when difficulties present themselves. Adversity is rather an opportunity for God to reveal himself in and through a relationship that chooses to persevere. If one is going to break-up purely based on ‘spiritual reasons’, one must

lead toward marriage—should also be considered as a sacred act.

Scripture may not specifically address dating, but very clearly teaches that the Christian life is to be marked by prayer and supplication (Phil. 4:6; 1 Thes. 5:17; Matt. 26:41). Regardless of circumstances, prayer is intended to be at the beginning, middle, and end of any important decision a Christian is faced with. If prayer came first, a lot of bad decisions (and bad break-ups) could be avoided. One cannot expect to model well a Christ honoring relationship if one does not first have a relationship with

“...What must stop, is falsely quoting God as though the break-up was divinely inspired, when God was never involved in the process in the first place...”

ask themselves the question: did I seek God’s will when I was contemplating asking this person out? Was God present in making the decisions that led to this break-up? In other words, if God had nothing to do with the origins of a relationship, then God should not be credited with its end. The will of God is not, and should not, be an afterthought for Christians, especially in dating. For most Christians, marriage is considered to be the most intimate of human relationships and a sacred act instituted by God himself. If Christians believed this to be true, then dating—which is meant to

God, saturated in prayer.

Let me be clear, I am not implying that by praying about a relationship, everyone will get it right, all the time. Prayer is by no means a technique that ensures romantic success. I am not saying that there aren’t perfectly justifiably reasons for one to end a relationship for moral reasons inspired by Biblical teachings. One is justified in ending a relationship because one doesn’t have feelings toward the other; or because one doesn’t see a future together; or because it’s just not a good time for a relationship. Certainly, there are a myriad of

reasons for a relationship to fall through. Figure out what the real reason is, and be honest with your significant other. Surely, you owe them that much. What must stop, is falsely quoting God as though the break-up was divinely inspired, when God was never involved in the process in the first place. Doing so has turned “God said so” into a cliché utilized by Christians who are too afraid to admit their shortcomings, while simultaneously making the God of the universe a tool in our belts to avoid transparency with another human being. Humans are flawed. We make mistakes—especially in relationships. Its ok to make mistakes! God should not be blamed for one’s own realization that one is incompatible with another person. It is wrong to usurp the name of God, and use it as a ‘spiritual trump-card’ because one doesn’t have the courage to say “Hey, it’s not working out.” For Christians, the point of dating, should be to learn if two people are compatible for marriage. If the answer is no, then the solution is simple (though the process can certainly be painful). Seek to value the other person over your own personal level of comfort, but most of all, honor God by seeking His face daily, and treating people with the love which is modeled for us in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. ★

*Shehan is a Senior majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies with concentrations in Music and Theology*



The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.



SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor  
should be 250 words or less

SUBMIT TO  
[editor@houghtonstar.com](mailto:editor@houghtonstar.com)

You can comment on articles online at [www.houghtonstar.com](http://www.houghtonstar.com)



# Artist of the Week

## Christopher Cilento

// senior applied design and visual communication major



*The Almighty in His Office* Digital Photograph

"I am a veteran of 3 combat tours. Art is how I make sense of things and how I give something back to the world. Art keeps me going and gives me the strength to continue. 'Just because the road stops, doesn't mean you have to!'"



*Journey* Oil on Canvas



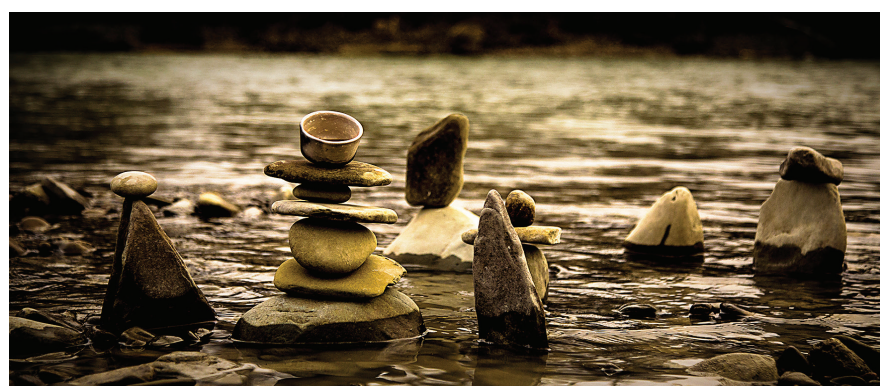
*Mephistopheles* Digital Composition



*Broken Dreams* Digital Photograph



*Rialto Bridge* Digital Photograph



*Cloister* Digital Composition