

Yale Theologian Miroslav Volf Lectures at Houghton

By Laura Thompson

Miroslav Volf visited campus last week as a part of the Inaugural celebrations, delivering a Tuesday evening lecture as well as Wednesday morning's chapel. *The Star* sat down with Volf to discuss his lectures, the problems posed by contemporary culture, and his intriguing devotion to Nietzsche.

Star: Your latest book *The End of Memory* deals with how we remember events, particularly painful ones. What prompted you to write such a book?

MV: What prompted the book was that the way we remember the wrongs we have suffered has almost a defining influence on how we relate to one another, and to ourselves... [as well as] how we relate to the person who has wronged us and how we relate to the

larger world. Wrongdoing remembered is the wrongdoing that no longer sits comfortably in the past, but is brought into the present... And I think it is very important if you think in terms of reconciling with others. It's about healing and acting responsibly in the world, and to deal with those memories in a way that is healthy, helpful and helps build that reconciling future rather than thwart it.

Star: In your lecture on Tuesday night, you referred to the connection between temporal, experiential satisfaction and a larger understanding of what truly satisfies us. Could you clarify those components and the connection between them?

MV: I think we have come to think of ourselves in primarily contemporary Western culture, which is dominated

by the global economic system, we have come to think... that we flourish, that we live a good life when we are experientially satisfied: as little pain as possible, as much pleasure [and] whatever that pleasure would be that seems fine. It's your thing as long as it doesn't interfere with somebody else's life, and my question is this way of life- is this in sync with who we truly are? Or do we live, so to say against the grain, of our own true selves? So [then] it is no accident that, notwithstanding the fact we so vigorously pursue experiential satisfaction, we end up being some of the most dissatisfied people on the planet. It seems almost like this satisfaction eludes us, and every time we come close to experiencing it - it runs away from us. The stakes become higher and... we

always need new experiences because the old ones are not good enough, and it's a kind of melancholy thing. To live truly satisfied lives we shouldn't make satisfaction of desires the primary goal, but rather a byproduct of something else by opening ourselves to our neighbors and to God. We are eccentric beings in the sense that we find our fulfillment not in ourselves, but in being tied to something larger. We can think infinite thoughts. We are infinite in that sense, and nothing but a relationship with the infinite will satisfy.

Star: You mentioned your theory of the "Hiltonization" of culture. How can Christians, and especially college students who are so closely tied to popular culture, combat its effects?

MV: I think the best way to combat

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Inaugural Weekend Celebrates New President, Houghton Tradition

By Laura Jackson and Rebekah Miller

This past weekend, Houghton College celebrated the inauguration of its fifth president, Dr. Shirley Mullen. In addition to the inaugural ceremony and reception on Friday afternoon, the college hosted a gala, a colloquium, and a concert over the two-day period.

Dr. Mullen leapt into the festivities on Thursday night when she arrived at the 1920s-themed Inaugural Gala wearing an impressive floppy hat and an equally dazzling red boa. She was in good company - many took advantage of

the opportunity to dress up in fashions from the period. "The turnout was very impressive," said Naomi Sherwood, a junior. "Everyone was included; most of the students and faculty attended, and a lot of alumni came also. It was a good way to kick off the weekend."

Flappers, gangsters, and the occasional newspaper boy milled around the quad eating Klondike bars, Reese's cups, peanut butter and fluff sandwiches, and other food with roots in the 1920s. Colored lights, marshmallow roasting pits, and live jazz music added to the atmosphere. Attendees were also treated

to several numbers by Houghton's very own barbershop quartet.

Highlights of the evening included the introduction of the homecoming court, with Kate Ambrose and Marc Smithers being named senior class flapper and gangster, and the dedication of the 2006-2007 Boulder to Mrs. Kathie Brenneman, who has been a presence in the Information Center for many years. Yearbooks were handed out in the Campus Center directly after the gala.

The Friday morning colloquium showcased Houghton College's

investment in the world of academia. The topic was "Fixing up this World: Houghton College and the Wesleyan Imperative for Personal Transformation and Global Engagement." Held in the Wesley Chapel, Houghton Hosts welcomed alumni, students and visitors as they made their way in. Four speakers addressed the audience: John Tyson, a Professor of Theology here at Houghton College; Joel Carpenter, Professor of History at Calvin College; James Kirby, Professor of Church History at Southern Methodist

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THE WORLD OUT THERE

By Thomas Lerew

Pakistan's President Wins Reelection

Pakistan's General Perez Musharraf has won what some have labeled a "tainted" reelection. After months of legal battles debating the constitutionality of Musharraf's simultaneous positions as president and chief of the military, the Pakistani Supreme Court legitimized his place on the ballot just prior to the election. Musharraf has been in office for eight years, assuming the presidency after a military coup in 1999. His opponents had hoped that a legal case would effectively remove him from power.

Congress Reevaluates No Child Left Behind Act

The "No Child Left Behind" education act is about to expire and its reauthorization is being fiercely debated in Congress. The act, which was intended to increase nationwide educational standards, was extended past its September 30 expiration date, giving legislators time to determine if its language could be revised to augment its effectiveness. It is being argued that while the new standards are good for school districts, the federal government's promises of funding have fallen through. While the standards have boosted average standardized test scores, substantial changes may need to be made for the act to be reauthorized.

Speaker Pelosi Says Only the President Can End War

During an interview on Sunday, Speaker Nancy Pelosi stated that she now feels that only the president can end the war in Iraq. "Voters want it to end and they had expectations that Congress could end it." But, she said, "We can't without a presidential signature." Over the past few weeks, Pelosi has sought to inform the American people of the complexities Congress faces trying to end the war in Iraq. This in defense of the democratic campaign promises

leading up to the 2006 victory to end the war and bring the troops home.

Conservative Christian Leaders Meet to Discuss 2008 Presidential Race

Prominent members of the conservative American evangelical community convened in Utah last week to explore strategies for promoting their agenda in the upcoming 2008 presidential elections. A much-discussed proposal at the meeting was one to withdraw support from the Republican party and run a third-party candidate that holds traditional evangelical moral and ethical views. Many are concerned that front-runners such as Rudy Giuliani may not support pro-life movements or fight same-sex marriage. Some argued that a third party would merely assure a Democratic victory in the general election.

Security Contractor in Iraq Creates Controversy

An Australian security contractor working in Baghdad has sparked attention in both Iraq and Washington. Employees of the contractor have killed at least 17 Iraqis in what some Iraqi citizens are calling "unprovoked murder," causing the Iraqi government to demand \$136 million in compensation from the contractor. In light of the recent Blackwater USA issues, Congress is reconsidering the regulations and restrictions placed on private security contractors that work in Iraq.

Senator Craig to Finish Elected Term

After announcing his resignation from the senate following charges of lewd behavior in an airport restroom, Idaho Senator Larry Craig has rescinded his resignation saying he will finish his six-year term. Nearly two months ago, press reports were issued detailing his arrest for "soliciting" homosexual sex in a Minneapolis airport. Craig is already facing primary challenges in his upcoming reelection in 2008.

Halberg Gives Lecture On Microfinance

By Katarina Kieffer and Sandra Stark

Microfinance is one of the newest development models advocated as a means of alleviating poverty in developing countries. It involves short-term loans, distributed by microfinance institutions, to the poor and small entrepreneurs in an attempt to foster micro-business in free market economies. The Grameen Foundation, founded by the father of microcredit Muhammad Yunus, promotes microfinance businesses as "a proven and sustainable poverty-fighting method."

In the spring of 2007, Richard Halberg, Professor of Business, spent his sabbatical in Cambodia, working with World Hope International to conduct a "financial and operational review" of Cambodia Rural Economic Development Initiatives for Transformation (CREDIT). CREDIT is a microfinance institution (MFI) based in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Halberg used this experience as a basis for his Monday

evening talk, "The Business of Helping the Poor." The lecture was the first in this year's Hoselton Lecture series. Halberg is the current Hoselton Chair of Private Enterprise and Ethics.

In his lecture, he outlined six key areas that need evaluation when reviewing the relative strength of an MFI. The first question to be asked is, "Are they fulfilling their stated mission?" This involves questions of clarity in service, sustainability of the institution, and reaching their intended target groups. Financial performance is the second area to be addressed; according to Halberg, it is important to "match up your loans and your donations with the demand for loans." This means assessing cash flows and using ratio analysis to assess whether or not the institution is self-sufficient. Also crucial in the evaluation of an MFI is its ability to respond quickly to problems and to be internally accountable. He also discussed board oversight management, efficient product and service delivery, as well as proper information

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BB4C

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With A New Strategy And An Old Formula, *In Rainbows* Shines

By Eric Stevenson

On Wednesday of this week, Radiohead released their much-anticipated seventh studio album entitled *In Rainbows*. The album is available for download from the band's website.

Radiohead ended their recording contract with EMI Records in 2003 and everyone was wondering with whom they were going to sign next. Instead, the group decided not to sign at all. Lead guitarist Jonny Greenwood posted on the group's website on October 1 that the album would be available for download on October 10 and that the cost would be determined by the individual buyer—even if that was nothing. Radiohead, in other words, is selling their own album leak. A disc box with many extras (including nearly twice as many songs) can be preordered for release on December 3rd.

Radiohead is perhaps the most influential band of the last decade. Coldplay frontman Chris Martin has joked that his band is just recycling old Radiohead material with more

commercial appeal. Radiohead's new approach to album distribution is essentially snubbing the entire recording industry in front of entire global music community. Multiple bands including Oasis and Jamiroquai have already released statements saying they may follow Radiohead's lead in skipping traditional distribution methods. If the trend continues and gathers steam among fellow artists, the entire music business will undergo one giant facelift.

In short, what they're doing with this album, from a business standpoint, is revolutionary.

So now that you know the background story, let's get to the actual album. I'm writing this on the release date having only listened through the album three times. I refuse to make any strict judgments on this record, given that I've had little time to actually listen to it, but I shall share my initial impressions.


It's a great record. Radiohead have affirmed that you can always expect quality work from them. Notably (and thankfully!), they've found their guitars

again. The band's fourth and fifth albums (*Kid A* and *Amnesiac*) turned away from the innovative guitar-driven rock of their first three albums (*Pablo Honey*, *The Bends*, and *OK Computer*) that had initially defined them. *Hail to the Thief*, their sixth album, seemed to hold elements of both. This new record has brought them back to their old instruments, thankfully, but it's still nothing like what they've done before.

Hardcore fans have known about these songs for a while, with live bootlegs of nearly all of them floating around the Internet for the last year and a half. Some sound very similar to the live versions ("15 Step," "Bodysnatchers," "Weird Fishes/Arpeggi") while others sound completely different ("Reckoner," "Videotape"). The only song never before heard is the wonderful two minute track "Faust Arp." It's a beautiful acoustic guitar tune with rapid-fire vocals and a gorgeous string section. It definitively stands out and is the biggest surprise on the record.

Unfortunately, the album does have some disappointments. Most notably

is the recording of "Videotape" as opposed to its live counterpart. Listeners who have never heard the live version will find the track beautiful and compelling, but those who've heard the live version will have been expecting something much more powerful. Fan blogs screamed that "Videotape" was supposed to be Radiohead's best song. Perhaps time will show us that this album version is, in fact, better (I personally remain hopeful that's true).

Overall, Radiohead have done it again. The album flows well and is very diverse, innovative, and layered. You may still catch new things on the 20th or 30th listen. They've changed their sound (again), wrote a mind-bending album (again), and have gone about their actions in ways people haven't expected (again). Many have labeled them "the greatest band in the world," which is a completely subjective claim. With their long career, new album, and new distribution model, however, Radiohead dares to challenge whether that claim can be called opinion any longer. 

Field Hockey Team Looks To Build On Recent Winning Streak

By Alec Gilfillan

The Women's Field Hockey team is currently in the middle of a three-game winning streak despite struggling early in the season to score goals. The run includes a lopsided 8-0 win over NCAA Division II Wells College and leaves the Lady Highlanders with a 5-7-2 record thus far this year. The team's leading scorer, Ashley Hoffman, has scored six goals over the past three games to bring her season tally to eight. She is just one of many underclassmen who have contributed to this year's squad.

To understand the field hockey team, it is important to first look at the conditions in which they play. The sport of field hockey is not recognized by the National Associates of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA),


making the Houghton Women's Field Hockey team independent. Practically speaking, this means that there is no postseason and they cannot be nationally ranked, which creates difficulty in recruiting new players. Not having a championship to aim at forces Houghton to recruit women that demonstrate a passion for the game itself. Senior Kathleen Griego stressed this point, emphasizing that "every girl on the team is playing solely for the love of the game."

Athletic excellence, Christian commitment, and academic achievement are the three defining features of the Highlander tradition. The Houghton Women's Field Hockey team exemplifies these qualities on and off the field, shown in the team's work ethic and unity. When asked about this

year's team, Coach Darlene Wells said, "you couldn't ask for anything better." The program's achievements can be seen on and off the field. Last year's squad had an average GPA of 3.328 which would have qualified them as a Scholarly Team under NAIA guidelines. This year's team is just starting to see their hard work pay off.

According to Coach Darlene Wells, the biggest struggle this year has been scoring goals. At a recent practice, Coach Wells referred to the "patient persistence" that has been demonstrated this year in working together through adversity. Furthermore, field hockey aficionado Connie Finney has been impressed with the women's ability at talking through problems on the field. This ability highlights their unity. Senior Kathleen Griego said,

"Honestly, I think that we are an incredibly unified team. Each year, we pick four core covenants for our team to remember and work on throughout the year. This year our core values are dedication, love, sisterhood, and humility. I believe that every girl on the team exemplifies these qualities."

There is still much promise for the rest of this season. As senior Ashley Pink stated, "The incoming freshmen have been a huge contribution to the team and we are really excited to continue watching their growth." Houghton hopes to build on their winning streak in their next game against Ramapo College in on Saturday, October 13. The team's next home game is October 26 against SUNY Morrisville. 



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University; and Carolyn Miller, President of the Summer Institute of Linguistics International.

The inaugural ceremony began at three o'clock with a colorful processional of past, present, and visiting professors. Several school officials, including Daniel Chamberlain, the college's president emeritus, took part in the opening stages of the service before turning the platform over to Robert Wennberg of Westmont College, who taught alongside Dr. Mullen for

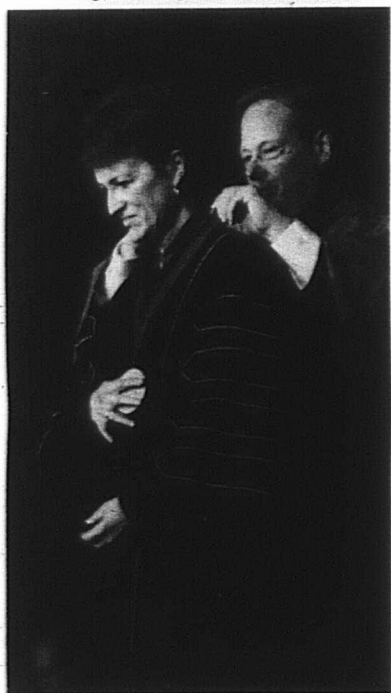


Photo by Ashley Hackett

Accepting the Presidential Medallion.

many years. Dr. Wennberg described Dr. Mullen's many accomplishments and referred to the "whirlwind of activity" she stirred up at Westmont, first as a professor of history and later as provost. In addition to her academic and administrative achievements, he spoke of the "depth of her spirituality," and finished with a glowing recommendation

of his former colleague. "Be well assured, Houghton College," he remarked, "[that] she will serve you faithfully and she will serve you well."

Mullen herself was met with a standing ovation upon mounting the podium to deliver the inaugural address. In keeping with the inaugural theme, "For Such a Time as This," she shared some of her vision for the years to come. Although Houghton's reputation as a liberal arts college is something to be proud of, she noted, the risk of hiding away in complacency is dangerous. Dr. Mullen stressed the need for addressing "the



Photo by Ashley Hackett

The Choral Union performed Walton's *Te Deum* under the direction of Dr. Johnson.

tough issues of our time" and working to cultivate a "symphony" of learning within a convicted, meditative, truth-speaking community.

The inauguration ceremony concluded with a prayer of blessing delivered by Earle Wilson, the General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church, and a benediction given by Laurence Mullen, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus and President Mullen's father. "The inauguration was good in the sense that it included the whole community," said Houghton student Aaron Straus. "Although the ceremony

unveiled, followed by the Inaugural Concert. The three gifts bestowed by the college were presented at this time, including Gary Baxter's commissioned sculpture *Common Elements*, John Leax's commissioned poem *Walking the Ridge Home*, and a performance of Dr. Mark Hijleh's composition *Such a Time*. Performers included Houghton Symphonic Winds, Houghton College Chamber Singers, the College Choir, and Eric Thomas, a professor of the Greatbatch School of Music, who delivered a rousing rendition of *Largo al factotum delle città*.

centered on Dr. Mullen, her message took into account the...history of the college. I also enjoyed the free chocolate," he added, referring to the complementary gift handed out at the end of the ceremony.

Celebrations continued into the late afternoon and evening with a reception, during which the presidential portrait was

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management.

Microfinance is considered by some to be the perfect solution to poverty, but Halberg was quick to point out legitimate concerns that accompany any microfinance institution. Specifically, issues of "mission drift" need to be addressed. Many MFI's have "gone into giving loans [only] to small entrepreneurs, because they make more money at it." He noted that "there is a tendency to [sway] away from lending to the poorest of the poor, because you don't make any money doing that, and, in fact, it threatens the

long term viability of the organization. So there is a tension there."

Halberg pointed out that another concern is a tendency within microfinance institutions to ignore the importance of job creation: "MFI's don't evaluate the extent to which business create jobs, yet it's something I think is very important, and in my mind may be more important in alleviating poverty than just giving out loans. Because as we've said...not everyone wants to be an entrepreneur, they just want to have a job, they just want to have a way to earn a living."

He also addressed the criticism that

microfinance "does things backward," creating a problem of loans being used for consumption rather than businesses or savings. These issues can be exacerbated by the "bureaucratic model" that many MFI's operate on, a model that tends to "add a ton of extra work for an already stretched staff." This focuses its time on paperwork and other menial chores, hindering its efficiency. This also "raises the cost of operations, which then hurts their operational self sufficiency."

Halberg ended his lecture with a question-and-answer session, in which he further emphasized the

importance of focusing on job creation as well as loans. "I would prefer to see more emphasis placed on job creation, because that in fact does have a ripple effect...individual loans to a poor family helps a little bit; it probably makes their lives a little more comfortable, but I don't think [it] has a very noticeable impact on the poverty level in the country." He concluded by stating, "MFI's...are doing some good things [and] we certainly shouldn't get rid of them. But there's lots of room for improvement."



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that may depend on where you come from... and what your story and background is. My sense is that we need to resist this notion of being these black holes of self-absorption. I think probably the best way to do it is to find someone in need and attend to them. Just get away from yourself! And it's this self-obsession, this self-absorption that is, I think, so acidic to our true happiness. [We need to] nurture a sense of God who is not there to be a heavenly butler or a lady who wants to have everything at her disposal, but rather a God who challenges us to turn outward... so that we find this rest in loving God and loving our neighbor.

Star: Mother Teresa came up as an example of letting go of our self-obsession. That brings to mind the recent discovery of her letters that uncover her crisis of faith. How can we prepare for this and equip ourselves to still seek God, even when we want to give up?

MV: Mother Teresa is probably serving many Christians as well now that she has died [because] these diaries have been published...as well as she served the dying in Calcutta. Doubt is always part of our faith, and doubt is part of our faith because God isn't a... controllable, predictable object in this world. God is God, and we are creatures of God.... God's ways

aren't our ways and any God who would be so predictable, that is always a source of simple comfort and always available would be more like a heavenly butler than truly a God who we don't control but rather on whom we profoundly depend. So this sense of darkness of the soul before God...[is] the experience with the living God. Those are the

experiences...that challenge us and call into question our own expectations and projections and dreams as to who

yourself.

Star: One of your lectures touched briefly on fear-based media, and how

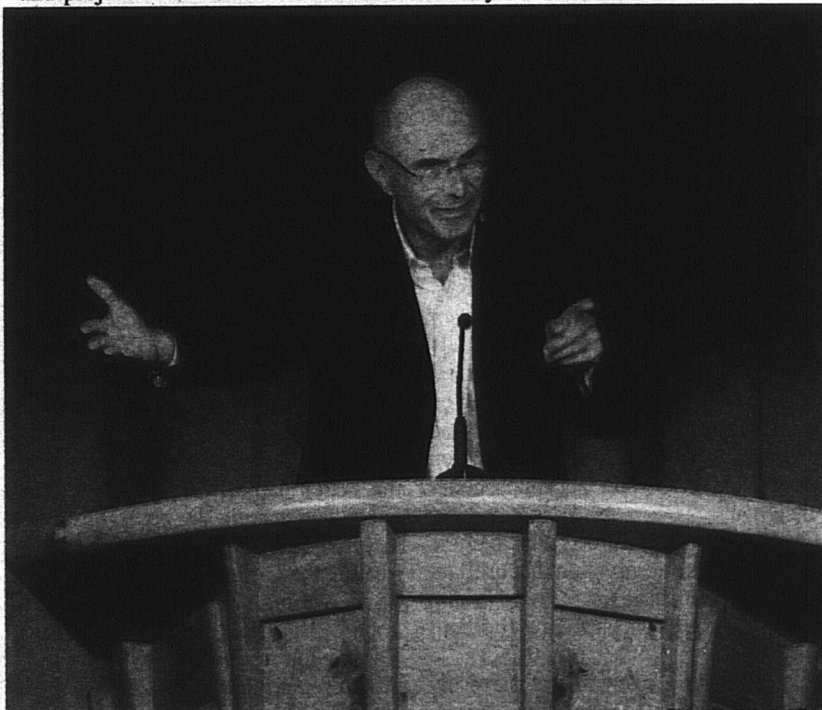


Photo By Wesley Dean

Volf spoke passionately of a Christianity not bound to experiential satisfaction.

God is and who we ought to be. I think this darkness of the soul is a reminder that our dreams cannot be simply our own, [and] that we are again... eccentric beings. We are ourselves when we have this profound relationship with God, but you can't then make God into an extension of your own dreams and satisfying

your own desires. You have to find yourself in a situation of not understanding, of puzzlement, of emptiness, in order for yourself and what you think to be challenged so that you can grow into something that may be larger than yourself. The struggle with this darkness is the struggle to remain true to God and true to

the cause for concern over 9/11 was fear-based. Any personal thoughts?

MV: There are many factors, but clearly it seems to me one important factor in how media functions... we love to view violence. Violence sells. Fears, addressing fears via portraying violence seems to be very important to

us so that media distorts the reality – when I talked to some of my friends in the inner cities they are saying local channels will...not just report on violence, but have reruns when there is no violence occurring because violence sells. Then the perception of reality is created that inner cities are much less safe than they in reality are, and that's on the top of the fact that of course the way news operates is that if something


goes well, that's not newsworthy. Only if something breaks down – if subway in New York functions well for 30 days nobody hears about it; we presume that's what is supposed to be happening. If it breaks down, immediately it's in all the papers, and often then that also creates our reality, since much of our reality comes through news. That creates a reality that is really distorted in many ways, and so forth.

Star: Out of curiosity, you intrigued us when you mentioned that you read Nietzsche for devotions. What do you gain from reading him?

MV: [Tuesday] night I gave an example of what I've gained in that you've got to have eyes to perceive something, and if you don't have a sufficiently expanded horizon you won't see something even if it's right in front of your nose. A very small, but very important lesson. He's very interesting as a critic of Christianity... He's as loudly and intelligently atheistic as they come, but at the same time I think he can purify the faith and show the weakness of our practices as well as thinking. There's nothing so bad for you as complacency... when you think everything's okay and 'that's who we are.' You acquire habits of thinking and

“We are eccentric beings...we find fulfillment not in ourselves, but in being tied to something larger. We can think infinite thoughts. We are infinite in that sense, and nothing but a relationship with the infinite will satisfy.”

acting that are profoundly at odds with the faith, and you don't even know it. Read somebody like Nietzsche and you suddenly realize

“What? What am I doing? Why am I believing this? How do I live?” Nietzsche senses that to live is to be unjust. It's a very radical claim that Americans tend not to like to hear, but that seems right. It's very hard for us to live just lives. We err all the time. We don't love our neighbor as ourselves, we don't love God with our whole heart, and we're so complacent about it. Luther wasn't. Luther thought that's a huge, big deal. 

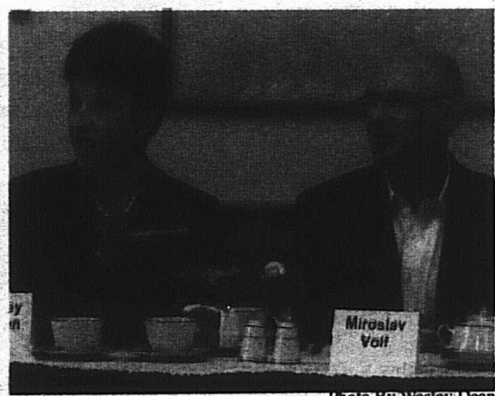


Photo By Wesley Dean

Volf's visit was a part of the Inaugural season.



A More Complex Christianity: Reflections on Miroslav Volf

Volf's critique of the "commodification of Christianity" was spot on, but will his words be misinterpreted as a mandate to perpetuate outdated evangelicalism?

By Dr. Meic Pearse

The *Houghton Star*, my friends, has a much longer reach than most of us ever suspected. Indeed, that is the reason why, ever since a few days ago, the top of my head is not merely bald — but scalded and scorched. On the day of President Mullen's inauguration, when I found myself, like most of us, jostling and mingling and making small talk with old friends and new, I was hailed by a visitor from southern California with "Dr. Pearse, you have greetings from Richard Mouw."

Now, since I have never actually spoken to Fuller Seminary's Professor Mouw, I was taken aback at this news. And then I realized the awful truth: the greetings were a biblical pan of hot coals upon my all-too-deserving cranium (Prov. 25:21-22). As devoted readers of this august journal will remember, Mouw spoke here last year in the Lecture Series, to which I responded with an article in the *Star* that was guilty of, well, *pan-ning* several of his more contentious ideas. As I stood crestfallen in the Campus Center, coals dripping from his seared bonce, my interlocutor consoled with me with "No, really; he thought your arguments were quite good."

So, since it falls to my lot to respond to another such visit, I suppose I had better watch out; after all, Yale is much closer than Fuller. Okay, here goes:

On the Tuesday and Wednesday of the week before the inauguration, Houghton had the privilege of playing host to Miroslav Volf, and hearing him expatiate on several topics, including the theme of his latest book, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*.

For some years now, Volf has been one of the six or seven most important theologians in that world. His *Exclusion and Embrace* was almost certainly the most significant theological book of the 1990s. But he has also published on the themes of God and work, on the nature of the church and, at a popular level, on giving and forgiving.

Born in Osijek, Croatia, he was

brought up in Novi Sad, where his father, Dragutin Volf, was one of the most important leaders of Yugoslav Pentecostalism. He has always been well connected. His sister is married to Peter Kuzmič, founder (and still principal) of the Evangelical Seminary in Osijek, as well as being a professor at Gordon-Conwell; his wife, Judy Gundry-Volf, is herself a biblical scholar and the daughter of another. And Miroslav took his doctorate and *Habilitation* in Tübingen under Jürgen Moltmann. It doesn't get much better than that.

Yet this 'explains' no more than the commonplace observation that brilliant people tend to discover one another and stick together. Oh, and have brilliant kids.

The nasty mistreatment Miroslav received in the 1980s at the hands of the authorities in Communist Yugoslavia, along with the savage wars of the 1990s that accompanied the break up of the state: these are the phenomena that have driven much of his theological reflection. How do we forgive the unforgivable? How can we find reconciliation with enemies? How do we deal with memory of past wrongs?

His dissection of these problems is searing and breathtakingly insightful. I find myself unable to follow Miroslav to all of his conclusions, but no one could accuse him of slipping over difficulties or evading painful questions. How he gets there is almost more important than the end points of his arguments.


His Tuesday evening lecture, however, covered slightly different ground. He began by pointing out the constantly shrinking nature of 'the American dream' — from the Pilgrim Fathers' godly 'city on a hill', to the nineteenth-century 'redeemer nation', to the late twentieth century's quest for individual satisfaction and the hedonism (or what he calls 'Hilton-ization' — as in Paris Hilton) of the early twenty-first.

Broadly the same observation for the West as a whole. It's moved from its premodern ideal of Christendom, through the nationalisms of the period

from 1789 to 1945 or so (in most cases, but more recently in the Balkans) — and on from there into consumerist nirvana. And of course he's right to say that the latest phase — consumerism and hedonism — is contemptible. Still, the Christendom model wasn't so hot either (oppressive, unbiblical) and the nationalist phase was downright lethal. And, as a Croatian from a Pentecostal background, whose excellent ecclesiology was so well set out in *After Our Likeness*, no one knows all this better than Miroslav himself.

He was making the point, however, that in the consumer society we end up treating the gospel the same way as we do everything else: we try to 'sell' it, hoping that someone will 'buy'. And, alas, we succeed. This is what he calls the 'commodification' of Christianity. The gospel is 'bought' the same way consumers buy everything else: on their own terms, selectively, and as and when they want it.

The results are not altogether surprising: a Christianity that is indistinguishable in its beliefs and lifestyle from the surrounding glitz and schmaltz of the West. Or, he might have added, from its addiction to therapy and self-esteem fixations.

Along the way, Miroslav pointed out that our over-eager quests for 'relevance' in Christianity are misguided; we end up selling out the very thing we thereby aim to promote. Amen! Even so, as I sat in the audience absorbing this, I couldn't help worrying how he was being heard. Will those among us who want to perpetuate the evangelical culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on into the twenty-first take this as encouragement to keep at it? I hope not. Even once we've debunked synthetic religious grooviness and the sycophantic determination to say the shibboleths of the postmodern West (in suitably pious words, of course!) it nevertheless remains true that, sometimes, we need to change in order to remain the same. 

Dr. Pearse is a Professor of History at Houghton College.

Update from London: The Local Music Scene

Flinging mobile phones out the window to hear Blue Rose Code.

By Chloe Ackerman

There is no better concert than the one where you sit with the band when they aren't performing. Last night I had the privilege of hanging out with Steve Smith and Blue Rose Code, thanks to my graphic designer friend Jesse. She had been to a Blue Rose Code concert the week before and ended up chatting with the band manager about her work. He asked to see her portfolio, liked what he saw, and invited her back to chat with the band about the possibility of working together. I tagged along

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Names may be withheld upon request.



• *London Continued from Page 6*

since Jesse didn't know these people or where she was going, and ended up discovering a new favorite band.

The concert was at The Distillers, a classy pub in Hammersmith, and though the room in which the event was held was more in the style of an open mic, the audience was completely focused on the performers. People who talked were shushed, and any mobiles that dared ring were promptly tossed out the window. The program was called One Taste, and included a remarkable young man named Jamie Woon, who took a looping device and turned his voice into a full choir and band to accompany his rendition of "Wayfaring Stranger." Also part of the show was PoeTree Man, a slam poet and tree surgeon who, as part of his performance, had the audience sing and scream like they'd been oppressed for two thousand years.

Blue Rose Code is an Islington band (Islington being a burrow in London), though Steve is from South Africa and the lead singer, Ross, is from Scotland. They play relaxed folksy rock, bringing in instruments such as the harmonica and the fiddle to accent the acoustic guitar and bass. The band members themselves were personable, treating Jesse and me as little sisters rather than a potential business partner and her random friend. Chris offered to buy us drinks, Steve's sister told us stories from when she'd been a student at the London School of Theology, where we happen to be studying now, and Steve and Ross fell in love with the art samples Jesse brought along to show them. Most important, however, was their music, which was so mellow and nostalgic that I became convinced I could listen to them forever and never grow tired of their style and sound. Blue Rose Code has real talent, and I wouldn't be all that surprised if, in a couple of years, we find their album in our music stores. 

Chloe is a junior Writing major. She is currently studying in London.

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From the Editors' Desk...

Calming the Rhetorical Storm: Redefining Sincere Environmentalism

Live Earth? Earth Day? The most inconvenient truth may be that it's not really about saving the earth after all.

By Jason Fisher

I'm prone to channel surfing. It's an admittedly bad habit, but occasionally bears fruit, like last week when my wandering attention was suddenly grabbed by the hypnotic hip-gyrations of the Pussycat Dolls. They sounded awful, but since the Pussycat Dolls aren't really about music anyway, I pressed the mute button and continued to watch. A few moments later I realized I was watching a long overdue airing of their performance for the Live Earth concert series. At this point, a question crept into my mind: why is this event called Live Earth?

We celebrate Earth Day every year, and utilize disposable coffee cups that will help us save the planet. (Now that's a powerful cup!) However, something about this rhetoric is fundamentally dishonest. My thoughts (and yours) on climate change don't change this fact: it isn't the *earth* that may be in danger, but *we* that may be in danger.

If you were going to write a history textbook about the earth itself, you'd have some exciting things to cover.

For starters, humans wouldn't appear until the last page, or more likely, the last sentence. That's how short we've been around compared to the great planet that we currently call home. You'd note that for most of the earth's history, it was a pretty balmy place, with no permanent ice anywhere. For the first 20 million years or so that Antarctica resided at the South Pole, it was ice-free and covered in rich vegetation. In your book, though, you'd also want to mention that when ice did show up, it was no walk in the park. About 2.2 billion years ago the earth underwent a massive ice age, followed by a billion years or so of

warmth. Then, things got really ugly: Snowball Earth. Some scientists think that the entire surface of the earth may have been frozen solid, with ocean ice 800 meters thick. My libido aside, even I doubt that the Pussycat Dolls could have warmed that place up with their hot pants and corsets (which, apparently, are perfectly acceptable as outerwear).

So far, your book has only covered the intense and varying natural climate change that the earth has gone through. You haven't even touched on some of the more explosive events, like massive volcanic eruptions. In 1815, Tambora erupted with a force equivalent to sixty thousand Hiroshima-sized atom bombs. But Tambora is in Indonesia, so how about something closer to home? Well, Yellowstone National Park is what geologists refer to as a supervolcano, which I believe classifies it as a very large volcano. Two million years ago, Yellowstone produced enough ash to cover Houghton College in over 60 feet of the stuff.

But Tambora and Yellowstone would probably only make it into your


You could leave your pick-up truck running all day. Frankly, this planet has been through worse. You and I aren't so resilient.

book as a footnote. You'd probably want to spend a good chapter on whatever it was that killed off the dinosaurs. It's called the KT event and it happened about 65 billion years ago. There's disagreement about exactly what it was, but we think it came from space, and the impact was equivalent in force to over four billion Hiroshima-sized explosions.

But here's the thing: amazingly enough, the earth is still around for you to write a history text about it. Earth Day? Live Earth? Save the Planet? You could leave your pick-up truck running all day, burn tires and plastic bags, refuse to recycle bottles and cans,

and do just about anything else you could think of to be environmentally unfriendly. In fact, we could probably do all of these things collectively as a species and the earth would continue to exist. Frankly, this planet has been through worse. You and I, however, aren't so resilient.

Here, as it should be plain to see, is where environmentalism fails. It is a decidedly humanistic movement. It claims that we, as humans, have the ability to destroy and, more importantly, to save the earth. It is this sort of intellectual self-indulgence that can make environmentalism so unappealing. Environmentalists may claim that they are trying to save the planet, but it is really about saving themselves. So what is stopping them from admitting that, at worst, we'll make this planet inhospitable for humans (and, granted, many other species) and cause self-extinction? To do so would sacrifice their moral superiority that they've carved out for themselves, and to admit they're really concerned primarily with themselves, making them just as selfish as the rest of us. I wonder whether some of them would be disappointed to find out that it is incredibly unlikely that humans would destroy the globe. That would take away from the power of humans where, of course, all power resides.

The language needs to change. This isn't about the earth. It's about us, as people. There is no shame in admitting that the worst we could do is wipe ourselves out. While it would be no KT event, it would still be an impressively catastrophic accomplishment. Without the Pussycat Dolls and the rest of humanity, however, it would be a very bleak world indeed. 

Jason is a senior Philosophy and Political Science double major and serves as a news editor.



Photo by Mike Wise

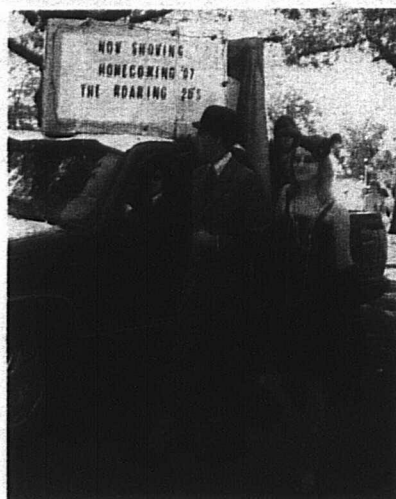


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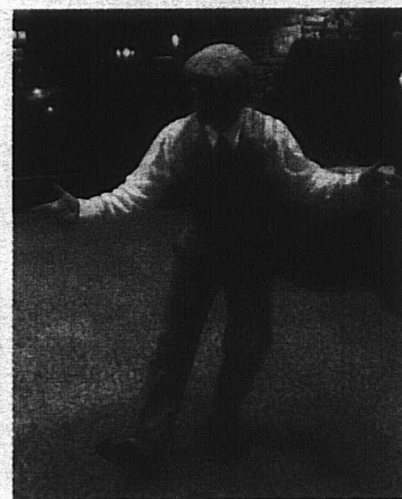


Photo by Daniel White

featured photos homecoming weekend

These photos were taken by students and parents during Homecoming festivities.

Parade, SPOT Highlight Homecoming Weekend

By Constance Foster

Homecoming festivities took place all day Saturday starting with the parade in the morning, three sporting events in the afternoon, and the banquet and SPOT in the evening.

The parade began around 10:30 a.m. in the Fire Hall parking lot before ending in front of the Campus Center, where the class floats were judged. Marchers in the parade included ROTC, the Equestrian Society, Allegany County Outreach, Houghton's Volunteer Fire Department, and representatives from each of the college dorms. President Mullen even made an appearance, marching with children of faculty and staff. The class floats were last in the procession. Mark Satta reported that "the senior class float theme was jazz music, the junior class theme was movies from the 1920s, and the sophomores had a 'gangsters' theme complete with chocolate coin money, IBC root beer, and giant playing cards. All the floats looked great and [participants] showed a lot of energy. It was a lot of fun." The seniors' float won

first place, followed by the sophomores, juniors and freshmen.

Sporting events took place in the afternoon, with the women's volleyball team defeating Malone College with a 3-2 victory. Malone had entered Saturday's game ranked first in the American Midwest Conference North Division. The Highlander soccer teams faced Point Park University in Saturday's Homecoming games. The Lady Highlanders broke through the Pioneer defense twice near the end of the first half and maintained their lead the rest of the game for a strong victory. In the mens' game, the Highlanders out-shot the Pioneers 33-3 but the Pioneer defense held firm until the end of the first overtime period. With the official time reading 99:59, Steve Grudda scored a dramatic winning goal pushing the Highlanders to a 1-0 win.

The Homecoming Banquet began at 7:00 p.m. as students found their tables in the Dining Hall. Jocelyn Pugh reports that she and Rachel Blystone, the Homecoming Chairs, "always knew we wanted to go for the classic black and white theme for the

banquet... [T]ransforming the dining hall was overwhelming. We thought it would never get done in time, but we had several unexpected people help us out, which was amazing." The center section of the dining area was curtained off with black fabric and black and white streamers adorned the ceiling, fanning out from a shimmering chandelier in the center of the room. Live 1920s-style jazz music and silhouetted cutouts of flappers and jazz musicians enhanced the ambiance.

Following the banquet, SPOT was full of talent, movies, music, and comedic sketches. Adam Slocum, who co-hosted SPOT with Megan Roll, commented, "It was a blast!" For many, the weekend was a chance to sit back and enjoy Homecoming after months of planning. Homecoming Chair Rachel Blystone reflected afterwards that "it was really fantastic to see it all come together at the end. It was especially nice to finally take a break from all the busyness, to relax and enjoy my friends, and actually have some fun after the craziness of it all."

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