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Committee on Spiritual Life Re-examines Chapel Attendance Policy; SGA Expresses Concerns

By Joel VanderWeele

Several weeks ago, student representatives of the CSL presented a tentative policy of grading for chapel to the SGA. In response to the proposed policy, the SGA drafted an official response which expressed their disapproval of the policy, stating that "the use of a letter-grading system would be misguided, as it would compel students to attend virtually every service simply to achieve a high mark. ... The changes would dramatically alter student viewpoints regarding the nature of chapel. It would be seen as an academic burden rather than a gathering of believers for spiritual edification."

Senator Lindsay Hansen

believes that the "Senate has done a good job of expressing the opinions of the wider student body. I mean, I understand... no, actually I don't understand the reasoning behind the proposal, but I think there is some confusion about it. I think it would be negatively received across the entire student body."

For the last two semesters, the Committee on Spiritual Life (CSL) has been actively re-examining Houghton's approach to spiritual life. Although the work of the CSL is not limited to the chapel program, the focus has been on the chapel mission statement, chapel attendance policy, and the format of the chapel program.

The current chapel mission statement was written six years ago when John Brittain was in his

first year as Dean of the Chapel. Although most elements of the college operate under a 10-year review system, Brittain "thought that we should probably re-examine the vision statement now, because all of the students and even a couple of the faculty who were involved five and a half years ago are gone... we're working towards a revision of the purpose statement. And frankly, I think one of our goals is to broaden that to reflect what we see as our goals."

In light of the student responses to grading for chapel, Brittain stated, "if there's overwhelming negative reactions, obviously we're not going to go that direction." But chapel attendance policy is a perennial issue at Houghton,

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New Admissions Programs Focus on Diversity

By Monica Sandreczki

The Admissions office of Houghton College is in the process of developing two new programs to help bring more diversity to the Houghton College campus.

"The Board of Trustees challenged the administration to increase the diversity," said Wayne MacBeth, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Church Relations. "Part of the reason that we want a more diverse population is because we want our students to be global citizens. Learning from and meeting others from around the world can be a great thing... [even learning from others] from urban neighborhoods, places that might be very different to some of the suburban students who come to Houghton."

These "efforts to move forward [the] commitment to diversity at Houghton" said MacBeth, regard a connection between China and a new program in Buffalo.

"China looms large on the global landscape and is already playing an enormous role in world politics and economy and is going to play a bigger one in the years ahead. So it makes sense for us to try to identify possibilities for our students to look at China or for Chinese students to experience Houghton College," said MacBeth.

Over Christmas, MacBeth traveled to Beijing and four Chinese provinces visiting universities and high schools to talk to leaders and students about the value of a small Christian college with a liberal arts education. Thus far, there have been ten applications for entrance into Houghton from Chinese students for next fall.

According to MacBeth, one of the main challenges for the Chinese students will be earning an adequate score on the English exam. Money is another issue as going to school in China is much less expensive than coming to the States. However, there are many students and not enough spots in good schools in China, so Chinese students are interested in finding good educational opportunities somewhere else.

"They are really interested in" • Diversity continued on page 2

Tennent Delivers Annual Chamberlain Lecture

By Shane Marcus

Tuesday night, students, faculty, and administrators gathered to hear Dr. Timothy Tennent give the 2009 Chamberlain Lecture. Dr. Tennent came from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary where he is the head of the missions program, as well as Professor of World Missions and Indian Studies.

Dr. Tennent's lecture was titled "Is Salvation by Grace through Faith Unique to Christianity"? He introduced his topic by talking about the ideals of the reformation that led to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. He emphasized the importance of Martin Luther and the protestant reformation to our current theological context.

He criticized the Western church and academy for not caring enough about the theology of other cultures. He said that we have for too many years forced Christians from other cultures to eat, sleep, live, breathe, and study our theology. What we have not done is gone into their context, to their churches, and to their lives to learn to appreciate their theology.

Dr. Tennent then introduced his idea of theological translatability. He defined the concept as the ability of the core essentials of

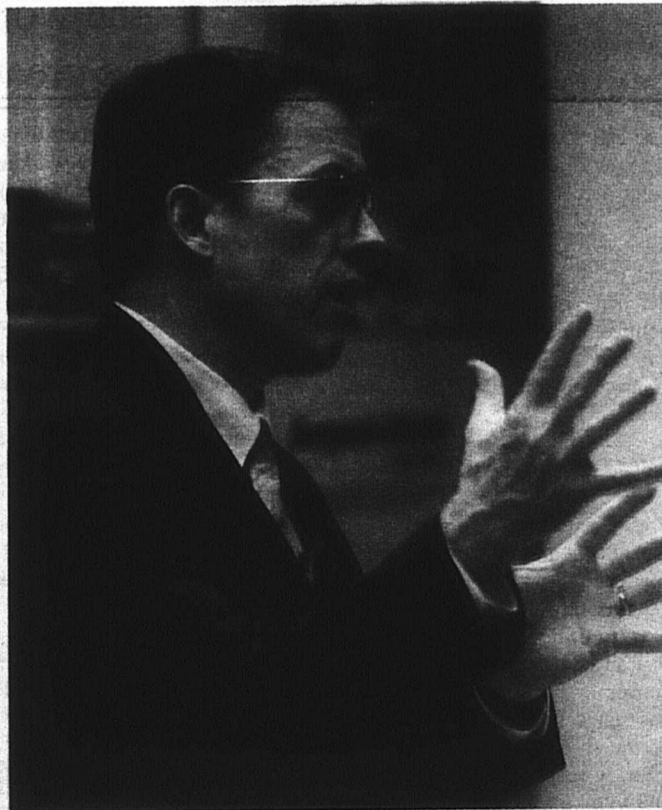


Photo by Jim Calloway

"Is Salvation by Grace through Faith Unique to Christianity?"

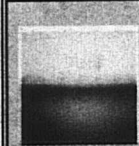
Christianity to be discovered anew in other cultures. As of yet, he said, Christianity in places like Africa and Latin America - where the church is growing far more rapidly than any other place -

has been divorced from the rich creedal tradition that we consider orthodoxy in the West.

He stressed the need to bring our own context and theology into

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WORLD out there

By Monica Sandreczki

Obama sides with the United Nations in Darfur Conflict

President Barack Obama met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon when he denounced the expulsion of international aid workers from Darfur. Obama has said that he wants to send a very strong message that there needs to be peace in Sudan. "It is not acceptable to put that many people's lives at risk," he said. "We need to be able to get those humanitarian organizations back on the ground." 13 aid organizations have been removed from the Sudan following the warrant for President Omar al-Bahir's arrest. Sudan has claimed that the aid groups had a political agenda in mind, but this has been denied. Currently, 2.7 million people in Darfur receive aid and it is estimated that 300,000 people have died since the onset of the conflict in 2003 when African rebels took up arms against the mostly Arab regime because they wanted a larger amount of resources and power.

German School Shooting

Earlier Wednesday morning, a 17 year old student entered a high school in Winnenden, Germany, and began shooting, killing nine students and three teachers. He too is dead, and preliminarily, it seems as though he was killed by police. After killing the twelve at the school, he drove 25 miles away and holed up in a supermarket, killing three bystanders in the process. Two police officers were injured before the student was dead. According to Erwin Hetger, regional police chief, the student gunmen "went into the school with a weapon and carried out a bloodbath." There have been two previous school shootings in Germany since 2002, resulting in the suicide of the gunmen in both cases. This is a story that is not foreign to Americans with the nightmares of Columbine and Virginia Tech in our minds.

US and China Pledge to Avoid Further Confrontations

After a confrontation between naval ships, the United States and China have decided to avoid such incidents in the future. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, met with China's Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi and discussed the interaction in the South China Sea, in which five Chinese ships dangerously threatened an unarmed US surveillance ship, according to the Pentagon. Clinton said that their conversations were

positive and that she hopes to build a "positive, co-operative and comprehensive relationship." China has said that this statement is very inaccurate. Clinton said that North Korea could face consequences if it went ahead with missile testing. Currently, Foreign Minister Yang is in Washington D.C. speaking with President Obama.

Rival Palestinian Factions Hamas and Fatah Have Unity Talks

Hamas and Fatah, the two main Palestinian groups, and long time rivals, have begun talks, in Cairo, to bring about a national unity government. According to BBC, the rift between the two factions is making rebuilding Gaza more difficult. Omar Suleiman, intelligence chief, who opened the talks, reminded the two factions that all Palestinian eyes are on them, so they should not let these people down. Many international aid groups, who have pledged billions of dollars to rebuilding Gaza, refuse to talk directly with Hamas because it is commonly viewed as a terrorist organization. Israel, who also refuses to deal with Hamas, has had a blockade, allowing in only food and medicine. Another unity agreement degenerated after Israel and Hamas both refused to recognize the other. Both Hamas and Fatah have pointed fingers at the other claiming that there are politically motivated arrests. Fatah chooses to act non-violently, but Hamas is willing to fight against Israel.

Joint Action at the G20 Summit

President Obama has called for a global action to bolster economies, speaking ahead of this weekend's G20 meeting of finance ministers in Horsham, in West Sussex. Saying that all of the countries are in the economic crisis together, Obama has stated two goals to come out of the meeting: to have a group effort in reinvigorating economies, and to take action on a regulatory reform agenda. His call for global spending comes concurrently with Europe's press for global regulation of the financial system. "We must work together not as a small group of advanced economies but globally, including the emerging and developing economies," said UK Chancellor Alistair Darling. There will be a G20 meeting of the ministers of finance on April 2, in London, which has many poor countries concerned that they will be underrepresented. At present, there is only one African nation attending the meeting.

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studying abroad in America. The parents are a little worried that America is not conservative enough for them because they've seen the movies and know what it's like over here from those perceptions," said MacBeth.

MacBeth also stated that it will take more than one or two visits to create an inroad in China, but he hopes that students from China will be coming to Houghton regularly in the next two to three years.

A second Houghton program aimed at student diversity is coming to Buffalo. According to Charles Massey, Professor of Education and the coordinator of the Office for Urban Connections, Houghton is exploring the possibility of an Associate of Arts program in the urban area of Buffalo, an area with a much more diverse group than what Houghton currently attracts. The students recruited to the program would be first-generation college students.

Rebecca Ballard, AmeriCorps volunteer and College Advisor in the Admissions Office, is currently working closely with this program. Ballard said that this program will target students who would be otherwise unable to go to the Houghton main campus, such as groups that place a high value on family.

Students earning an Associates Degree would work alongside students taking a semester in Buffalo, as well as work with students participating in the master's program in Buffalo. The students would live in houses in Buffalo with a mentor-in-residence who would most likely be a student working on their master's degree.

Classes would include general education studies, including American History with a focus on Buffalo

history and architecture. Students would also be AmeriCorps volunteers in order to participate in a service learning experience. In addition, they would receive a stipend from AmeriCorps. The hope is that they would end up with very little debt. "Financially, it would probably be a better option for a lot of students," said Ballard.

However, this program is still in very preliminary stages. If Houghton were to offer this program, said Massey, they will need to get approval from the state Department of Education, get a facility in Buffalo established, have the Task Force look at the report, and get approval of the details of the program from the faculty and the Board of Trustees. Massey also said that they have

not yet begun the dialogue with the Department of Education; he doesn't "know any New York state bureaucracy that works quickly."

The Task Force working on the program is a group of faculty, recent Houghton graduates in the Buffalo area, and individuals active with African

American and Hispanic churches. It is chaired by Massey and Jeff Carter, the executive director of the Pastoral and Church Ministries program. According to Ballard, the task force is currently administering a survey to students in Buffalo to get data on the interest level in the program. They are also working on the state accreditation that would be given to the program.

Recently, Ballard hosted a visit of several high school students from a church on the West side of Buffalo with a high refugee population. The students met with Houghton students and Brian Webb, who answered questions about being a minority student at Houghton.

It is anticipated that the program will be implemented in Fall 2011.

"We want our students to be global citizens. Learning from and meeting others from around the world can be a great thing."

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• *Chapel continued from page 1*
 and Brittain defended a revision, claiming that nobody drags out attendance issues like Houghton. "Can you force people to be in community by forcing them to be in the same place? Of course not. But you can't have community if no one is ever together. And the learning component, being exposed to a wide variety of preaching styles, theologies, whatever... as Dr. Mullen has said, the currency of an academic community are credit and attendance. That's how you say something is important. You give credit and/or you require attendance."

Kelvin Friebel, Associate Professor of Old Testament, who sits on the CSL sub-committee concerned with the chapel mission statement, explained that the difficult decision is whether "the mission statement should be what chapel is currently or should construct a theological statement of what we think chapel should be. ... To me, first of all, we have to define what the mission of the chapel is, what we are trying to accomplish... it may incorporate a lot or it may actually narrow the focus of what we do."

In terms of the diversity of Houghton's chapel program, Senator Hansen believes that "if we conformed to one specific style, not only would it exclude portions of the student body, it would also take away from the academic aspects of chapel."

In order to get a better sense of how Houghton should approach chapel attendance policies, the CSL has "done a lot of listening and a lot of opinion collecting, and now it's time to determine some things," said Brittain. This opinion gathering included a study

of other schools' programs, a recent survey of Houghton students, and conversations with the Student Government Association.

"For whatever reason," said Brittain, "Houghton has a group of what are called 'dashboard schools,' you know, schools we compare ourselves with all the time to make sure the engine is not backfiring.

"Can you force people to be in community by forcing them to be in the same place?"

Some of them we look at because they are cross-[application], some of them for size, mission, etc." Brian Webb, Administrative Assistant to the Dean of the Chapel, compiled a comprehensive study of chapel policies at these "dashboard schools."

The average number of chapels required per semester for schools included in the study with more traditional chapel programs was 35.1, compared with Houghton's attendance requirement of 26 chapels per semester. Five of Houghton's "dashboard schools" offer alternative chapel options, where credit is granted for non-traditional events (lectures, film screenings, forums, etc.). For these schools, students are required to attend an average of 21.2 chapels each semester. Offering "alternative chapels" is one approach that the CSL is examining and will make a decision on in the future. Of the 17 schools included in the study, only two, Eastern and Taylor, do not require chapel attendance at all.

The CSL met on Thursday to discuss responses to the grading policy and the results of the recent online survey sent to all students. They will continue to deliberate on topics ranging from the chapel mission statement to whether or not faculty and staff should be required to attend chapel.

Adams Elected President in SGA's General Elections

By Amy Buckingham

In sharp contrast to last year's hotly contested elections, the recent Senate elections can only be described as tame. The few students running for positions as a part of the upcoming year's Student Government Association had little to fear from competition.

Election Commissioner and Senator Joshua Nolen expressed disappointment in the student participation in this year's elections. "I would have liked to see more student involvement, both in voting for positions, but also in running for positions." The current year's election saw no contestations in any of the positions, with the exception of the position of Senator with nine students running for eight positions.

Of the approximately 1100 Houghton College students, only 266 voted in the elections, as opposed to the 501 who voted last year. One potential reason for this small voter turnout is the lack of competition over the role of SGA President. This election saw only one student running for president whereas last year there were three. Nolen says, "Last year the elections were also a lot more publicized, with the Star publishing the Presidential platforms, platforms being online, and printed, and a Presidential debate; again, with this year, we couldn't have had a debate and we didn't have multiple platforms to print."

The lowered student participation has incited concern among students. Nolen and others have expressed unease about the fate of Student Government at Houghton. "I've talked to a few graduating seniors who are afraid of what will happen to the SGA a few years down the line, and even next year... there seems to be a lot less involvement of the student body and a lot more apathy in students now than when I was a Freshman."

However, President-Elect Zachary Adams says, "I am really pleased with the elections, even though only one of the positions was contested. I think that the new Cabinet and Senate bring a great group dynamic that will serve the student body's interests well."

"There seems to be a lot less involvement of the student body and a lot more apathy."

With 69 percent of the vote, Zachary Adams was elected as President for the 2009-2010 school year, with 83 percent of the vote going to Audrey Gillette and Jennifer Steinhoff as Vice President for the Fall and Spring semesters, respectively. The line-up for 2009-2010 Student Government cabinet has Jared Houseman as Commissioner of Finance, Wesley Bevens as Commissioner of Communication, Suzanne Derksen as Chaplain and Marc Williams, Clara Sanders, Joshua Wallace, Joseph Chinn, Caitlin Cleland, Sophie Huber, Dan Liggett and Stephen Ross as Senators.

• *Salvation continued from page 1*
 conversation with the theology of other cultures and traditions, and that the West can not afford to ignore them any longer. He said that opening up this conversation would have two important benefits. The first is that it would give Western theology new questions to apply to the text of scripture, and new ways of answering old questions. The second benefit is that it will help us to see our own heresies and ways that we have blended our culture with the gospel in inappropriate ways. All Christians should learn to see the gospel as theologically translatable, just as the early Christians did when they took the message of Christ into all the world.

Dr. Tennent then moved into a case study of Pure Land Buddhism as a way to see if the gospel of

salvation by grace through faith could be found in other religions. Pure Land Buddhism was a new sect of Buddhism started by a monk who was fed up with the abuses of established Buddhism and wanted to reclaim "orthodox" Buddhism. Through study and meditation he came to revoke all of the strenuous works Buddhism required and embraced the name Amita. He then became enlightened.

While the two faiths seem similar in some ways on the surface, Dr. Tennent stressed a need to go deeper into them. He pointed

out that the nature of Amita and the nature of the Christian God are very different. Amita is a subjective deity, a monk who long ago became divine, instead of the eternal source of all things.

Dr. Tennent pointed out that other religions must be carefully studied to see how they diverge from Christianity.

The doctrines of grace and faith are also very different in Pure Land Buddhism. Grace is still an unmerited gift for Pure Land believers, but it is a grace that removes their sin

and makes them equal with God. Grace for Christians, however, is a forensic judicial act that must be followed by sanctification, and never erases the difference between

man and God. Faith, for Pure Land believers, is a sincere self-reflection and not a turn to Jesus Christ, a man whose existence is verifiable in the actual history of the world.

So, while Dr. Tennent affirmed that grace and faith are necessary for salvation in other religions, he was sure to point out that those religions must be carefully studied to see how they diverge from true Christianity. And, while Christians can theologically translate their core essentials into other cultures, and can use the ideas of religions from those cultures to help them, they should not make the mistake of merely appropriating the exact ideas. They too must be translated for the true gospel of salvation by grace through faith to come to light.



"Engaging the Muslim World" Class Educates Students on Islamic Culture

By Rebekah Miller

On Monday afternoons, it is not uncommon to see head scarves bobbing up and down in conversation through the windows of Java 101. No, Houghton does not have a resident Muslim community that meets regularly on Monday afternoons for coffee. Instead, these headscarves and hats are part of Dr. Hegeman's class "Engaging the Muslim World." Working from the premise that knowledge and understanding of the Muslim culture is important in today's world, this class meets regularly to discuss and practice appropriate and effective interaction between Christians and Muslims.

Jesse Woolsey, a Junior in the class, advocates the importance of knowledge about the Muslim world. "The Muslim world is growing in its global impact, so forming an understanding and gaining insights about Islam is increasingly more and more imperative in understanding the world around us...Ignorance results in a greater susceptibility to fear; fear can easily turn into

hate; hate can easily turn into violence."

This class, then, gives students the ability to practice their engagement with the Muslim world in two parts. In the first part, which takes place in Java, students take turns acting as a Muslims and others take turns conversing with the Muslims. This however, is not designed as a debate between Muslim and Christian. Instead, Dr. Hegeman advocates two things, politeness and asking questions. "Muslims can't resist a good question" he says. "It makes the Muslim think." Because a Muslim is not allowed to ask questions about religion, he hopes that by inserting questions into the conversation, the Muslim will be more likely to use their time of private prayer at the end of the day to confess their confusion to Allah, after which time Dr. Hegeman is confident God will start to work.

Phase two takes place back in the classroom. Here, Dr. Hegeman prepares students for interaction with the Muslim who comes back from the first conversation desiring to know more about God. He

breaks away from the blackboard and uses "improvisational dramas" to help the students "imagine Islam from the inside." Expanding on the breakaway from the blackboard, the class also goes on class trips to mosques, and plans on going to Toronto.

Tirzah Cook, a Senior in the class, enjoys the class and the hands-on experience it provides. She explains that in each class Dr. Hegeman adds a different aspect of Muslim culture to the class. First, they had tea, then they took to sitting on the floor, after which followed the separation of men and women, and then the wearing of head scarves. She contends that wearing headscarves is not disrespectful. "The hats are about modesty, it's not about mocking or mimicking them." Using these things in class "helps us to be engaged in what's going on in class," Cook remarks, and "helps us think of it from a different perspective." She emphasizes her insight especially into how Muslims view gender roles.

Both Woolsey and Cook acknowledge the importance of

the other Islam class on campus, Introduction to Islam, in connection with this class. The Intro to Islam class, in which students read the Qur'an, gives the knowledge and background of the Arabic world necessary for one to engage the Muslim world, or at least, practice engaging it, in this class. Woolsey notes, "it is one of the more difficult classes I've taken as a result of my lack of background knowledge of the Arabic world and experience with the Qur'an" but goes on to say, "the challenge is worth it." Cook also says, "This class works very well with the other class offered..."

Student response to the class has been generally positive. Woolsey finds the class "both enlightening and intriguing," and Cook stated that it is "an amazing opportunity that most universities don't offer." Dr. Hegeman, while noting one student who grumbled about the class, was happy about the way students have been responding. However, he does add, "I cheated—I prayed."

U2 Releases New Album: *No Line on the Horizon*

By Luke Sanford

U2 released its twelfth album, *No Line on the Horizon*, on February 27th. "Get on Your Boots" was featured as the lead single from the eleven song album and they will start the U2 360 Degree Tour on June 30th.

The Irish-born band composed of Bono, The Edge, Larry Mullen Jr. and Adam Clayton has grown from local Dublin heroes to international superstars since they formed in 1976. Their worldwide fame creates anticipation any time U2 announces a record release; this album particularly has been long awaited because it has been five years since they produced *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*. A band that carries a fan base with the magnitude of U2 is always subject to scrutiny as they age, but *No Line on the Horizon* has been met thus far with very positive reviews.

U2 kicks off the album with the title track "No Line on the Horizon." The song continues to do what has made U2 famous: melodic tones superimposed with Bono's occasionally harsh voice and emotionally driven

lyrics. The chorus of second song, "Magnificent," proclaims that "only love can leave such a mark and only love can leave such a scar," evoking the Christian imagery the band often incorporates in their lyrics. A few tracks into the album, "Unknown Caller" includes a merge of Bono singing, the band chanting, and an organ playing part of the hymn "My Savior's Love." This competes for my favorite part of the album. Charles Gabriel's hymn jumps in somewhat surprisingly toward the end of the song, giving it a welcomed change. Two songs later we are brought the lead single "Get on Your Boots," a rock and roll song with a fun, upbeat, made-for-radio sound. The song doesn't really fit in with the album, but because of its success as a single, brought

immediate attention to the release. I really enjoy the provoking lyrics of "Stand Up Comedy" which issues a challenge to come "out from under your beds and stand up for love." The album concludes with

"Cedars of Lebanon," a song with lyrics that peaked my interest the first time I heard it. Bono signs off with a thought provoking last line, which



I see as a picture perfect way to end the album.

In my mind, the Irishmen have produced another great album. A band with a history of albums as celebrated as *Joshua Tree* and *All That You Can't Leave Behind* is going to find it a chore to produce music good enough to please their audience—especially an audience as critical as U2's. However, I commend U2 for their work and continue to enjoy their music and intriguing lyrics.

Whether you enjoy U2's music or not, I feel there has to be a certain amount of respect for what they have accomplished. The band has won 22 Grammy Awards, will soon eclipse 150 million records sold, and have recently been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. A band with such musical credentials certainly demands respect, but U2 has done much more than make

records.

The band has gained widespread recognition for their work in human rights and social justice. Most notably, Bono's DATA (Drugs, AIDS, Trade in Africa) campaign has brought world attention to some of the most impoverished, underprivileged and exploited people on earth.

U2 will embark on their U2 360 Degree Tour in June, which will consist of a European and North American leg, both about 6 weeks long. The tour will feature a 360-degree stage presence, allowing the audience to surround the band on all sides. The band is also planning on releasing another album called *Songs of Ascent* before the end of the year. The album will be comprised of songs recorded during the production of *No Line on the Horizon*.



Rochester Indie Band Orchard Drive Entertains Crowd

By Jessica Stoddard

It's not very often that you sit down with a bunch of pop-rockers and hear them explain that their music "smells like Christmas, and tastes like popsicles," but I had the pleasure of getting to know the spunky members of Orchard Drive before their concert in the Campus Center this past Friday. This indie band from Rochester hail themselves as a mixture of hopeful melodic-rock and alternative pop, emulating bands such as Switchfoot, Mae, Coldplay, and Radiohead. Lead singer Nate Cronk emphasized the band's desire to focus on "real and moral issues through the eyes of faith and hope" as expressed in their lyrics and musical style. Each of the member's classical background was complimented by a fun sense of humor and expansive musical taste (demonstrated by their cover of Britney Spear's "Womanizer" or "The Office" theme song) and was welcomed appreciatively by the crowd during their performance.

The healthy-sized crowd that gathered for the start of the show was introduced to Orchard Drive with a sprightly pop lead-in, with vocals reflecting Stephen Christian of Anberlin and lyrics resonating with "love is still alive." One of the great strengths of the performance was Orchard's ability to keep



Photo by Jonathan Kipfer

Orchard Drive demonstrated vast musical capability and an ability to keep the crowd's attention during their set.

their audience's attention. Songs were introduced with short cover segments spanning from "Amazing Grace" to "With or Without You" by U2. Crowd engagement was a key factor for the visiting band. Cronk gave a special welcome to visiting prospective honor students scattered throughout the audience, and joined in on some of the frivolities of the dancing crowd. Appropriate teasing ensued as these newly graduated Roberts

Wesleyan alumni declared that for the night their allegiance was loyally pledged to the Highlanders. Cue in the skeptic jesting.

Orchard Drive's lyrics challenged the portrayal of war and sexuality in the media as an answer to the world's problems. The band also kicked out some nice covers, including "Hero" by the Foo Fighters and "Meant to Live" by Switchfoot. These brought the audience to their feet

as individuals danced within the larger crowd. While I wish I heard more vocal variation throughout the show, the penultimate song successfully harmonized vocals with the guitar and bass.

The band wrapped up the night with a Switchfoot encore and chatted afterwards with interested fans at the merchandise table. Orchard Drive's upcoming EP Forgive ≠ Forget will be released sometime this spring.

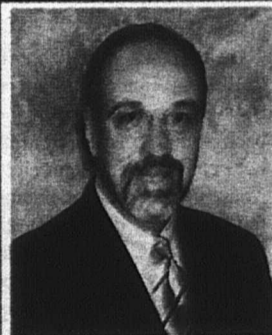
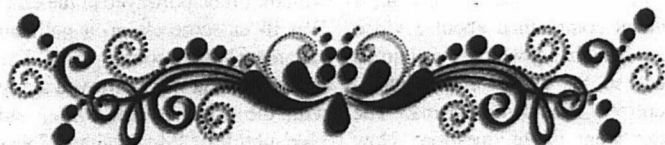
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Oscars With Grouches: How the Academy Awards Are Failing

Reflecting on this year's Oscar ceremonies, is appropriate attention to the art of filmography being sacrificed for a political statement?

by Alex Vitale

On February 22, 2009, several million people worldwide settled into their couches, papasans, bean bags and recliners to watch the 81st Annual Academy Awards ceremony, once again, held at the Kodak theatre in Hollywood California. Hugh Jackman - this year's host - spiced up the show with a few musical interludes and a Broadway revival of musical theatre, with quality certainly worthy of his Tony for *Boy from Oz*.

But as the show progressed, the audience and viewers alike were not only presented with the usual glitz and glamour of the red carpet and the honorary reminiscence of bygone actors and their stellar performances; they were met with yet another episode of political and social "advice" from certain members of the Academy. For those of you who are unaware, the Academy that nominates and gives awards, is the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences or AMPAS, and consists of writers, producers, actors, directors and other film industry members, numbering over 6000 with representatives from roughly 36 countries.

It seems every year we continue to encounter more and more political and social propaganda from various members of the Academy, mainly actors, writers and directors who seem to have an alternative agenda. In years past we have heard advocates for African

American accomplishments and others lambaste the government for poor decisions. This year's "contributors" were none other than *Milk* actor Sean Penn, and *Milk* writer, Dustin Lance Black. Black received the award for Best Original Screenplay and Penn for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role.

Now, typical Oscar etiquette dictates that the award winner

takes the stage, receives the award from the fellow Academy member who has just announced them, and then proceeds to thank as many human beings as possible, before the live orchestra ushers them offstage. Mistern Penn and Black felt they would do otherwise. After their names had been called, they took their statuettes, gave brief thanks to a few people, and then launched into speeches regarding the advancement of rights for homosexuals. After speaking for a longer-than-average amount of time, they were ushered offstage by thunderous applause from the audience.

Now, please do *not* misinterpret my purpose here. I, in no way am making a statement for or against homosexuality; or any other social movement for that matter. I am not making a judgment regarding the morality or ethical qualities of

any social, political or religious movement present in our world today. I am however, making a judgment regarding whether it is appropriate to *use* the Oscars, as a means to promote, propagate and advance *any* social, religious or political group. There are other media and channels through which to speak about and support any belief under the sun.

I have always held the opinion that film is art. It is a beautiful, wonderful, intense and oftentimes powerful art form. The process of making a film is one that I have always held in highest esteem and

feel that film is a form of art that connects with me on a multitude of levels. I believe that I speak for a good number of film-junkies when I say this. That being said, the Oscars are a *celebration* of this art form! They are a recognition of people who have devoted time, energy, emotion, and lives to the continuation and promotion of film as art. It is an opportunity for people around the world to tip their hats to others who can accomplish what most of us won't ever even dream about doing! It is a time to celebrate the talent, gift and determination of those in the film industry!

Therefore, I find it *highly* inappropriate when any member of AMPAS feels it necessary to begin

spouting off their personal opinions regarding their religion, political leanings, sexual orientation or present advocacy of a social movement. I believe that to be the molestation and complete abuse of a privilege that has been exclusively given. It is a misuse of time meant to be used to thank those who have supported, sacrificed and struggled to make them successful. Regardless of whether I agree with the person or not, I don't believe it is right for any member of AMPAS to take advantage of their time at the podium, under the lights of the Kodak. This then of course raises the age-old question of: when is it appropriate to give personal opinion and advocate any sort of belief? Newspapers, interviews, rallies, magazines, movies, music etc, are all acceptable forms of propaganda. NOT the Academy Awards!

In ceremonies to come, I hope that the members of AMPAS can remember why they are at the Kodak. I hope they remember that they are making art for people all over the globe. I hope they remember that millions of people every year give their time and money, to see a work of art that will hopefully connect with them in some way. I pray that film as an art form can remain just that...and not become some twisted and perverted means of grossly promoting someone's personal agenda.

Alex is a sophomore Communications Major.

I find it...inappropriate when any member of AMPAS feels it necessary to begin spouting off their personal opinions...

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

How refreshing to read an article in the recent STAR, written by someone outside the FL department, defending the value of foreign languages at Houghton College. Thank you, Abigail, for a thoughtful and measured article.

-J.L. Roederer, Associate Professor of French and Spanish

Dear Editor

As a senior and a minority student of Houghton College and who was one of the coordinators of the chapel, it would be remiss of me not to respond to Ms. Hannah Yanega, 2012 letter dated February 20, 2009.

"Instead, 'Mr. President' was emblazoned underneath a statuesque portrait of the President..." And the question - was that chapel appropriate? The hymn is the African American Anthem and it celebrates the life and achievements of past, present and future African Americans. Ms. Yanega would not understand fully the magnitude of

the celebration,

neither I, a citizen of the Caribbean cannot fathom what it truly means because my family background is of a different ethnicity but I can share in their celebrations from having the understanding. I felt somewhat disappointed by the statement Ms. Yanega made, "But we shall not give credit... to a man who is not a savior, nor a staple part of Black History." Credit should be given where it is due and this gentleman - President Obama - won against all odds and the stigma placed upon the African American males in society, and showed the world that America is no longer at a place of judging one based upon skin color but upon brain power and wisdom to lead. That is a reason the African-American community celebrates. And that this came to fruition from all the public and silent praying that people past and present have done. Dr. King Jr's prayers were answered, Rosa Parks, etc.

My point is Ms Yanega, President Obama wasn't idolized but merely celebrate because History begins now, every second lost is in the past and President Obama is a staple aspect of the African American

History; he became the first minority and African American President. That was and still is history. Who are you to judge what is history and not? I hope Ms. Yanega understands our celebration and she can for her own benefit read that anthem and hopefully understand the words. Finally, Ms. Yanega, needed not to say so many times that she is not a racist, she need not put a disclaimer upon herself. We are all children of God and in God's Kingdom, there is no room for racism. But myself and fellow members of Heritage Club do understand your concern as a student and hopefully Ms Yanega and others understand. No one idolized President Obama, instead we celebrated the achievements of African Americans from ending of slavery to current. To God Be the Glory, Great things He hath done!

-Adele Cameron, SGA College Senator & Class 2009

Dear Editors,

In the last issue of the Star, a student complained about a video shown in chapel which she claimed went so far as to - and I quote - "idolize" President Obama. The letter went on to question "How can this possibly be appropriate for

chapel?" stating that the author had been caused to "sincerely doubt the intentions of those who made this video, and the ideals of our college for showing such a clip".

As I recall, that video, which displayed a slide of various prominent African-Americans, was shown as the grand finale of Black History Month. It is natural that such a landmark event as the election of America's first black president be included.

Granted it was on the grandiose side, but so was the entire presentation. A massive picture of MLK Jr was portrayed and accompanied by the swelling voices of the choir below and I don't recall anyone saying "Idolatry!" Sure Obama was portrayed as the ending crescendo swept through the audience like a storm, but isn't that natural? Obama's achievement of being the first black president of the US has been the most recent milestone in black history- why wouldn't it be portrayed at the end? Was it - as some claim - a political statement? Of course not. The reason Obama was portrayed along with the floating, red, white, and blue subtitle of "Mr. President!" was because he is president. The subtitle



From the Editors' Desk...

Roe, Wade, and America's Search for a Final Solution

Do we judge the German people for their blind complicity with the Nazi regime, while ignoring the horrifying parallels in American society?

by Micah Warf

In his brilliant satire, "Biedermann und die Brandstifter," (Biedermann and the Arsonists) German author and playwright Max Frisch constructs a penetrating metaphor for the Nazi rise to power as seen through the eyes of the German people. The play opens with the protagonist Gottlieb Biedermann (his last name also meaning "bourgeoisie," symbolizing the average middle-class German citizen) reading his morning paper, angered by reports of increased arson in the city. Tramps are worming their way into bourgeois residences under the guise of needing a place to stay, and then setting fires in the attics, indiscriminately burning whatever they can.

As Biedermann is ranting about how much he hates these people, he is informed that a tramp (perfectly matching the description of the arsonists at large) is at the door. Through persuasion, intimidation, and unstoppable loquacity this tramp, Josef Schmitz, convinces Biedermann to give him a place to stay for the night, along with his friend, Eisenring. The next day, Biedermann wakes to find his attic stacked with barrels of gasoline, but refuses to believe that he was so taken in by Schmitz and Eisenring. The play continues with Biedermann helping the arsonists measure fuse line, chatting as they set detonator caps, and at the end, giving them his own matches, all the while staunchly ignoring the screamingly obvious and horrific scenario that is unfolding in his own home.

Frisch provides, in this play, not only a brutally honest portrayal of the horror of the holocaust, and the frankness with which it was carried out, but an avenue for the German people to begin to work through the guilt and shock and

the burning questions that were left: *How did we not see this? Wasn't this obvious? What could we have done? Were we just fooling ourselves?* It is impossible to start describing the intense effects the holocaust had on Western culture. These effects, however, only exploded after the horror was over. During the holocaust, the ignorance (both real and pretended) of Hitler's plan suppressed and frustrated large-scale reactions. Devilishly clever propaganda and euphemistic political language let the German people soothe their collective social conscience, and turn a blind eye to the industrial genocide of the death camps.

It is only too often that the events surrounding this period in history are looked back on with supercilious morality and indignation. *I certainly wouldn't have ignored this!* People were being slaughtered for no reason — *this couldn't happen today.* I cringe at the morbid ridiculousness of these sentiments in modern America, when abortion remains a legal and socially accepted, or even encouraged, medical procedure. I'm not going to talk about the ethics of abortion. I'm not going to take a stand for "what is right," when I can already feel the roundabout logic of a pro-choice fanatic numbing my brain with words like "embryonic tissue," "liberty," "religious myths," or, "valid option." These things would do nothing to change the moral climate of our culture, and would probably be very insignificant to those who have a host of scientifically rigorous things to throw in my naive and uninformed face.

Instead, I want to ask that you be open, if only for a moment, to be sure of what you believe. Maybe you have all of the medical proof you need to feel internally settled that an unborn fetus is just a lump of tissue that does not have a right to life like other organisms do. Perhaps you are certain that liberty and personal freedom needs to include a woman's right to abort her fetus. But set these things aside for a moment. Think instead only about the way that the fact of legalized abortion manifests itself in our culture.

I would invite you to ask yourself if there aren't parallels that can be too easily drawn between legalized abortion in America and the holocaust in Germany

There is a constant battle between the left and right on this issue, one saying it is a harmless procedure that gives a woman control over her body, the other saying that it is wholesale murder. We have photographs, too gruesome and sickening to behold, of aborted infants dismembered, in buckets, or with snapped necks, and covered in blood. The right publicizes these, asking how this killing can possibly be legal and justified, and the left dismisses them as faked images that are merely meant to deceive, fabricated to provide a shocking misrepresentation. We have dizzying and circular language from both sides of the issue that have moved beyond ratiocination, and into belligerent propaganda and euphemism. Abortion clinics refer to themselves as "women's health centers," pregnancy as a "condition," abortions as "procedures," and fetuses as "uterine contents."

Aside from your personal beliefs on the subject, I would invite you to ask yourself if there aren't parallels that can be too easily drawn between

legalized abortion in America and the holocaust in Germany. The photos that are denounced as fakes, the euphemisms, the political propaganda, the hushed nature of the matter, the use of the law to justify the procedure. The holocaust made such an impact because of its scale; somewhere in the neighborhood of 6 million Jews were exterminated under Hitler's orders. Since the infamous Roe vs. Wade case of 1973, over 42 million infants have been disposed of. I don't care what you are convinced of — take the crucial time to think again.

I'm not only talking to pro-choice people, who it is safe to say are in the minority on Houghton campus; I'm also talking to those who would denounce abortion without a second thought. Do you really think that every German was fully supportive of Hitler's plans and ambitions? The vast numbers of people who did not have a hint of murder in their hearts, however, chose to stay quiet, afraid of the public stigma and possible punishment that would accompany a stand for what they believed in. Like Biedermann, they simply refused to believe the hard evidence that was in front of them, assisting in the triumph of evil by standing by and letting it happen.

What are your beliefs driving you to do about this? If there was ever something to stand up for, wouldn't this be it? Is the evangelical church too caught up in "The DaVinci Code" and the gay marriage debate to realize that those are trifles compared to what is happening 3,700 times every day in America?

Think about it. There's a lot that I've just said that can be argued against. But one thing remains that the human race has had a hard time denying ever since the beginning of time: history repeats itself.

Micah is a junior Philosophy and Music major and serves as commentary editor.

merely underscores the magnitude of the event. As far as the clip failing to be "God-centered", let us keep in mind that SPOT or The Dark Knight was advertised in chapel, and while neither of those had any particular religious significance I don't remember anyone questioning their "appropriateness."

How do a handful of clips of President Obama and a patriotic subtitle translate into idolatry? There was no altar, no halo, no claim to divine heritage- in short, nothing that could possibly be interpreted to have religious meaning. Similarly, nowhere in the presentation was there any claim that Obama was the "author" of history, nor any claim that he was anything other than the

first black president of the US and therefore an important part of black history.

Let the facts be faced, the majority of the Houghton student body is conservative. Some disappointment, perhaps even anger, is expected and natural- bitterly sending up a wail of protest every time the president is mentioned is not. Rather than make unsubstantiated claims- such as "idolatry!", perhaps it is time to extend the courtesy of acting in the same way you'd want Obama supporters to act if McCain had won instead.

-Gordon Brown, Class of 2012

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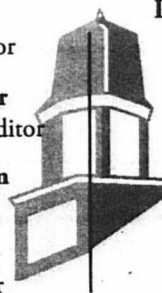
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artist: HALEIGH OF THE WEEK: JOHNSON

Notes from the artist:

The simplest way I can even begin to think to describe my art would be to say that it is purely tangible emotion. All of my work comes from somewhere or something...that much I know. As I am sure it is for a lot of artists, the majority of my artistic work comes from the feeling of needing to put "it" down on paper. "It" is the visual idea of what words cannot express that eventually turns into a piece of art. "Dissected Valentine" was one of those pieces. Similarly, "I Planted A Seed" expresses what it feels like to see my life shoot in completely different directions than I predicted...or wanted. A great release is being able to express it in an artistic way.

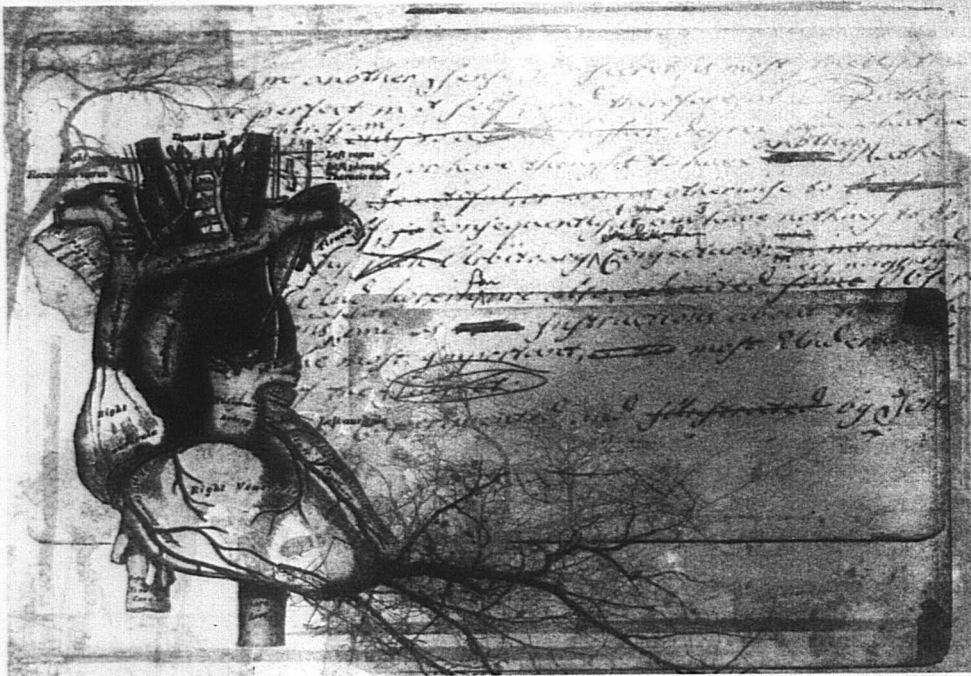
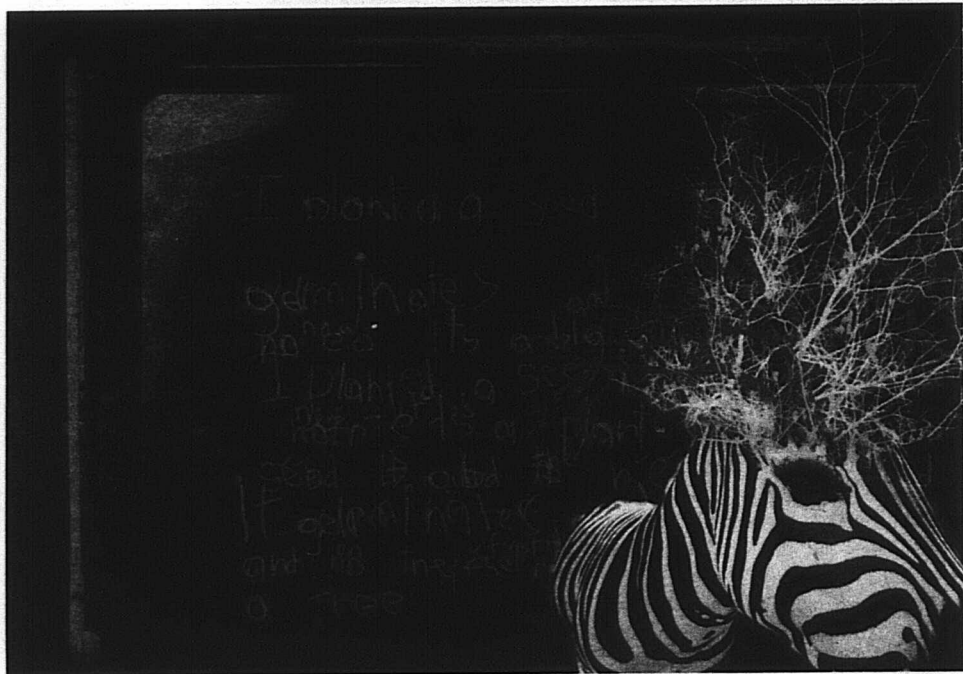
A lot of my work also tends to be open-ended. I create it based on myself, but I try to keep it broad enough that anyone would be able to take his or her own feelings and thoughts into account and find in it some kind of personal meaning. I think one of the best and most valuable aspects of art is being able to find that meaning in others' work and truly connect it to your own life.

Haleigh is a Junior Communication major.

**DO YOU HAVE AN
OUTSTANDING ARTIST
FRIEND?**

Nominate artists you
know for the Houghton
STAR Artist of the Week!

E-mail nominations to
STAR@houghton.edu



Congratulations to last issue's
winner, **Tim Chen!**

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

B	A	E	D	E	K	E	R	C	A	D	G	E	S		
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SU DO KU

Submit your
completed
puzzles at the
Star office for the
chance to win a
Sudoku book!

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