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Is Houghton a Condescending College?

How public relations is eliminating the myth of Houghton's "city on a hill" mentality

For years, Houghton College has been struggling to rid itself of the negative aura that surrounded it – the dominant impression of Houghton College in the past has been that its students and faculty are stuck up and snobbish, that here at Houghton we maintain a “city on a hill” mentality.

Jayne Maugans, a professor of sociology here at Houghton, provided an example of the reality of this unfortunate Houghton aura. While working at Alfred University in the early nineties, she recalls, “I heard many negative comments about Houghton.”

In order to eliminate this stigma, the Public Relations sector has been working to ensure Houghton

participation in more community-oriented programs, and it appears to have made progress in recent years. Although the “city on a hill” mentality probably does still exist in the world outside of Houghton, it is clearly less prominent today than it has been.

But why is building community so important? Wouldn't we do fine as a college without worrying about the surrounding community? According to Public Relations Director Doug Roorbach, “It's always important to be a good neighbor, to build a reservoir of trust and civility between the community and the college... We want to make sure our actions are those of a good neighbor.”

At a local gas station in the Town of Hume, a man told me that he definitely had a positive view of Houghton. It was a “neat-looking” college, and he said that the students seemed to be well-behaved and kind.

Another Allegany County native in Hume told me that as a result of her tennis practices here at the college, she has gained a positive view of Houghton. When asked if she thought it was important for Houghton College to do more public relations-focused programs, she summed up a very important concept to the Public Relations program, replying that community-based programs were definitely important in order for “other people [to] see what the college is like so other people can go there.”

Houghton College strives to get its students involved in community-oriented programs, so that

our college will not exclude itself from other aspects of the world. Through various service projects, internships, and events open to the community, Houghton is successfully eliminating the negative aura that has hovered above it in the past.

Around this time of year, students begin raising money for Thanksgiving turkeys for families that are unable to afford them, along with giving presents for underprivileged children around Christmas time. Students also work in the spring to provide Easter baskets for children. It is this type of selfless action that Public Relations works to make into news for the outside community – to get the word out about what students here are doing to help their community and to show that we, as students, are not focused solely on our own college world but are willing



(cont'd on p. 3)

Men's Soccer Team Back In Business



Midfielder Ernie Walton pushes the ball past Cortland defenders in Houghton's second pre-season scrimmage. **Story on p. 2**

Islam and Christianity A brief study of interaction

Since the OPEC cartel introduced the oil embargo in 1973, not only did the OPEC barrel prices increase, but there was suddenly a surplus of money available for Islamic causes. For the last three hundred years, Christians assumed they were the more active of the two religions. In the last thirty, Islamists have begun to assert their presence in many ways.

“Christians have been reluctant to wake up to the reality of the Islamic revival,” says Prof. Ben Hegeman. “It's indisputable now that we are dealing with an incredibly well funded religion – the best funded religion in the world. That doesn't necessarily mean it's right or wrong, but it just means it's powerful.”

The much publicized “attacks on the West” of the past few years, combined with the OPEC situation, are drawing the West's attention to Islam once again. Hegeman explains the political context: “At starting, they were stronger than us. Christianity was usually fighting them out of their backyard – Spain or the Balkan areas. We generally were never the stronger partner, and then [took on the stronger role in] the last 300 years since their defeat in Vienna. There the tides turned in ...the European favor.”

While the global Muslim community does not affirm terrorists' actions, “there's a widespread sympathy for what they're doing.”

(cont'd on p. 7)

Men's Soccer Team Back In Business

The men's soccer team recently defeated Geneva College of Pennsylvania 5-1, securing a home playoff game in the first round of the AMC North Division playoffs. The Highlanders are 6-10 overall, but they are currently ranked first in the conference with 5 wins and 1 loss.

Towards the beginning of the season things were looking bleak for the Highlanders, as they failed to get a win through the first eight games of the season. The team was off to a 0-8 start but pushed for a win against Daemen College in their first conference victory of the season. Having begun their turn-around, the Highlanders went on a 6-2 run with conference wins over Walsh, Seton Hill, Point Park, and a big win over long-time rival Roberts Wesleyan. The team's only two losses came against two quality teams from Tiffin and Mercyhurst.

Houghton's men's soccer team was plagued with injuries early in the season. At one point, six of the Highlander starters were forced to sit out until their injuries healed. Before pre-season started in August, the team found out that freshman recruit, Brendan McKirchy, would be forced to red-shirt for the entire season due to a torn ligament in his knee.

The team did not give up on the season, in spite of their disheartening first eight losses. As soon as key players started returning to the field, the potential that many had anticipated for the Highlanders developed into winning results. While the Highlanders are not assured first place in the conference, they are guaranteed a home playoff spot. Coach Matt Webb commented on the team, "I have never felt so good about a team that is 6-10 team."

Senior captain and forward Andrew Walton is having an outstanding year, leading the team in scoring with 11 goals this season. Senior forward Guillermo Jimenez and junior mid-fielder Vince Wagner have proven themselves to be key contributors on the field, while sophomore attacker Tyler Cook has added significant flare to the Highlander's offense in timely fashion. Junior midfielder Ernie Walton (pictured on p. 1) has been the key ingredient to Houghton's ability to possess the ball and move it up and down the field, netting two goals this season as well. He is aided by sophomore Josiah Snelgrove, who has recently recovered from a broken leg. Snelgrove continues to work tirelessly for the Highlander mid-field.

At the other end of the field, the Highlander's defense has turned things around, allowing a mere 5 goals in the last eight games. Led by freshman goalkeeper Eric Lefebvre, defense has been an important

factor in the Highlander's dramatic turn-around. Lefebvre is having a solid season in between the posts for the Highlanders, having already brought about four shut-outs and being named the AMC defensive player-of-the-week. The defense is anchored in the middle by sophomore Tyler Haggerty and junior Ben Loos, with freshman Chris Cruikshank and sophomore Steve Woolsey holding the outside back positions.

The Highlanders play their last conference game against St. Vincent in Pennsylvania on Saturday, October 29th. The team will start the play-offs in two weeks with a home game at Burke Field.

-Benjamin Loos
Guest Writer



Get Caught In The Trap

Have you ever attended a play where you find yourself continually checking your watch because, due to bad acting or a boring plot, you are counting down the minutes until the final curtain call? You can leave your watch at home if you attend the student production of The Mousetrap, November 17th-19th. Written by Agatha Christie, this two-act play is a classic story of suspense, full of action and energy, that will captivate your attention. It is currently being performed in London's West End, as it has been for over 50 straight years, making it the longest running play in the theatre district's history. Christie penned 14 plays and 80 books, which varied between novels and short story collections. Besides the Bible and Shakespeare, she is the most widely published author of all time and of any language.

The audience is taken immediately into an enjoyable tale of intrigue, full of quirky and fascinating characters. The play takes place on a cold and wintry night at Monkswell Manor, a

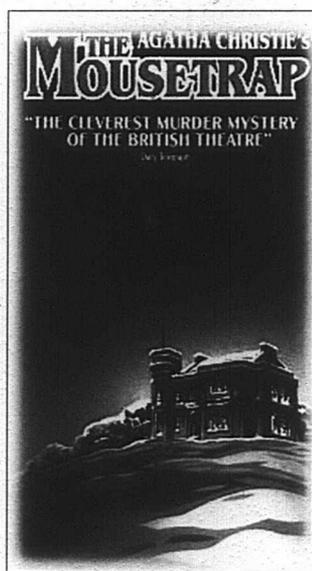
newly-opened guesthouse outside of London. It is soon discovered that a murder occurred in the city earlier in the evening, and as clues arise it seems likely that the killer may be among the guests in the Manor. The array of peculiar lodgers, however, proves to make solving the mystery quite difficult.

Directed by Professor Bruce Brenneman, the eight member cast includes Emily Furman, Shane Marcus, Jason Fisher, Kristin Riggs, Ethan Stowell, Christine Penney, Jared Wright, and Timothy Gunning. Auditions for the play were held in September and rehearsals began immediately after. The ensemble is currently practicing three days a week and practices will become ever more frequent as the dates of performance draw closer.

Observing a rehearsal one night, the benefits of a smaller cast were apparent: there was a sense of intimacy among the actors, which helped to create great chemistry between characters on stage. When I dropped in on their practice last Thursday night, I was

impressed with what I saw, and I left anticipating when I would be able to enjoy the whole performance. The cast was already expected to have all their lines from the first act memorized by the beginning of the week, and they seemed to do fairly well. Although there are still a few wrinkles in the production, they are being ironed out. Brenneman and the assistant director, Seanna Faley, were clear and detail-oriented in their criticisms, and remained encouraging throughout. They seemed to not overlook any aspect, whether it pertained to lines, tone, movement, interaction, or character motivation.

Everyone is working together to create a seamless show so that the audience will be swept up in the suspense of the fast-paced who-done-it. Seanna emphasized the importance of keeping the ending a surprise, so if you attend the show on opening night—shh, don't tell!



-Rachel Varughese
Staff Writer



A Confessing Community

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.”

James 5:16

I have never liked drawing from Community Chest. When the dice moved my small metal shoe to that particular tile on the Monopoly board, I always felt some disappointment. It didn't carry with it the excitement of Go to Jail, the glee or horror of Park Place and Boardwalk, or the benefits of Free Parking. Instead, I was either forced to pay a small amount of money (\$20 for Community Little League or some such civic duty) or I was obliged to win an equally small amount (say \$25 for “winning a beauty contest” – go figure). The amount was large enough to invoke a slight pleasure or dissatisfaction, but too small to be worth wasting my turn around the board. My little metal shoe would simply wait through Community Chest for a more exciting turn.

The term community is thrown about on a campus like Houghton with adjectives such as Christian, spiritual, or academic often attached. But in this collegiate environment, where the individual students come and go every four years, how well can we actually achieve “community”? If it is indeed what we were created for, as we are often reminded in church and chapel, then we must seriously consider how community may be achieved.

I'd like to suggest that, despite our best intentions to build community through our shared beliefs, our service projects, even our collective adherence to a “statement of community responsibilities,” we too often miss one of the most crucial practices in achieving it. Without this practice, Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests we may still feel alone, that, “Christians, notwithstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service, may still be left to their loneliness . . . the final break-through to fellowship does not occur because [we] do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners.”

It is in a fellowship of confessing sinners that we begin to

see true community take root. Real relationship, and with it genuine healing, will not occur if we allow ourselves to mask ourselves, both our beauties and deformities, before each other.

But really, how would such a confessing community look? Should a booth be constructed in the chapel foyer where Dr. Brittain could sit behind a little curtain and prescribe additional minutes of prayer and “quiet time” for those who confess their deepest, darkest sins (like scanning and scrambling)? Though this may seem a little ridiculous, I feel it may be a step in the right direction. What if students submitted confessions to an online forum, or perhaps anonymously blogged their confessions to be read by other members of the community and even responded to by references to resources that might help HotStud2214 deal with his addiction to pornography, or HappyChic4491 deal with her self-image issues? Again, these things may help move us in the right direction, but they fall short of real community.

More than prescriptive prayers, additional resources on how to overcome our problems, and further teaching on what to do, we desperately need physical, incarnational interaction. We need to talk to our friends, our parents, our professors and administrators and confess both our brokenness and our redemption to them. Perhaps some of our issues of dealing with authority figures would be resolved in this type of relational community if, as Henri Nouwen suggests, we accept that “genuine spiritual authority is to be found only where the ministry of hearing, helping, bearing, and proclaiming is carried out.”

If we desire genuine healing in our lives and in the lives of our friends and students, we need to become healing power to one another. We need to, as Leanne Payne suggests, “invoke the presence of God and call down upon the

needy person the grace to repent. [Otherwise,] we have neglected the root healing.” What would it look like if professors, administrators, and other students were to actually pray for each other in chapel, in coffee shops, in stairwells? What if we had the grace to say, “I need you” and “I will open myself to you.” What would it look like if the hidden sins of your heart were brought to light? What would it look like if there was a place where you could bare the depths of your soul and receive light in them? It might look like the Church. It might look like the Body on earth.

Bonhoeffer goes on to say that “there is no clearer way to discern the presence of God's Spirit than to identify the moments of unification, healing, restoration and reconciliation.” Many are here at Houghton because they desire just such a community. Many professors, even now, pray for their students. Yet we remain lonely because many of us do not physically interact. We need more than Facebook relationships can offer. If we believe in an incarnational salvation, that Christ becomes real to us in His body, then perhaps we actually need to begin being Christ for one another. Let it begin in you, at this time, and in this place. Confess your sin and your redemption. It is in this that you will be healed. As the psalmist says, God will break down the gates of bronze and cut through the bars of iron that imprison us.

“Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.” James 5:14-15 ♦

-Brent Chamberlain
Managing Editor



(Public Relations, cont'd from p. 1)

to help those in need.

In addition, Public Relations publishes a newsletter twice a year to report on the ACO, the Highlander Kids' Club, as well as the Ortlip Gallery and its opening receptions, which are free to the public, and the MLK Service Day, to name a few. Houghton provides many other student activities that are community-oriented, including Upward Bound, Habitat for Humanity, Youth for Christ, and more.

It is not only these organized service projects that serve to eliminate negative impressions of Houghton, but, as Roorbach emphasizes, “The way you treat people at the store, on the roads, in area restaurants, all of these reflect on the college.” As Houghton students, it is important to realize that our very way of life leaves an impression on everyone we meet – not only of ourselves but also of our college. Professor Maugans recognizes this importance: “...our outreach not only enhances our relations with people outside of [Houghton College] but also gives us the opportunity to be a testimony to them. Houghton College members are putting their faith into action, reaching out in myriad ways to the citizens of Allegany County.”

Maugans also explains the benefits of leading Christian lifestyles: “Instead of poking fun at us for legalisms such as not drinking or dancing, people are increasingly complimenting us on our compassion, competency, and creativity.”

Doug Roorbach sums up the idea of community and Christian living when he says, “Like it or not, we are all ambassadors. Our charge as Christians is to live our lives so that others may see us and want to know more about the God we serve.”

Although Public Relations has done tremendous work in helping to eliminate the stigma surrounding Houghton, it may ultimately come down to us, as students, to work toward showing the outside community how Houghton should really be perceived. ♦

-Jillian Senna Getman
Staff Writer



Featured Artist: *Lizabeth Allen*



Still life by freshman Lizabeth Allen, oil on canvas. Allen has been painting as long as she can remember—in high school she took all the art classes she could and had a makeshift studio set up with tarps in the corner of her bedroom—but this semester is the first time she has ever worked on an easel with oil paints. This still life is the second oil painting she's done. "The silver teapot was really fun to paint. I liked getting all the different colors in it." She says she loves the texture of the oils and the smoothness of the way they blend together, although the drying time was a little frustrating at first. Oil paints can take between days to weeks to dry completely.

These first few assignments have been encouraging she says. At first she had the "stereotypical freshman thing of 'Oh, it's a college course, I'm going to die,'" but when Professor Ted Murphy made suggestions for how to improve her pieces she discovered that she "liked the feeling of being critiqued." The atmosphere of the art department has been encouraging as well. "I felt like I was in a box before because I was the only artist in my high school, but now there are all these other artists around and the studio feels really home-y." ♦

-Kelsey Harro
Arts Editor



A Film From The Library

From Here to Eternity

This 1953 classic stands as one of the great films of American cinema. Winning 8 Oscars and reviving Frank Sinatra's career, *From Here to Eternity* was well received when it came out, and it has stood the test of time.

Taking place at a military base in Honolulu just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, *Eternity's* story about army life is balanced and thoughtful. Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt (Montgomery Clift) is a boxer who swore off the sport after the injury of a friend. He comes to the base and, against all attempts of his fellow soldiers, refuses to box, holding to his convictions. Contrasting this young, sensitive, yet strong-willed role is the tough, physical Sgt. Milton Warden (Burt Lancaster). The tension between the two soldiers escalates but eventually is resolved by their respect of and love for the army.

Showing no fear of being melancholy or downbeat in its tone, the film allows the characters

to explore their own depths and struggle through their flaws. The inner emotional turmoil that stems from the forbidden love affair between the captain's wife, Karen, and Sergeant Milton Warden is wonderfully developed and climaxes with a famous passionate (and risqué for the time) kissing scene on the beach.

The superb acting and well-written story which allows its characters to develop and grow through dynamic subplots and interaction with each other make *From Here to Eternity* the classic it is. Though by today's standards the movie moves a bit slowly, if you give it time to develop and consider its important place in cinematic history, it is well worth two hours of your time. ♦

-Adam Sukhia
Columnist



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*"Mothering God, you gave me birth
In the bright morning of this world
Creator, source of every breath,
You are my rain, my wind, my sun."*

It's interesting how words can seem to change over time. I first came across this verse based on the medieval writings of Julian of Norwich in a Mennonite hymnal several years ago. In the process of thinking about them and living with them, they have gradually formed into an entirely new perspective on the problem of language. While the first time I read these words they were vastly foreign, since then they have become a part of what feels like a personal legacy from a woman who was gracefully trying to understand a God.

It's not that living at Houghton has turned me into an angry radical, although there are some people who can only see the issue in these extreme terms. It's just that I've seen the way words have failed in helping broken people relate to a God who wants to have some sort of connection with us. The problem is not a question of political correctness; it's a matter of reconciliation. For those whose experiences of a father relationship are particularly distant, these metaphors are more than inaccurate, they are alienating. God, by default, becomes associated with awkward silences and estrangement.

Recent biblical scholarship has been examining the gender implications associated with translations of the names of God. "El Shaddai"



A Mothering God

is now widely translated as a reference to God's breasts. Passages like Deuteronomy 32:18 which says, "you were unmindful of the Rock that bore you; you forgot the God who gave you birth," and Job 38:8-9, which portrays creation as "bursting from God's womb," also connect God with explicitly female imagery. Scholars like Elizabeth Johnson and Southern Baptist Preacher Paul R. Smith maintain that a significant percentage of metaphors for God used in the Old Testament are related to images of birth and nurturing. Still, almost all of the pronouns and images used to talk about God in the evangelical church are definitively male.

Of course, issues of gender language and stereotypes are always complicated. Our culture has tended to polarize what it means to be masculine and feminine to such an extent that there is often no room for powerful women, nurturing men, and the vast areas of ambiguity in between. Ideally, traditionally feminine attributes, such as that of nurturer, and traditionally masculine attributes, such as the exercise of strength, could be seen as a human traits, rather than characteristics of gender. In the meantime, intentionally refocusing our language could help us begin to balance centuries of associating both God and maleness primar-

ily with patriarchal clout.

Since God is always more infinite than any of our verbal descriptions, there shouldn't be any theological trouble with expanding our metaphors for Him/Her. It could actually be a helpful reminder of the fact that attempts to capture God in language are inherently limited. As Thomas Aquinas wrote in the thirteenth century, "the supreme knowledge which we have of God is to know that we do not know God, insofar as we know that what God is surpasses all that we can understand of him." Still, it is amazing how defensive people can be in discussions of gender inclusive language, particularly within the evangelical community. Dr. K. LaCelle Peterson has remarked on how "ironic [it is] that the people most committed to the phrase 'I am born again' are most opposed to picturing God as the one who birthed them." Yet in an issue where language can affect the possibility of relationship between people and God, an actual change should be worth any amount of inconvenience. ♦

-Kelsey Harro
Arts Editor



Developing Art Music In The Context Of Global Christianity

In composing pieces that reflect the interaction of non-western music with world Christianity, Prof. Mark Hijleh tries to "reconcile what [he] considers to be very valid criticism of modernity, with a fully Christian worldview, with the increasing [globalization of the church, and he sees]... those elements lining up in a certain way that could be very interesting and exciting."

"I have a theology of music that involves eclecticism which is why all my pieces are eclectic stylistically," explains Prof. Hijleh. His theology is derived from New Testament passages which discuss the body of Christ and its diversity. Even as each part is different and have divergent roles, they all must operate under one purpose. Prof. Hijleh tries to express each separate musical influence as combining in a coherent whole, admitting that, "some people find it disconcerting rather than organic."

The development of this theology is rooted in the conviction that "Christianity is becoming a world religion... and that has cultural implications for Christians," according to Prof.

Hijleh's observations. He cites the increasingly recognized projection that Christianity's growth in the next fifty years is going to occur outside of the West.

These cultural implications are not merely going to affect the way Christians think about missions and evangelization, but also the Western arts. Prof. Hijleh is fond of recalling the words of missiologist Andrew Walls, and paraphrases them: "western art is in a kind of morass, having reached the peak of modernism and entered a postmodern crisis."

A solution typically found in secular examinations of this problem is to seek influence outside the West. "Now a confluence in Christianity and multi-cultural studies apart from evangelism" inspires Prof. Hijleh, as a Christian composer, to draw from the "fresh material in the music of other cultures...which can be utilized to express Christian ideas in a different way."

"One of the things western culture does in the arts particularly well is...synthesis," Prof. Hijleh expresses, "taking choice elements from

other cultures and [creating] new things out of them, which is something unique... [non-western peoples] tend to remain strictly in their own cultural mileax." ♦

-Victoria Kempton
Business Manager



A New Hope

This past Wednesday, I had the opportunity to hear former Secretary of State and four-star general Colin Powell speak at the University of Buffalo. The arena was packed, and with good reason: it's not often that someone so distinguished comes anywhere near western NY, much less a run-down place like Buffalo. Moreover, Gen. Powell is an excellent speaker. He puts an easy, often humorous spin on events usually delivered with dour severity by news anchors, and his anecdotes, ranging from experiences on the front lines of Berlin during the Cold War to being berated to find a post-retirement hobby by his wife, far exceed the usual chapel fare (at least, from what I remember).

Amusement, however, was not Gen. Powell's purpose in

speaking that night. His themes were what one would expect of someone addressing a large group of collegiates: lessons on leadership, learning from your mistakes, striving to do your best and reach your fullest potential. Stuff most everyone has probably heard before, albeit from a significantly less famous mouth. The things Gen. Powell had special insight into, were political matters. These were what most of the listeners came to hear about, and he tactfully obliged. We were mercifully spared any of the "protecting freedom via wanton wars of aggression" drivel that spews out of the White House on a regular basis. Gen. Powell was also careful not to blatantly criticize the administration or its detractors, although he did hint at problems of "personality and policy" in the

current government. No, the thing he tried to hammer home whenever addressing current political affairs was a message of hope.

Hope. It's an easy thing for those aware of America's current mess to lose (If you still think everything is all hunky-dory in the good ole' U.S.-of-A... no comment.) From the incineration of lives and cash that is the Iraq war to the massive corruption currently being exposed in the current administration, things are looking pretty bleak. And while a regime change in 2008 would certainly bring about a sorely-needed change of direction, we will still have to deal with a deteriorating environment, rapidly-disappearing natural resources, a teetering economy, and all the ill-will towards America that "yee-haw!" foreign policy has generated. The future looks (almost) as dismal as a Houghton winter. That a person as intelligent and experienced as

Colin Powell can look at the whole fiasco and still see plenty of bright spots is heartening. Amidst all the despairing headlines, there's more funding for and research going into cures for the ravaging diseases of our time than ever before. Economies are booming in previously destitute nations. Europe has put behind it millennia of warfare to build the European Union. While there are certainly rough spots, more and more nations are groping their way towards democracy. There is hope for a better world, and (yes, I know it sounds cheesy and preachy,) it is this hope that can sustain us through these dark times and urge us, as a community, as a nation, as a species, to always try and do better. ♦

-Dan Perrine
Columnist



On Christian Politics: Grace and Mercy

In our discussion of politics (which we defined as the relationships within a polity or community), it is crucial that we understand something about the nature of grace. As I stated in the last column, if we expect honesty and openness within a Christian community, we must also provide an environment that invites such things. The keys to establishing this environment are grace and mercy. Grace is often simply defined as 'giving something that is not deserved,' as opposed to mercy, which is 'not giving something that is deserved.'

One of the chief obstacles to the functioning of grace and mercy in a community is pride. Human nature desires to be accepted, and because of the fallen condition of creation, we often trample others in our quest for love and acceptance. We spend much time trying to be better than other people, or at least trying to convince ourselves that we are better. "Did you hear what that person said?" "Did you see what they did?" "I would never say or do that!" Variations on this

conversation occur repeatedly. Gossip, slander and even legalism are all forms of negative judgment that sacrifice grace and mercy on the altar of the ego. Christ teaches, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matt. 7:1,3 NIV)

Too often in a Christian community or institution, are we quick to judge! The mind readily stereotypes, trying to classify people into unnatural boxes that all too easily turn into prisons. We trap people in categories based on first impressions, appearances, behavior, and a myriad of other observable criteria. While categorization is a natural way in which we process the world, we must be careful not to imprison people, for this leaves no room for grace and mercy.

Another way the ego impedes grace lies in the concept of "rights." We get so caught up defending our own "rights" that we often forget that other people might have "rights" as well, and the concept

of privileges is all but lost. Christ did not say, "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, punch them in the gut," or "sue them for all their worth," or even "have them locked up for assault." He says, "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well." (Matt. 5:39b-40, NIV) He further commands, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Matt. 5:44-45, NIV) Christ himself is the ultimate example of this. He was with the Father at the creation, and gave up his "rights" as God the Son and took on flesh, becoming the Son of Man so that He could live a righteous life only to be forsaken and suffer a horrific death on the cross, and He did all this for people who were his enemies! (See Rm. 5:6-8; Philippians 2:5-11).

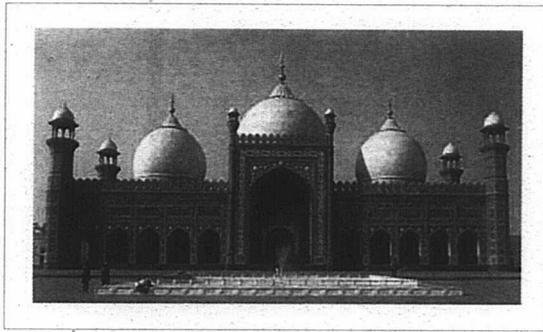
In Psalm 103:10, David

states that God "does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities." (NIV) If we are to follow Christ in both his commands and example, then it does not matter how many times we have been "wronged." It does not matter whether or not we are "right." We are all sinners. We all have specks or planks in our eyes, and we must show people grace and mercy, forgiving them and offering our love and acceptance to them, because that is the way God has treated us. There is much more to say on this topic, and so we will turn our discussion next to grace, mercy, and accountability. ♦

-David Clem
Guest Writer



E-mail your letters
to the editor to
star@houghton.edu



What would global Muslims have us understand by their growing public presence?

Dr. Hegeman will be using a social science approach to describing the customs and rituals of Muslim communities throughout the world. In this observational overview, he will discuss Islamic beliefs and what Muslims would like us, as evangelical Christians, to understand from their practices. Dr. Meic Pearse and Dr. Jonathan Case will respond, drawing on their respective fields of history and theology. Questions and student reflections following the speakers are greatly encouraged.

The event will be held in the Chamberlain Center, in rooms 123-125 on Tuesday, November 1st at 7.00 PM.

(Islam, cont'd from p. 3)

ing," according to Prof. Hegeman. "What you'll commonly hear Muslims say is, 'I totally disagree with what [those] Muslims did, but...' They see colonization, neo-colonization, globalization as forms of aggression, even though they benefit enormously from it - they feel we are the aggressors."

Still, the goals of the Islamic community are rooted in their identity as a people seeking peace. This is evidenced in even the name of their religion, a cognate of "shalom," which means peace. "They're not these people that want to go out and pick fights," Hegeman defends. "They have this deep longing to settle down, make good money, have a nice Muslim home, go to the nice mosque nearby... But they carry their grievances profoundly, deeply."

The sensitivity that is a characteristic of the Muslim community affects the way Prof. Hegeman learned to interact with them in his missions work. He relates: "When I'm with a Jew, I'm very diplomatic, when I'm with a Buddhist, I'm diplomatic, but when I'm with a Muslim, I'm twice as diplomatic, ultra-diplomatic. And I don't want to lose his friendship. I don't want to be...sycophantic in front of him. I want to very much enjoy immensely the conversation, but I do know that I have to be very, very sensitive. [While a] Muslim perceives himself as a man of peace, he also perceives himself as deeply abused and offended by the global forces."

There are many models for

how Christians ought to interact with the Muslim community and an accurate knowledge of how the Muslims view Christianity is necessary to understanding these interactions. "Islam gives a small synopsis of Christianity and says, 'This is all you really need to know about Christianity.' And, when [we (as Christians) read it, we] can't even equate it with what we know about the Scriptures," Hegeman explains. "It's very much an Islamic text, but in Jesus' mouth. Jesus says, 'I never said I was the Son or that there was a Father. I'm only a prophet. People have told lies about me. I just say that there is One God Allah...'"

In approaching the Islamic community, Christians are interacting with those who believe they understand the Christian faith. To bring a Muslim to encounter Jesus as depicted in the Bible requires a great amount of subtle and sensitive negotiation. This is necessary to allowing them to understand what Christianity is actually about, but it is very difficult to ask an unwilling Muslim to read the gospel accounts. Prof. Hegeman has experienced this only in the context of a friendship with them, formed through mutual trust, respect, and laughter.

A metaphor Prof. Hegeman is fond of using refers to his interactions with them "as the journey of 1001 Arabian nights." He explains, "that's how many conversations you probably need before [a Muslim] says, 'I get it. Ah, I never realized this before. There has to be a lot of laughter, a lot of diplomacy,

and a lot of patience, but it's happening...We're hearing astonishing one-by-one-by-one-by-one, under the radar, stories of Muslims who are saying, 'I've got it - it was all about Jesus.'" This makes delicacy and discernment absolutely crucial for fostering Muslim-Christian friendships.

The affect of globalization on the Muslim community has facilitated its expansion, even as they remain adamantly against joining such a global community as a passive neighbor to other religions. This is not to say that they are less compassionate or cooperative, Prof. Hegeman explains, "but they don't seem to respond to the effects of globalization the way others' religions seem to. So, we need to observe and study them..."

As Prof. Hegeman says, "Like the fact that I have fifty different car models is not a sign that forty-nine of them are wrong and only one of them is right. Let's see how these cars hold up. [In the same fashion,] let's see how...different approaches to Islam cope." Discussion and the testing of various methods for contact are essential in developing a Christian response to the Islamic community. ♦

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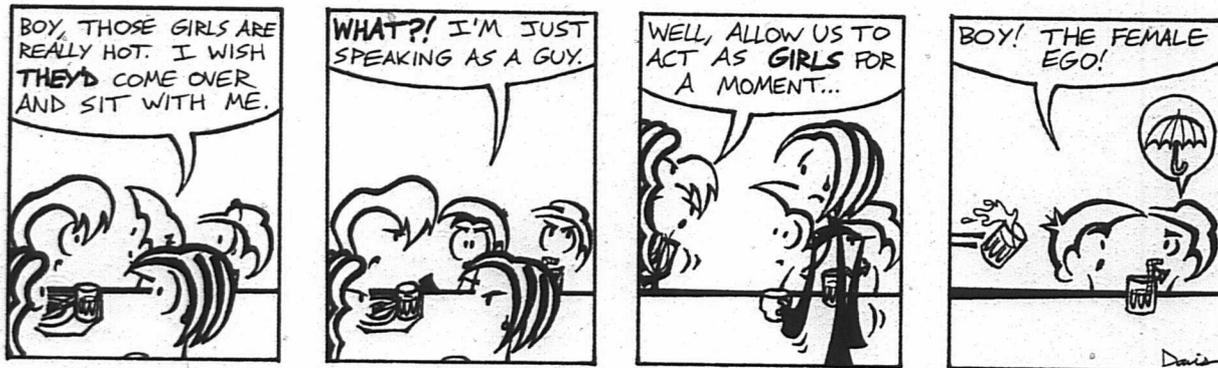
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