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Chapel series separates campus in debate

PAUL LODDEEN
sports editor

The Chaplain’s discussion of sexuality, that has been taking place in Chapel and Counseling services, entered its second week.

In Dimmit Chapel, Monday, members of the Hope community packed to hear what Chaplain Ben Patterson had to say. After the music died and the lights were turned back to full power, Patterson started his open talk on sexual sins and how to rid oneself of them.

A brochure from the Chaplain’s office states, “The series grows out of a desire to honor God and to care faithfully and intelligently for the students of Hope College.” The brochure also states that the Chaplain’s office has handled several themes involving human sexuality in the past five years from students.

This has become a delicate issue at Hope, and has people talking about the way that the Chaplain’s staff is trying to address the issue.

“Out of this grows the need to bring about an awareness of how the body, mind, and spirit can be misunderstood,” Patterson explained.

“In addition to bringing in White, Bergner is also playing an important role in White’s visit.”

“If it is a day for Hope College when Student Congress fails to support the ideals of a liberal arts education,” he said.

The disappointment has led to action. In response to Congress’s action, RISE, WIO, and GLOBE have joined together with other students, faculty, and staff to ensure that White’s message will be heard at Hope College.

“It’s incredibly important that we facilitate dialogue on the issue. It’s important to present both sides,” Schneider said.

Goodman explained that RISE aims to present all sides of the issue.

“Because there are numerous perspectives both academically and spiritually, RISE would like to see different perspectives present so that the students can make informed decisions on the issue,” he said. “We want to further meaningful dialogue on the issue of homosexuality and the religious convictions associated with that.”

WIO has also become actively involved in the efforts.

“RISE is a minority group issue, and we are committed to fighting for minority rights, for all rights,” said Jill Pierson (’00), president of WIO.

GLOBE is also playing an important role in White’s visit.

“It’s an issue that directly affects the lives of our members,” said Anne Roulo (’99), president of GLOBE.

Without recognition as an official student organization at Hope College, GLOBE does not have a budget to support these groups like RISE, and WIO have. Their contributions have been mainly behind the scenes.

“Since we have no money or recognition, we’ve been involved in things like general planning, legwork, and handing out ribbons,” Roulo said.

In addition to bringing into White, these groups are also planning other activities in response to the Chapel series, “Setting Love in Order.”

This is an emotionally-charged issue,” said Kristen Gray, Assistant Dean of Health and Counseling. “We try to deal with emotionally-charged topics as a staff to help the students.”

The Chapel series will continue Friday March 19, when Mario Bergner speaks in the normal, 10:30 a.m. Chapel service.

The next speaker on this issue, Tracy Ore (’84), will speak on “A Lesbian Experience at Hope.” She will speak on Thursday, March 11, in the Maas Center at 11 a.m.

A signature on the petition signifies that the person wants, “The opportunity to hear (Mel White) speak and formulate (his/her) own opinion.”

Some students are questioning the learning experience at Hope by challenging the Chapel staff and the entirety of coverage on the issue. Several students want to hear both sides and not just one view.

Individuals that have been struggling with this issue and need assistance can reach the Counseling Center after the Gathering service Sunday, March 14. The center will be open as long as needed to help students. Public Safety can also reach a counselor on call through the switch board.

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Congress president explains her view of rescinded vote

To the Editor:

As Student Congress President, I completely stand behind all decisions made by Congress in the past months. Although the meetings were held in accordance with our constitution and Robert's Rules of Order, they were also conducted with integrity and civility. And for that I am very proud and extremely grateful.

Personally, as a Hope College student, I am very disappointed in the events that occurred last Thursday. I am disgusted in the fact that we were weak, we could not stand behind the decision we made when the pressure was applied. I felt that Congress was finally doing something, we were at least trying to find ways to provide students the opportunity to use Congress as a vehicle to improve this campus. Supplying an alternative viewpoint on homosexuality within the Christian context, was not only worthwhile to the student body, but also gave Congress the chance to prove itself as a school that values and promotes a valuable organization on campus. Congress is a governmental body that represents the entire student body, so we could voice their opinions and concerns about the chapel. Two weeks ago, that process began. We re- corded all signs together, we were simply pressing concern about the one-sidedness of the chapel, and so we gladly took action. Congress never intended to disrupt any event, but we needed to bring attention to the issue of sexual orientation.

Student details issue as one of respect

To the Editor:

We are impressive. We are forming here, at Hope College, patterns of thought that will follow us for the rest of our lives. We need to know the truth, and we desire to find the truth for ourselves. Our professors spend so much time urging us to think on our own, and nearly all of them treat every student's opinion with respect, regardless of their own. The administration, however, is pulling against free thought.

The issue at hand is not even that of homosexuality, it is an issue of respect. In short, it does not matter what I think, it doesn't matter what Ben Patterson thinks, it does not matter what President John Hartman thinks. It matters that each of us respect each other enough to say: I value you enough to at least hear your side, and even if I disagree in the end, I will still consider you an essential part of the Hope College community.

Perhaps we have reached the point where we believe we can (and should) decide for others. We have used, learned and listened and prayed and lost sleep over and neglected homework to debate with friends and enemies and screamed and spoken softly about this issue, then and only then, can we be close to a decision on what to think.

Finally, if the administration insists on keeping the alternative viewpoints in the proverbial closet, I consider you an essential part of the Hope College community, and I will not give up and always remember that in the end it is worth it. In the end, we will prove it. I don't want to go through it may remain secret, I want to go through it may remain secret.

[Signature]
Dana Marrold

Professor makes comments on current campus issue

To the Editor:

If I may I'd like to make two comments on the current turmoil on campus.

First, in regard to the debate over the liberal arts curriculum, I think that each of us respect each other enough to say: I value you enough to at least hear your side, and even if I disagree in the end, I will still consider you an essential part of the Hope College community. Perhaps we have reached the point where we believe we can (and should) decide for others. We have used, learned and listened and prayed and lost sleep over and neglected homework to debate with friends and enemies and screamed and spoken softly about this issue, then and only then, can we be close to a decision on what to think.

Second, in response to Sheri Hines's letter, I believe that, as Christians on campus, we must first keep in mind our love for God, and then our love for our neighbors. When we go through these events, we can see merits on both (or several) sides of an issue. Going through this process brings us to a new level of maturity. People who don't go through it may remain secret in their authoritarian view of the world, but they won't be able to stand in the many unusual situations which they will confront later in life.

[Signature]
Jessica R. Black

Student asks others to "act in God's love"

To the Editor:

My roommate and I don't always see eye-to-eye on certain issues, and the issues raised on campus the past few weeks have been no exception. I have stayed up well past my usual bedtime (which is late enough already), I have been dismayed and heated debates with her. And we still disagree. I began to get discouraged, then frustrated with my roommate, and then completely angry with her. I tried to ignore her, judge and hate her, and speak angrily about her to others. It was then that I realized I was being wrong to my roommate.

I thought she was emotionally harming me apart, really, I was doing emotional harm to myself. Jesus tells me that it is wrong to be angry (Matt 5:22) and that I am called to love others (Matt 5:43-48, John 13:34, Luke 10:25-37). No one knows the meaning of my life, the pain within my heart, the frustration I have dealt with. I believe that in the end, I must love my roommate for who she is. While this has been difficult, through God all things are possible, and the stress, anger and emotional pain has been lifted.

I believe that we can overcome this in our community. On campus, we must first keep in mind our love for God, and then our love for others (Luke 12:29-31). To believe is to love. We must take care of one another, and we must love the person we are because we love ourselves away from God's love. If we act in God's love, then everything else will fall into place.
Brought up. After reading the past other. By this I mean that people come to realize that quickly people
do the same. Homosexuality is a very delicate subject, which Christians feel very strongly about, and are split on both sides of
that. The.ibus not come to campus, just that instead support a forum. The pro-
sage is one that has not been heard
say about the forces of nature and sexual "I will not agree. Nevertheless, this mes-
sage is one that has not been heard on campus. I voted against White twice, not because I cannot tolerate homosexuals or because I am not
remembering. We felt that as a representative organization of the entire student body, con-
gressed could not in good faith en-
force only one side of this touchy issue. Instead, this forum would allow us to promote dialogue on campus by having a panel discussion with people arguing different views on homosexuality.

After last Thursday's decision, many have accused congress of be-
ing close-minded, and not promot-
ing dialogue. The reality is, however, that we are doing just the opposite. The public forum will allow both sides of the issue to be presented at the same time, and will permit us to remain neutral. This proposal is an excellent compromise. Both White
and Mario Bergner are still coming to campus, but congress is not throwing support into only one side. It is not the congress' responsibil-
ity to counter every message that groups present on campus. Regardless of what other organizations on campuses, we do need to consistently represent all students, not just those who are opposed to the Chaplain's views on homosexuality.}

We were unhappy with the way that the decision was made. The proposal was presented, and it was voted on, and then the decision was made. We feel that this is not the way that decisions should be made on this campus. We feel that decisions should be made by the students, and not by the administration. We feel that the administration should be doing their job, and not making decisions for the students.

We also feel that the administration should be doing a better job of communicating with the students. We feel that the administration should be doing a better job of listening to the students, and not just making decisions without listening to the students. We feel that the administration should be doing a better job of representing the students, and not just the administration.

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schools deal with issues of homosexuality on campus

ANDREW KLECEZK
staff reporter

Last week three homosexual students came out at a Bible study at Calvin College. Earlier this year, Aquinas College and Goshen College also in Indiana, had to deal with anti-homosexual graffiti.

The debate over homosexuality has not been exclusive to Hope College.

"After the initial shock there hasn't been much. Questions that might actually deal with it haven't been asked. There wasn't really a theological debate," said Natasha Vandenburg, staff columnist for the Calvin Chimes.

According to some Calvin students, it's not as big an issue there as it is at Hope. According to Sarah Potter, the Editor of the Calvin Chimes, "A lot of people are trying to figure out where they stand on an individual level."

She also feels that more people support homosexuality on their campus than don't, and that it hasn't really been a controversy. Vandenburg and Potter each feel that the campus was becoming more receptive to homosexuals.

Calvin Chaplain Dale Cooper said, "I think most of the regents have to be done by "straight" people by their persecution of homosexuals."

Cooper also said that it was important to welcome others as Christ welcomed them. "If one person anywhere is insulted, beleaguered, or hurt by thoughts or actions, one is infinitely too many," Cooper said.

White Calvin's situation could be compared to Hope; other schools have had more extreme events taking place. At Aquinas last October, the school celebrated National Coming Out Week with homosexual-friendly side-walk chalkings. Slogans such as "Jesus said, Love thy Neighbor," and "It only takes love to make a family," could be seen throughout campus.

"If White comes in, we want an outside group to support him," Bass said. Bass also added that he felt Bergner was "a breath of fresh air."

Marolt also added that he had received numerous messages supporting White's visit. Matt Brumble, (W) originally drew up the proposal to bring White to campus.

Personally, I think the rescinding of the proposal was wrong, not because of the issue itself but because of the fact that it makes the student body and Student Congress look weak," Brumble said. "But as a member of Student Congress, I stand behind any decision they make."

Mario Bergner will offer testimony on hope and healing

CARRIE ARNOLD
spotlight editor

As the controversy over homosexuality heats up on Hope's campus, many find themselves curious to hear the words of speaker Mario Bergner.

The director of Redeemed Life Ministries in Wheaton, Ill., Bergner is an active member of the ex-gay movement. His organization, Redeemed Life, ministers to the homosexual community and other people that are "sexually broken." This movement stresses that homosexuality is a sin and that homosexuals need to be redeemed. That is, gay members of society need to be converted to heterosexuals through Christ and the church.

Bergner himself was a practicing homosexual for five years.

"A large part of me liked being gay. I enjoyed the fellowship in the gay lifestyle," Bergner said in his sermon "Great is Repenance." "[But] if [God] wanted me to change my homosexuality, I was willing to let him." According to some Calvin students, it's not as big an issue there as it is at Hope.

The change in Bergner's life occurred when he came down with all of the major symptoms of AIDS, such as opportunistic diseases and rashes. While he was hospitalized, Bergner prayed for physical healing. "I don't know if I had AIDS or not, but that’s not the point of the story," Bergner said in his sermon. "The point is that Jesus appeared to me."

Over the next several years, Bergner said that he "came out" of being gay due to the ministries of his sister, his church, and a friend, Payne, author of "The Broken Image."

The Lord did heal my homosexuality," Bergner said in his sermon. "It was a long battle, but it was either that or dying, physically and spiritually. I knew now that my homosexuality was nothing more than my sinful reaction to situations committed against me."

In the 10 years since Bergner joined the ex-gay movement, it has picked up speed among Christian communities in the U.S. Recently, an ex-gay organization even placed a full-page ad in the New York Times. There have also been numerous television ads encouraging people to bring their homosexual friends to Christ. Bergner is at the forefront of this movement.

In 1994, Bergner received his Master of Divinity from Trinity and is the author of the book "Senting Love in Order: Hope and Healing for the Homosexual." He has spoken around the world in hopes of healing other homosexuals like himself with groups such as Exodus International and the International Catholic Program for Evangelism. He is scheduled to speak at Hope on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, March 12, 13, and 14.

Marolt also added that she had received numerous messages supporting White's visit.