

Northwest University's Student Magazine

# TALON



HOME CAMPUS LIFE OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT OPINION AUDIO/VISUAL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ABOUT US  
COMMENTARY CONTEST THE SCREECH PODCAST

by northwest7  
on October 30, 2016  
under Opinion  
∞ Permalink

## WHY I STILL LOVE MARS HILL (OPINION)

Posted on Sep 2, 2014

by Isaac Lund



As someone who once attended Mars Hill and was deeply affected by Mark's teaching in my own understanding of Christianity, the past few months have been fraught with confusion, frustration, and sorrow. Just a week ago, the Seattle mega church pastor announced that he would be setting his preaching responsibilities aside while a list of formal charges made against him are reviewed by the church's elders. For those readers who may be unfamiliar with the latest news concerning the Seattle mega church and its lead pastor Mark Driscoll, I will provide a brief timeline of events that have led up to Driscoll's most recent church update.

In 1996, Mark Driscoll, Leif Moi, and Mike Gunn founded Mars Hill Church. The community started as a house church with about 60 regular attendees and increased more than fivefold over the next three years. Mars Hill launched its first satellite campus in 2006, and by 2008 the church had community gatherings in Shoreline, West Seattle, Bellevue, Olympia, and four other locations. During this time the history of the church was, Driscoll was known as the pastor of the fastest growing church in the least-churched city in America. The Mars Hill bus was in top gear, and nothing was going to stop it.

Some former members and staff trace the current controversies back to 2007, when Driscoll fired church elders Paul Petry and Bent Meyer. The suspicion surrounding their dismissal has led many to question the inner workings of Mars Hill's leadership, and since then many families have come forward on social media platforms such as [welovemarshall.com](http://welovemarshall.com) and [joyfulexiles.com](http://joyfulexiles.com). To give accounts of their own painful departures from the Mars Hill community. I refer to these sites not to supply Driscoll's critics with more ammunition, but to point out that the issue at hand is not Neo-Calvinism, homosexuality, or a particular perspective on masculinity, and gender roles. While these are all factors in the equation, the problem that must be addressed is the abuse and mistreatment of Christians at the hands of Christian leaders.

The fact of the matter is that there are NU students who call Mars Hill their home and call that community family. Few of us know what it's like to watch our spiritual environment dissolve before our eyes, and I even fewer (if any) have experienced such a thing with this amount of public exposure. I can't imagine the pain that results from going on any online forum and reading an outsider's thoughts about how your own family is falling apart. It is worse when many bloggers (some of them Christians) have gone to tremendous efforts explaining how it is all a good thing. As a Christian community, we cannot turn a blind eye to these events as they unfold simply because we are dealing with Christians. Whether we like it or not, we have no choice but to adopt a High School Musical ethic and realize that *we're all in this together*.

One cannot deny the incredible humility and sincerity exhibited by Driscoll in his statement last two Sundays ago. As I watched one of the most influential Christian leaders in America talk about his love for God's church and apologize to his community, I was reminded of why I once considered this man my pastor before I was even able to attend a Mars Hill campus. When I look past the anger, the lack of sensitivity, and the (possibly) chauvinistic rhetoric in Driscoll's sermons, I hear a message about Jesus and how Jesus loves his church. As a community, this is the message we must cling to as we decide how to react to this entire situation.

For you readers who attend Mars Hill, know that this community loves you and we will do everything we can to support you in this season. For those of you who are merely observers of the events that have transpired, remember that you have brothers and sisters who are directly affected by these circumstances. Our job is to find ways to love our fellow Christians and be a help rather than a hindrance to their restoration. As for myself, I will pray for Mars Hill because it is part of God's Church. I will pray for Mark because he is my brother in Christ. I will not share any posts concerning Mars Hill or Mark Driscoll on any social media sites; private prayer and public silence is far more conducive to the restoration process than electronically distributing MH documents and letters. Let us, as a community, remember the words of St. Peter: "Above all, keep loving another earnestly, for love covers a multitude of sins."

