

Northwest University's Student Magazine

TALON



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by northwest7
on November 20, 2016
under Outside the Bubble
Permalink

THE WANDERING SHEPHERD

Posted: Tuesday, September 2, 2014 9:24 pm

By Kelly Grant



Mars Hill is one of Seattle's best-known churches and is frequented by a number of Northwest University students. Over the summer, members and non-members alike have been heatedly discussing the church's latest controversy. There have been many allegations made against Mars Hill's preaching pastor Mark Driscoll, such as hiring a consultant to artificially enhance his book sales, helping him to receive an unearned spot on the New York Times Bestseller List. It was also said that he was verbally abusive towards those in the church who disagreed with him. He has been kicked out of the national church organization that he helped found, the Act 29 Network, and as of Sunday, August 24th he decided to step down from his position for six weeks, allowing for the church leaders to investigate the numerous charges against him.

These occurrences have affected the Northwest students and staff who call Mars Hill their church home; they have had to make the difficult decision of whether or not to continue attending. When asked if the changes at Mars Hill would influence her decision, Emily Sears stated, "For a while it was, but I feel that God still wants me there and that he is still working within the church." Mark Mandi, the Cross Country and Track Coach at NU, has decided to continue attending as well. He says that "It is easy to treat the church as a product in our consumer based society, to only go as long as you are getting something out of it. Mark Driscoll is still a great pastor and we should support him, not in his wrong actions, but as our brother in Christ."

It is not always clear how to act or how to feel about a situation such as this, but as Christians, Northwest students want to be sure that they were acting in a way that glorifies God. Pastor Brandon Rainwater, who preaches at The Vine church and runs a Bible study at Northwest University, advises that "Before you form an opinion, create a prayer life towards it. We don't want the devil to receive any glory from the confusion that controversy can create."

During the next few weeks, as Pastor Driscoll takes some time away from the church, we can use this time to pray that through all the noise of gossip and opinions that God's will be done.

UPDATE:

Mars Hill has announced the closures of several locations following the controversy that has surrounded the church in recent months:

Mars Hill Downtown Seattle – Oct 5

Mars Hill U-District (Seattle) – Oct 5

Phoenix, AZ – Sept 30

Huntingdon Beach, CA – Dec 31

Both Seattle churches will merge into Ballard's Mars Hill campus.