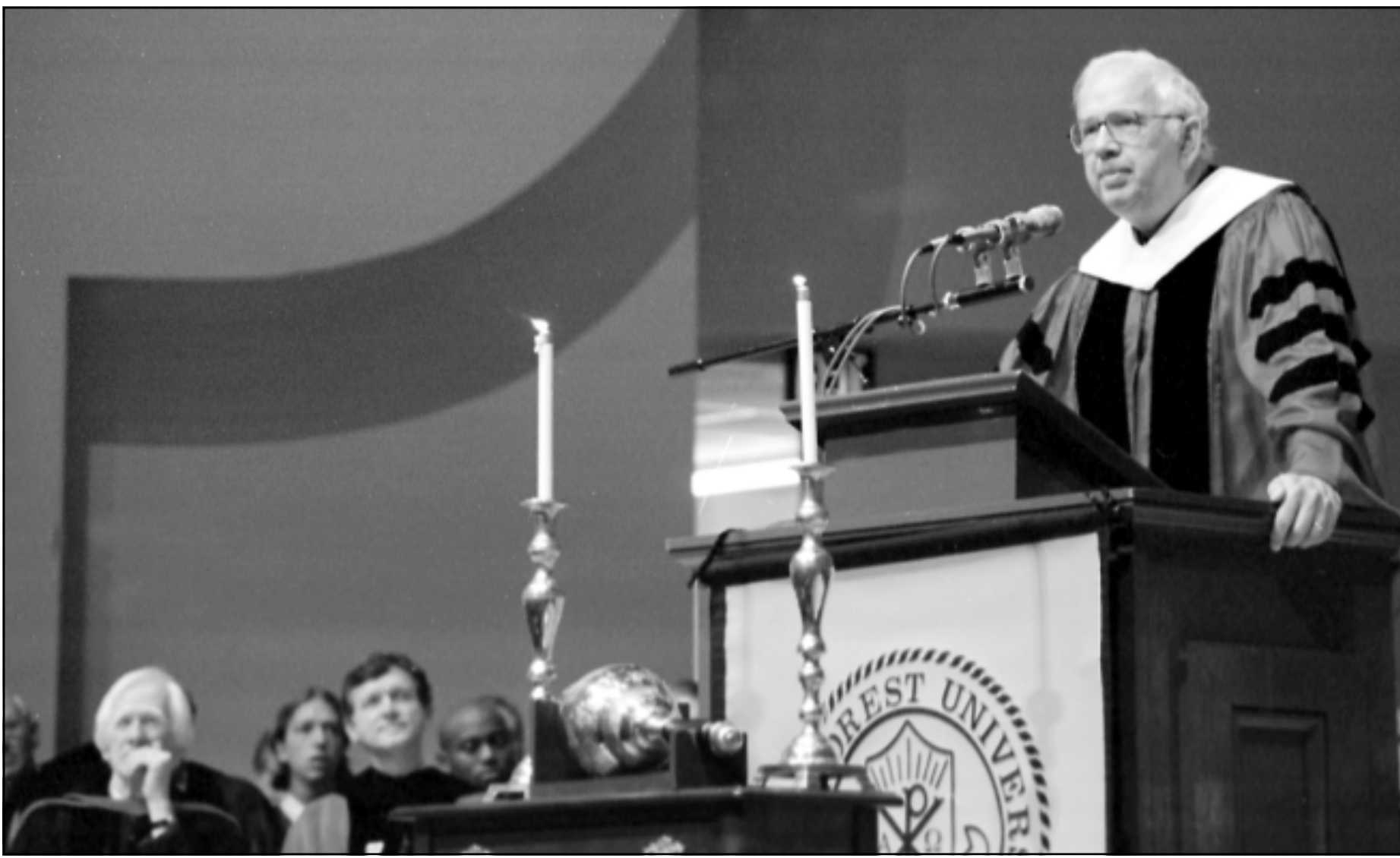


Divine Inspiration

Year of Religion to provoke discussion, ideas



Noel Fox/Old Gold and Black

The university welcomed Rabbi Harold Kushner, a renowned author and speaker, at the Sept. 4 opening convocation in Brendle Recital Hall.

"At first encounter, there is something diminishing to be told that we are not the greatest force in the universe. But upon reflection there's something very liberating about it. It says to us we don't have to solve all the problems because there's a power beyond our power that takes over where our power ends. And we are defined, and we are reassured, and we are comforted that the problems we can't solve will be solved by a power beyond our own."

Rabbi Harold Kushner

Diverse doctrine serves as theme for the Year of Religion

By Kate Cosgrove
Features Editor

Last Thursday, the university gathered for opening convocation in Brendle Recital Hall. Convocation, a ceremony marking the start of a new academic semester, has evolved into a tradition founded on more than academic principles. On this anniversary of the deaths of Julie Hansen and Maya Witzl, students gathered whose minds rested undoubtedly on more than the official beginning of a new year. And perhaps appropriately, the university announced the beginning of its new theme year, "The Year of Religion in American Life."

At a time when tragedy seems to seep more often through the insulated bubble in which the campus exists, the university appears to be asking more questions that cannot be reconciled through mathematical equations or logical reasoning. Simultaneously, the university embarks on a year concentrating on the ways in which religion seeks to resolve the unanswerable questions.

Rabbi Harold Kushner, the bestselling author of "When Bad Things Happen To Good People" addressed the unanswerable questions that tragedy brings to the fore, in his keynote address introducing the Year of Religion. Drawing upon his own life experiences, Kushner acknowledged the role that religion plays in the lives of individuals coping with death.

"I thought that the Rabbi did a splendid job of helping to set the tone for the Year of Religion in American life," said Charles Kimball, the chairman of the religion department and co-chairman of the committee for the theme year. "He raised important questions regarding the role of religion in our personal and academic lives."

Kushner's address was the first of many events planned for the theme year. Bill Moyers, the author of *Healing and the Mind*, and Tony Campolo, an evangelical and spiritual advisor to President Bill Clinton will give lectures as well.

Bill Leonard, the dean of the Divinity School and co-chairman of the Year of Religion Steering Committee describes the Year of Religion as "an effort

to highlight events that are held on campus every year — classes, study groups, music, and drama — that encourage religious life.

"We hope to highlight a variety of faith traditions and stimulate dialogue and debate that improves understanding about the role of religion in American life," he said.

According to Leonard, the university chose the Year of Religion as the theme for the 1997-98 school year as a way of reaffirming the university's religious roots, and as a means of addressing the nature of religion in the present and in the future. Despite the university's Baptist heritage, the committee of faculty, students, and staff who planned the year has planned a diverse program.

"We will listen to the visitors and to those already among us, debating great ideas, challenging belief systems and presuppositions, while recognizing the right of all persons to struggle with faith and ideas from different perspectives," Leonard said.

"I think that it is admirable that a school with Baptist roots is bringing speakers of different religions to campus," junior Heather Scalf said. "I really liked having a Jewish rabbi speak at convocation." Other scholars that will visit the campus this year to lecture, teach classes, and

initiate discussions are Abbot Hyon Gak Sunim, Buddhist monk and author of *The Whole Language is a Single Flower*; Rev. Francis Kline, abbot of Mepkin Abbey; The Rev. Claudia Highbaugh, chaplain of the Harvard Divinity School and expert on African-American spirituality; and Janet McCloud, a Native American and expert on Native American religions.

A \$25,000 grant from the Lily Endowment of Indianapolis will allow the university to host a conference on religion in higher education for 13 Baptist schools in the Southeast as part of the Year of Religion.

Wake Forest, Chowan College, Meredith College, Gardner-Webb University and Campbell University in North Carolina; Samford University in Alabama; Mercer University and Shorter College in Georgia; Carson-Newman College in Tennessee; Averett College and the University of Richmond in Virginia; and Furman University and Anderson College in South Carolina will take part in the conference.

"The goal of the conference is to explore ways schools can live out their faith traditions," said Richard Hughes, a Pepperdine scholar affiliated with the Lily-funded study and book.

Moyers to speak at convocation

Bill Moyers, the recipient of over 30 Emmy Awards and the author of *Healing and the Mind*, and *Listening to America* will speak at the university's fall convocation on November 19.

Moyers, an author, journalist and broadcaster, graduated from the University of Texas and went on to receive the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In his 25-year career in broadcasting Moyers has served as senior news analyst for the CBS Evening News, and chief correspondent for the documentary series, "CBS Reports." Moyer established Public Affairs Television in 1986 and has since produced more than 200 programming hours which include.

Moyers has also served as deputy director of the Peace Corps in the Kennedy administration and special assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson from 1963-67.

Committee will award grants

Due to the multitude of interpretations inspired by the theme Religion in American Life, the Year of Religion Committee has set up a grant fund to allow for the addition of any speaker, program, or event not included on the current agenda.

\$10,000 has been allotted for the '97-'98 academic year. The money will be awarded in mini-grants of \$250 or larger grants of up to \$1,000 based on availability and stated purpose.

"The Year of Religion committee realizes that, as diligently as it has worked, there are people and events it may have overlooked in setting up its schedule. Therefore, the grants and mini-grants provide an excellent opportunity to make a positive contribution to the campus community and broaden Year of Religion programming and experiences," said Sam Gladding, assistant to the president and chairman of the grant committee.

Page written and compiled by Kate Cosgrove, features editor, and Sarah Kutner, assistant features editor.



Courtesy of the University Editor

Bill Leonard heads the Year of Religion Steering Committee.

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Bill Leonard

Dean of Divinity School, co-chairman of Year of Religion Steering Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mini Med School

Lecture series sponsored by Bowman Gray/Baptist Hospital with a focus on aging. Featuring a different guest lecturer each week.
When: 7-9 p.m. Sept. 15 to Oct. 27, Monday nights

"Great Men and Women of Faith": Film Series
Shadowlands: Sept. 15 (tentative)
Malcolm X: Sept. 16
Dead Man: Walking Sept. 17
Gandhi: Sept. 18

"Euthanasia": Discovery Lecture Series
Free admission, interactive discussion
When: 11am-noon Sept. 23,
Where: Benson, 3rd floor rotunda

Abbot Hyon Gak Sunim
Religion Resident, Buddhist monk and author of *The Whole World is a Single Flower* and *The Compass of Zen*
When: Sept. 30 to Oct. 2
Events to be announced

Ministerial Alumni Seminar
Topic: "Studies in the Psalms", led by Walter Brueggemann of the Columbia Theological Seminary
When: 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Oct. 13

"Religion and Higher Education"
Symposium featuring presidents, deans, faculty, trustees and students from 13 Baptist affiliated colleges and universities in the Southeast. Discussion involving role of religion, values and faith on campuses.

When: Oct. 23 to 25

Reverend Francis Kline

Religion Resident, author, spiritual director, organist; performing Marcel Dupre's *The Stations of the Cross*, narrated by Ed Wilson, English professor and provost emeritus; open to the public
When: 8 p.m. Oct. 29
Where: Wait Chapel

"Portraits of the Devil": Film Series

The Exorcist: Oct. 27
The Omen: Oct. 28
Rosemary's Baby: Oct. 29
The Devil and Daniel Webster: Oct. 30

Bible Study Seminar

Topic: *Luke: The Parables*, led by Mary Foksett of Wake Forest religion department
When: 3-9 p.m. Nov. 6

Reverend Claudia Highbaugh

Religion Resident, chaplain: Harvard Divinity School, expert on African-American spirituality
When: Nov. 3-6

Fall Convocation

Lecture and dialogue in Wait Chapel with Bill Moyers, author, journalist, broadcaster
When: 8 p.m. Nov. 19
Where: Wait Chapel

"Heavenly Creatures": Film Series

The Preacher's Wife: Nov. 17
Ghost: Nov. 18
It's a Wonderful Life: Nov. 19
Heart and Souls: Nov. 20