

PERSPECTIVES

Respecting Perspectives

STAFF EDITORIAL

This week, The Davidsonian is running a pair of articles on homosexuality, Christianity, and what it means for the Davidson community to support events like the National Coming Out Day panel, held on October 7. Obviously, both sexual orientation and religion are deeply personal parts of the human experience, and all of us, as students, are fortunate to attend a school where these elements of our lives are respected by both the administration and by many of our peers. That said, the Davidson population is spiritually and culturally diverse, and with this diversity comes a wealth of occasionally conflicting viewpoints and opinions. These two articles on homosexuality are evidence of those differences.

Part of respecting these various viewpoints is listening to those who may see the world differently, despite how difficult it may be for some. Similarly, healthy and persuasive discourse relies on this same principle, as it is impossible to carry on a useful discussion without viewing both arguments on an equal and level playing field. We hope that our readers will give both perspectives the proper degree of deference that each deserves.

Every week, this paper strives to cover topics that affect the campus and its student body. This relationship between the community and the Davidsonian works both ways, as a student-run organization, our articles are necessarily informed by the thoughts and interests of Davidson students. While this is certainly true of the entire publication, the Perspectives section serves as a much more open forum where members of the Davidson family can bring to light issues that they feel have not been addressed adequately, be it in the paper or on the campus at large. Because Perspectives exists explicitly to serve this purpose, the section's editor's primary duty is to respect the messages and philosophies of those whose work is printed every week.

At the same time, our editors must respect the thoughts and beliefs of our readers, as this too is necessary for a successful debate. We have worked hard with both writers throughout our editing process to make sure that the arguments are considerate of differing opinions while maintaining the original meaning of the articles. The writers and editors hope that this effort will work towards a more eloquent and civil conversation. As a reader, we trust that you will work with us towards this goal.

The Davidsonian

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Homosexuality against Christian tradition

MICHAEL SPANGLER
Guest Columnist

Nearly a month has passed since the October 7 celebration of National Coming Out Day, but I am still left with serious concerns about it. For those who did not hear about it, the event was a discussion with a panel of gay and lesbian faculty and staff intended to support and celebrate students coming out publicly about their homosexuality. Davidson should be a place where the truth is honored and students are cared for, and I think the event showed a major failure in both areas. I hope that the readers of the Davidsonian will hear these concerns with an open heart.

I know that Davidson desires to protect its students from harassment. I happily support this worthy goal. However, it is a grave injustice when this ideal is twisted to obscure the truth and to lead students to openly rebel against the God who made them. I affirm, along with the Christian tradition with which our Statement of Purpose allies itself, that "God is the source of all truth." The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are his Word, are thus trustworthy in all their parts, since they are inspired by the God from whom all truth comes. These scriptures plainly attest that homosexuality is rebellion against our perfect Creator. The crowning glory of his very good creation was mankind, made male and female in God's own image, united as one flesh in marriage, and commanded, "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:23-25 ESV). This first marriage and every subsequent human marriage point to the great marriage of Jesus Christ and his church at the end of the world, which is the joyful destiny of all those who love the Lord (Revelation 21, Ephesians 5:31-32). Along with other sexual sins such as adultery and fornication, homosexuality overturns the Creator's beautiful design for marriage. It also mocks his wise design for the human body and sexual intercourse. Furthermore, homosexuality makes it impossible to obey the command, "be fruitful and multiply" and leads to the extinction of generations yet unborn. God justly condemns it in his own voice as an abomination (Leviticus 18:22), and shows his hatred of it by destroying Sodom and Gomorrah as an example (Jude 1:7). Furthermore, the apostle Paul teaches that being given over to homosexuality is a punishment on those who worship idols (Romans 1:18-32). Therefore, when Davidson officially encourages homosexuality by supporting events such as the National Coming Out Day celebration, it is unwittingly encouraging its students to turn against the God who made them, his very good creation, and his perfect moral law, and to live and die under his wrath and curse.

To honor the truth and to care for our students, we should

direct them toward the path of life: repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Homosexuality is not the only sin we all sin and need a Savior. What depth of mercy that God provided his only begotten Son to be this Savior! This is the good news: for all those who trust in him, no matter the depth of their wickedness, Christ bore the full wrath of God against their sin on the cross. By faith, believers receive his perfect righteousness and can stand before God now and for eternity, as if they had never sinned. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). On the third day after being crucified, Christ rose from the dead. In the same way, those who were once dead in their sins are made alive through him (Ephesians 2:4-5). With this new life comes freedom and power to fight remaining sins, including homosexuality, with a complete victory promised in the final resurrection at the end of time. This new life is an abundant life (John 10:10): the Christian has joy amid trials and persecutions, a cleansed conscience, assurance of salvation, freedom from worry and need, a fervent love for God, and a grateful desire to keep his law.

That Davidson directs its homosexual students away from such abundant life is especially shameful considering its history. Davidson was founded by Presbyterians who loved God's Word and who loved Jesus Christ. A vestige of that solid Reformed theology exists in our current Statement of Purpose. As I understand the official sources of the Chaplain's Office and the Board of Trustees, Davidson believes that approval of diversity in matters of sexual orientation honors God. The truth is quite the opposite. I believe that God hates the sin of homosexuality and he graciously offers his only Son to rescue people from it. A god that loves homosexuality and approves of those who encourage it is not the God of the Bible, and thus not the true and living God. Such a god is an idol of our own making. In worshipping it we break the first commandment, "you shall have no other gods before me" and the second, "you shall not make for yourself a carved image." In continuing to use God's name in our official documents and speeches we break the third: "you shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain." We must respect God as individuals and as an institution, for "the LORD will hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7). My dear friends, professors, administrators, alumni, trustees, let us humble ourselves before the Lord before it is too late, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Michael Spangler '10 is a Music major from Winston-Salem, NC. Contact him at mispangler@davidson.edu.

Accepting GLBTQ's affirms Davidson's ideal

JAMIE HOFMEISTER
Guest Columnist

I am a Christian, a Presbyterian, who loves God and struggles to understand who God is and who we are in relation to God amid a cacophony of voices and interpretations in the Church and in the world. One of the things I appreciate about being in the Presbyterian Church (USA) is the ability to question, to search and discover and study, and to disagree in order to respond to these huge questions. Presbyterians do this in such a way that values the Bible as an authoritative source while calling us to interpret it carefully and thoughtfully using the best historical, linguistic, and literary scholarship. It is from this perspective that I want to call attention to and celebrate Davidson's support of National Coming Out Day, through banner signings and a panel discussion with openly gay faculty and staff.

My tradition affirms that God created everything and declared it good. Humans are created in the image of God for a purpose, and God loves each and every person. God is more magnificent and powerful than I can ever imagine, and is beyond our realm of understanding. We are called to seek justice, cherish kindness, and walk humbly with God, knowing we are not alone.

The openness of the school and its support for the GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgendered, Questioning) community speaks volumes to the heritage of Davidson in the Presbyterian tradition. Despite individual differences of opinion on homosexuality, we can stand together and affirm homosexuals. I think one of the best things about Davidson's foundations is the opportunity it provides for critical thinking, for open dialogue and for faithful response to the current context due to the Confessional tradition of the Presbyterian Church. I find the openness of Davidson to students of all sexualities to be a wonderful sign of God bringing reconciliation and love into the world.

The openness of the school, and support for the GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Transgendered, Questioning) community, speaks volumes to the heritage of Davidson in the Presbyterian Tradition, in which, despite individual differences of opinion on homosexuality, we can stand together and affirm homosexuals.

We are challenged to be signs of these gifts, to break down boundaries around us, to welcome the outcast, the oppressed, the stranger, the hurt, the weak, and show love and compassion, following the example set forth by the prophets of the Hebrew Bible and Jesus' ministry. To walk into the Union each day and see the banner hanging with signatures of students, faculty and staff showing support for the GLBTQ community, I am reminded of the wonderful steps we as a community are taking to meet these challenges.

This gives me great hope about what we, a community of religious and non-religious individuals, Christians and people of various faiths, can do together to stand up against oppression and injustice of all sorts.

Jamie Hofmeister '11 is a religion major from Paris, NC. Contact her at jahofmeister@davidson.edu.



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