

The truth is that plaques don't force religion on anyone

I have heard complaints from some students concerning the placement of plaques containing Old Testament bible verses across the campus. As strange as it may seem, the first



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thing that came to mind when I heard these complaints is the Davidson humanities program.

I am enrolled in the humanities program. I have had to purchase works with my own money that support everything from Catholic doctrine to Calvinist thought. Later in the course I will be reading Nietzsche. I am not a Calvinist, nor a Catholic. And, although sometimes I daydream of being a world dictator (come on, who doesn't?), I have many issues with Nietzsche's philoso-

phy. Despite my objections, I was forced to purchase, study and even memorize portions of each of these texts.

It does not matter what my own beliefs are on predestination or absolute truths or sin. I actually had to read what other people thought about them! I was subjected to the humiliation of someone explaining to me, step by step, why they believed I was wrong.

Am I a bit too sensitive? Was it my decision to take humanities? Is it my fault if I did not look into the background of the program before I decided to sign up? Of course.

This same principle applies to the religious plaques. Although I did not notice them until writing this article (I don't know if that says something about my attendance record), some students find them offensive.

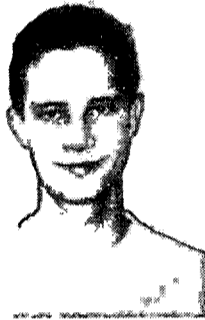
The troublesome verses highlight Davidson's religious past by emphasizing a need for something more than just book

smarts. A reliance on God is emphasized in verses like Proverbs 3:5, which reads, "Trust in the LORD with all thy heart; and lean not on thy own understanding," while other verses like Jeremiah 9:23-24, emphasize the spiritual things ("...nor let the rich man glory in his riches...").

I personally may not believe in the Judeo-Christian God mentioned in these verses. I might be a Hindu, an atheist or an agnostic. However, Davidson, a private institution, is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. It has the right to display these non-offensive, inconspicuous plaques. These plaques do not require every student to adhere to any specific religion on campus. Instead, they are reminders to us of Davidson's past and, perhaps, prompt each of us to step back from our hectic schedules to learn and think about something that just might be more important than our GPAs. Whether or not we choose to agree with them is left up to us.

Building the architecture of our time

The recent tragedies in New York and Washington have caused many people to question the need for monumental architecture. Some argue that large buildings are a waste of money and could be the target of another terrorist attack.



David Crow

In fact, this is not a new trend. Over the past 50 years, America's movement out of the cities and into the suburbs has resulted in the construction of fewer and fewer great pieces of architecture. In addition, many of this country's architectural masterpieces, such as the old Pennsylvania Station in New York, have been demolished.

Recently, a plan was proposed to tear down part of Eero Saarinen's 1962 TWA terminal building at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport. This building, a symbol of the soaring possibilities of the jet age, could soon be changed, and possibly gone forever.

While no building could ever be as important as the thousands of lives lost in this tragedy, it is wrong to think that symbolic architecture is no longer needed. To say that we should not rebuild the World Trade Center, or other buildings like it, would mark the end of an era in world history.

Every great civilization has made its mark on the world through architecture. Often, our first thought of these civili-

zations is a work of architecture (think of the pyramids or the Coliseum). Often, such emblematic structures have had to withstand wars and attacks, as well as the test of time. The fact that these works endure such hard times gives us hope that life can go on even after tragic events.

I am reminded of pictures and films I have seen of London during the Battle of Britain when another great city was under attack. Yet the symbols of London--Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and St. Paul's Cathedral--survived the bombings and gave hope to London's citizens and to the world.

Although the World Trade Center is gone, New York is left with many great works that give hope to everyone that we are still a mighty nation capable of surviving hard times. One only has to stand inside Grand Central Station and look up at the ceiling hundreds of feet above. Look at the constellations on that great vaulted ceiling as the sunlight pours down on the thousands of people of all nationalities, races, religions and beliefs who walk through its doors every day. How can one not have hope after such an experience?

The reason buildings like these are important, and the reason we must not just rebuild the World Trade Center, but also build more great works of architecture all over the country, is that monumental architecture makes us believe that everything America stands for will last well beyond our lifetime. Just as the Coliseum is a symbol of Rome and the pyramids are a reminder of the Egyptians, so too does our architecture give us hope for the future while reminding us of the past.

U.S. should look to prevent and protect

Two weeks after the murders of as many as 6,000 people, with our invincibility shattered, shock and grief have given way to anger as American leadership takes steps toward war.

Presidential calls for patience, warnings of a long and hard struggle ahead and a massive military build-up in the Persian Gulf, make it clear that America's response to the attacks of Sept. 11 will be one of sustained and punishing military attacks. Indeed, it has been stated repeatedly in the past two weeks that this nation is prosecuting a war against terrorism that starts with Osama bin Laden.

But is a global war to eradicate terrorism the right response to the terrible attacks?

Surely, any rational American demands and expects a military response--and rightly so. Military action must be used--to think otherwise is preposterous and cowardly. The only questions are in what capacity and in conjunction with which nations should the U.S. use its military might? What should be the goal of the American response?

Administration officials have promised to use every resource America has at its disposal--from diplomacy and financial influence to intelligence and law enforcement to military might--to properly execute the "war" on terrorism. Such talk of fighting a multi-front battle and admitting that the U.S., no matter how powerful, cannot simply bomb its problem away is encouraging, but talk of a lengthy fight against terrorism is not. A sustained, multi-purpose and devastating attack by American forces and their allies must take place, but they must not be the start of a conflict against an enemy that can never be defeated. If the U.S. dedicates itself to ending terrorism in this way, it will lose, or fight forever.

The goals of the attacks should be to end the threat posed by Osama bin Laden, to punish related organizations and to topple and eradicate regimes that support or sponsor terrorist cells. With such objectives in mind (particularly the last one, which would take years), the attacks would take quite some time, but not as much as the war currently being described. The U.S. will never eradicate terrorism because it would require the altering of American policy, as well as profound change to the American way of life. Prevention and protection are the lessons learned from Sept. 11, and they are the keys to defeating terrorists in the only sense possible.

We must get tougher with nations that say they are our allies, but then balk when they are called upon to support us. The State Department and other foreign ministries must coordinate efforts to pressure unfriendly or unsupportive regimes with various carrots and sticks. They must also be ready to reward those states that do cooperate--such as Pakistan. Most importantly, law enforcement forces at all levels--particularly the federal level--and the intelligence community must be encouraged to increase their counterterrorism efforts through the loosening of laws that currently restrict them both domestically and abroad. Obviously, this must be done with caution to avoid infringing upon civil liberties and privacy. Specifically, the executive order banning U.S.-sponsored assassinations of foreign leaders should be repealed to allow for the use of a valuable preventative measure.

All this must be considered with great caution and due care. A fundamental restructuring of the American way of life should not be the goal. However, it must be recognized that much has changed and will never be the same. A war--despite America's incredible military might--to stop all terrorism is a pipe dream, a noble yet unattainable goal. America cannot delude itself into thinking such a war could ever be won. Military action is called for, but it must be measured and tempered by more permanent fights on other fronts.

This school has little stock in diversity

I am not the best person to be writing about diversity on Davidson's campus. I suppose that I should explain my own background so that everyone can understand my point of view.

My hometown, Fort Worth, Texas, is the most provincial town that I have ever encountered. Its citizens believe that anything that occurs outside of "The Fort" is inconsequential to whatever is happening within the town's boundaries. There are debutante balls and "who's who" sections of the newspaper. And traveling far from home is driving across town to Texas Christian, down Interstate 30 to Southern Methodist, or all the way south on I-35 to Texas or Texas A&M.

Fort Worth is not a town that fosters diversity. Liz Sykes and I almost made the front page of the newspaper for coming all the way to North Carolina to attend college.

And then there was Chatham Hall, an all-girls boarding school hidden in southern Virginia that I once attended. It had diversity, but with only about 120 girls, it had difficulty attracting a broad range of personalities. Even though Chatham did an excellent job raising my friends and I, I did not consider diversity to be an important aspect during my hunt for an appropriate college.

I suppose that I liked Davidson because it felt like boarding school. There was an honor code, almost every student was housed in the dorms and the classes were small. Instead of being surrounded by a big, scary city, Davidson was in the middle of nowhere.

I'm guilty for joining most of our cookie-cutter student body, and truthfully, I like that feeling. I've never been out of the country and my travels have not expanded past southern California, the Rocky Mountains, the Southeast, New York, and Massachusetts. So I join the rest of those provincial Fort Worth socialites, except for one thing: I believe that diversity is defined through character.

Diversity isn't about weird-colored hair or multiple piercings. It is about personality, beliefs and backgrounds. The admissions department has succeeded in finding well-rounded students, but our reputation really does not travel far beyond the Southeast. Therefore, our student body does not attract the typical diverse student.

I have found some bits of diversity here. My roommate last year was one of 40 Jewish students, and fed me information about her holidays, cultural traditions and family (although I never did eat a Matzoh ball). I live on the arts hall and I think that there is enough diversity on the first floor of Cannon Hall to make up an army.

Remember to look deeper than appearance. You have friends who have a lifetime of stories that make up for what most believe is missing. But in order to cultivate a diverse campus, we, as a student body, must strive to expand our reputation, open our beliefs and receive others, speak wisely when in argument, and find friendships in those we see as different.

It is most important to find diversity in friendships and take advantage of the little diversity that we do have. And if you have difficulty finding any diversity, you're always welcome to come to first Cannon. We have enough to go around for at least half of the campus.



Cannon Hodge