

Just for kicks, I want to start with fire: *Some value systems are inherently superior to others.*

"My, my," some of you are saying, "perhaps Mr. Hill should take up residence at an undisclosed address. Better still, perhaps he should resign from the college." For, assuredly, those who identify themselves with the politically correct movement are already honing their swords. But before we bloody ourselves between the pages of *The Davidsonian*, let us first examine the underpinnings of the P.C. movement.

First, the politically correct intend to protect minorities and the handicapped from language which would damage their self esteem and which perpetuates senseless prejudices.

Second, P.C. philosophy embraces the subjective, asserting that all value systems should be equally respected as expressions of subjective truth. In other words, while world-views and philosophical systems may differ, none should be judged as inferior to the rest.

## Stephen Hill Intolerance and the P.C. movement.

Final, and most important, P.C. advocates call on private and public institutions to enforce these principles through laws and regulations.

Unfortunately, in pursuing such regulations, the politically correct ignore a fundamental tenet of societal organization. Namely, to conquer the chaos of natural law, a civilization must be willing and able to restrain individual freedom wherever it infringes inappropriately on the freedom and rights of others.

Already, then, most societies must condemn those value systems which honor homicide, theft, or unprovoked violence as normal and acceptable behaviors.

Nonetheless, by extrapolation, P.C. dogma must defend the legitimacy of violent subcultures and their corresponding belief systems. For while their moral codes deviate from the societal norm, their

very existence supposedly demands our respect as a dissimilar, but equally valid system of values.

In other words, the movement's emphasis on the subjective necessarily erodes its license to convict and censure even the most moronic and contemptuous of views. To explain, gangs, drug cartels, terrorists, the KKK, and serial killers can all justify their actions within their belief systems, many of which prove remarkably sophisticated.

Obviously, the politically correct do not intend their theory to apply to these systems, whose very expression causes physical harm to others. But to preserve consistency across its doctrine, the politically correct cannot condemn such groups or individuals.

Ironically, then, if we extend P.C. philosophy universally, it eventually must recognize and respect those prejudiced and mali-

cious views which it originally sought to eradicate.

In sum, the politically correct do not present a sound philosophical foundation from which they can attack those who continue to offend and persecute the less powerful members of society.

How, then, can such prejudices be progressively eliminated from society? I believe we must copy the methods evinced throughout human history—through proper legal sanctions and adamant social denunciation.

In the case of the United States, we have already seen that institutional discipline against speech directly violates our Constitution. To my knowledge, not a single court has upheld private policies which warrant punishment or expulsion for verbal or written insults and statements. Apparently, then, we are left only with the latter alternative.

Fortunately, I believe that if exercised consistently, social disapproval and censure would abolish a significant amount of the prejudice lingering in our society. Instead of castigating from afar, as the politically correct now propose, I would rather see a one-on-one confrontation with ourselves, our friends and our acquaintances.

If we assume the risks implied in philosophical conviction, and if we can overcome our inhibition to express disapproval, we will already begin to extinguish those behaviors which we secretly judge as offensive and inappropriate.

But until we abandon the tentative, subjective views of the P.C. movement, we cannot accomplish their goals. Until we have the courage to assert that some value systems are inherently superior we cannot eradicate opposing philosophies which violate the rights of others. And ultimately, inappropriate language as a symptom may diminish as the greater problem of prejudice is addressed in a confrontational, individual context.

Nathan Seay



## A guide to the Olympics.

I must start out this week by apologizing to my fellow reverends in the Universal Life Church.

I did not mean to imply that I was the only one who can marry you on campus. I have been struck with a missionary zeal and have been ordaining people whenever I get the chance. There are several men of the cloth (no women yet) wandering around this campus with the light of the world burning bright in their chests.

So, if you are struck with the desire to get married and I am unavailable, simply shout, "Is there a reverend in the house?" and perhaps someone will be able to help you. Now on to my article:

Like most of the world, I have been keeping an eye on the Winter Olympics. I don't claim to be a particularly bright or observant person, but some of the sports that are being televised just don't make much sense to me.

Take the luger, for example. How does one go about becoming a luger? Does the USOC send scouts out to the hills of Colorado looking for exceptionally fast sledders? "Look at that one, Charlie. He's already steering with his feet. We can skip that part of his training altogether. I think we have a prodigy on our hands here!"

I also think that whoever picks the lugers of the world goes about it entirely the wrong way. If I were in charge of picking lugers, my team would consist of the fattest men on the planet. I might even hire Richard Simmons to do my scouting.

The whole goal is to go fast, right? Anybody who has taken a physics class can tell you heavy things slide down a hill faster than light things. (Don't ask me, though. I don't know physics from phenylketonuria.)

I also could never picture myself going to any of those speed events to watch it live. I couldn't imagine anything more boring than standing around, waiting for a blur of color to come flashing by at eighty miles an hour. There is no way anyone can convince me that they can see anything.

At best you may be able to identify the primary color of the uniform, which each country makes sure has absolutely nothing to do with its national colors. I just don't understand what the spider webs all over the US Ski Team have to do with this country. Maybe their dorm has flies.

The biathlon is a sport that completely baffles me. I tried one day to map the development of athlons from bi to tri to dec. Don't waste your time. The only connection I could come up with is that people who compete in these events have way too much time on their hands and most of them can beat me up. But whoever made the connection between cross country skiing and shooting a gun must have been from some other country.

Everyone in America knows that the most natural thing to combine with guns is alcohol. I wish that an ingenious Southerner came up with the biathlon. Now, that would be a sport worth watching. The competitors would have to finish a case of beer and then shoot things. The bigger and more dangerous something is, the more points it's worth. Soon the entrants would turn the guns on each other and we'd have a blood bath. I guess I can see why the Olympics would turn that one down, but it would be a great way to get rid of some rednecks.

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Let's face it: evil is sexy. Who wants to date milk and cookies when you can have beer and pizza?



## Rob Spach David Bowie and the Statement of Purpose.

Oh God, please, no, not the dreaded "c" word! It must be a Bill Clinton-David Bowie conspiracy, advocating and popularizing such a thing! Ch-ch-changes! Should the Statement of Purpose be changed? How about the policy on trustees being Christians? Changed? Oh, no! How could we even think about making any ch-ch-changes to such a perfect place as Davidson College?

Or, alternately: Man, this place sucks. All this talk about Christianity as the basis for a statement of purpose is a farce. Those holier-than-thou "Christian" trustees just don't know where to get off! What we need around here is some inclusiveness--nothing tied to a specific tradition, just things like a call for justice, for diversity, based on objective principles we can all agree on. If this place needs anything, it needs change.

Okay, so I've presented caricatures of two polar positions, and I admit they're unfair. But it kept you reading this far into an article about what I think is basically an identity crisis at this college. Since its beginnings, Davidson has been Presbyterian-related, but as our society becomes multicultural and pluralistic, we're being forced to ask ourselves whether it makes sense to base our self-understanding on such a specific tradition.

Instead of celebrating our heritage, I want to reflect on institutional identity in our postmodern intellectual climate. Unless folks have had their heads in the sand for a decade, they recognize we can't have an "objective" perspective on ourselves and our world (and that applies in both the humanities and the sciences). We all bring categories and assumptions—in a sense,

we all bring "faith" claims—to the positions we hold.

To assert that we can stand in a completely objective position is intellectually naïve or dishonest. So, our choice isn't whether we

**"...we all bring 'faith' claims...to the positions we hold."**

want to adopt a neutral, tradition-free perspective as we formulate our self-understanding, but rather, which of the non-neutral perspectives is most appropriate given where we've come from and

where we want to be headed as a college.

I'm convinced the Christian tradition gives us a terrific perspective from which to see our identity. I can already hear the objections about Christianity being narrow because of its truth claims about things like the identity of Jesus.

For example, isn't one inherently prejudiced against members of other religions if one is a Christian? I would emphatically answer no. One may not agree with the truth claims those religions make, but disagreement isn't the same as narrowness or prejudice. You can believe something passionately and still respect the dignity of others who believe differently, and even encourage them to voice their perspectives. In fact, it's precisely when we express our positions with integrity, humility, and charity that the most significant interaction and education—and not just ideological shouting matches—can take place.

That fact is one of the reasons that Davidson would be poorer if it cut its ties with the Christian tradition. The values that I have just named don't come out of thin air;

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