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Religion: A new place for old dirt

Joe Thomas

I discovered a peculiar thing about human nature the other day. Strangely enough, I learned it managing a fraternity house. Let me see if I can explain... Once or twice a week we all gather together with as many men, women and freshmen as possible and celebrate at our fraternity. During the celebrating we have a lot of dirt around, shake the walls a bit and generally make quite a mess. Then, the guys usually come and go to bed and wait for me to call them in the morning. We then gather together again in smaller numbers, (in much less of a celebratory mood) and rearrange the dirt so that it's less noticeable. It's really quite tricky, but we have mastered scheduling an hour to an hour and a half picking dirt up in one place and gently (due to hangovers), quietly, moving it to another spot to prepare for our next celebration. It is really quite ingenious, because for a minimal effort we can maintain a house and throw as many parties as we like. Rarely does anyone consider the house. I think it even has a peculiar appeal; after all, people return week after week and see the same dirt they saw the week before, only they have the novelty of seeing it in a different light, so to speak. Not very much about it changes. In the simplest sense, I think that we as people are very similar to my fraternity house. We spend a great deal of time in the emotional and spiritual "party" of the world, never ceasing in our zeal to experience the excitement of the moment, the fast pace of pleasure. In the quiet of our hearts, in odd moments, we become suddenly aware of our shortcomings, the telltale dirt of

our lives. I say in odd moments, because it's usually not accompanied by a trumpet blast, or the descending of a gavel to strike a judge's bench. It is something more akin to a tear in the eyes of a friend we've hurt or failed somehow, or the sudden realization that we've looked out for ourselves first and been alarmingly, quite "normally" ...selfish. Yet, I believe that each of us knows we ought not to be that way (however dim or strong that feeling may be), and that is why we are so surprised at ourselves, and often dismayed. At the end of our "parties," our heart stands in the aftermath, confused and dazed, and slightly empty and dirty. The phenomena bears many cultural names (Darwin called it "Unsatisfied social instinct"), but the simplest is guilty conscience.

The dilemma deepens when our agendas and good intentions fail to allay the weight of it, because they so often fail. I think each of us can identify with the feeling of striving and striving to do better the next time and seeing that nothing has really changed.

That is why we can struggle at Davidson to ease racial tensions, we can initiate programs, and educate people (as so many noble efforts do) and still see persistent hatred, despite all our best intentions. It is why, at Davidson, we encounter the same social ills of alcoholism, drug use, greed, selfishness and ultimately despair that we do anywhere in the world. We are at a level of education envied by most of the free world, but is there a wise man among us? It seems that hearts remain the same.

In the ultimate sense, there isn't anything new under the sun, as each generation moves dirt around and the ills of society recur again and again. It seems at an individual and societal level, we need new hearts.

That is the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the

man our school calls "the central fact of human history, giving purpose, order, and value to the whole life." For those who are broken-hearted by their own sin, there is someone who is not under the sun, and who will bring the newness our hearts long for. As St. Paul declared to the Corinthians--Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come.... we implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Everything else, alas, is merely moving dirt around, but as the prophet Isaiah foresaw almost 800 years before Christ's death:

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,

yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by Him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions
he was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment which brought us peace was upon him.

And by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him the
iniquity of us all....(Isaiah 53:4-6).

For that reason, I feel safe in saying God is able and willing to cleanse the dirt from our lives, and because of that there is truly hope for a new beginning and the house we call our lives.

Joe Thomas is a senior biology major from Morristown, N.J.

We need to "blur" our sense of racial identity

Clay Adams

There is only one way to end racism, and that is to end racial isolation and segregation. Spelled out, this means that the yellow, white, brown and black people who share this planet must no longer think that there is any ultimate value in being the member of a particular race, independent of the others. An idealistic, reasonable impossibility, you may accuse me of bringing hope in, but I see no alternative. As long as we see ourselves as of particular races that must cling together, we will always harbour the constrictive instincts toward segregation and racial insulation, creating gut-level hostility that will never allow us to embrace each other. I therefore make a call to members of all races to endeavor in a conscious effort to blur their sense of racial identity. For example, whites, learn about Afri-

can and African-American ideas and take what appeals to you and integrate it in your lives, and then do the same with every other race. Blacks, do the same. Same, Yellow, Brown, et. al.. Some of us will find that we adopt a whole group of ideas that change our lives in ways we had never before considered. If everyone does this, then pretty soon (a couple of generations, maybe) individual racial ideas will become obsolete as people incorporate ideas according to their personalities, their interests, in short, according to forces much more constructive and positive than any limited by racial identity.

Racial discrimination will become the exception. The real movers and shakers, the cutting edge leaders and changers will be the ones who find expressions for their personal identity in a multitude of cultures and histories. These people will have resources that will propel them to new heights, new powers based on their ability to move beyond the simple fact of their race.

In the utopic ending to this scenario, there will be so many interracial marriages and intra-cultural expressions that few people will have a single race's blood in their bodies, or a single race's thoughts in their heads, but will have a patch-work racial lineage. We will see characteristics of every race glorified through this process and the whole of the human race become stronger, more sensitive and more expressive.

At Davidson, we are blessed with students from approximately 30 different countries. We have men and women of many races and racial mixtures. We also have some fantastic academic courses that reach past European influences and white American male history. As Davidson cements itself in the highest circles of education, it must cultivate free-thinking students who embrace the complexity of themselves and who have "selves" grounded in ideas that are more substantial than any racial identity.

Clay Adams is a junior English major from Atlanta, Ga.

A counseling job may be just what you need

Flake Sherrill

It's not too early... It is not too early to start thinking about a summer job. Some of the best opportunities for rewarding summer work need not be hard to find. Last year I found such a rewarding job that I want to pass it on to all Davidson students. I worked as a counselor at Camp Sea Gull. Counseling offers many opportunities. It is a time to relax, a time to earn some money and a time to make numerous friends. However, these opportunities are not what makes being a counselor at Camps Sea Gull/Seafarer rewarding. Your campers are what will make

your Sea Gull/Seafarer experience memorable.

The experience you gain as a counselor at Sea Gull/Seafarer will augment your resume no matter what career you enter. At Sea Gull/Seafarer you will learn how to make everyone feel important. You will learn how to turn a bad experience into a good one. You will learn how to instill morals into an individual. You will learn how to work with all personality types, shaping the good and attempting to eliminate the bad.

These are skills that most summer jobs cannot offer. These are skills much needed in the marketplace today.

These are tools that will help anyone's careers.

On February 14th, 1990 Camps Sea Gull and Seafarer will have two people from their administration on campus. Those individuals are Tim Joyce and

Sharon Payne. If you yearn to have a summer job that will be one of life's best experiences, then stop by the foyer of the student Union anytime between 1 and 4 p.m. on the 14th. If you cannot meet Tim or Sharon but are interested, then call or stop Flake Sherrill (SNT-111, 896-6501).

Also, if you want to talk about counselors' experiences at Camps Sea Gull/Seafarer, then just stop and ask the following Davidson students: Robert Marshall, Bailie Keiter, Steven Summers, Suzanne Spivey, Max Fisher, Sarah Nall, Gabie Vaughan or Flake Sherrill. Robert Marshall has worked at both Camp Sea Gull for boys and Camp Seafarer for girls..

Flake Sherrill is a senior biology major from Statesville, N.C.

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