Inclusion?

By Matt Reynolds
CRUSADER OPINIONS STAFF

Here at Holy Cross, the student body is always involved with something important. We’re as busy with our slate of extracurricular activities for which we stand in line during our studies. We’re playing sports on the athletic fields, improving our fitness in the gym, lending our ears to distinguished Islam to the Muslim public. Our clubs and causes behind which we rally. We all have the opportunity to pursue our specific activities of choice.

Unfortunately, however, the nature of activities in some organizations can preclude us from any worthwhile participation. Human beings have limitations. We can’t possess every skill. We can’t embrace every issue or take every side. I happen to be a lousy dancer (among other things (this is certainly not my only weakness), and therefore I’ll never become involved with the ballroom dancing program. I understand that my presence would be received eagerly at practices and that every effort would be made to develop my dancing techniques. But at the same time, I’m fully aware that I would be a liability and a hindrance to the program. I am willing to make my decisions on whether to allocate my time and energy to specific extracurriculars should reflect some common limitations.

In other words, we shouldn’t stick our noses where they don’t belong. If the football team allowed every ambitious youngster to play a few downs on the field at quarterback, without weeding out those prospects who couldn’t throw the ball straight, our beloved Crusaders wouldn’t be a threat to most high-school squads.

Should Holy Cross be burdened with the expense of a string of losing seasons in exchange for the benefit of gaining an unlimited equal chance to play? Of course not. But in a society where challenges must be addressed in the most rational forms of discrimination, such as the line-up tinkering practiced by Coach Allen, athletics remains one of the few arenas in which individuals may be excluded from consideration on reasons other than ability. The way forward here is by virtue of inclusion, be awarded positions for which they are unqualified, be at the expense of more skilled applicants.

Ironically, a political measure designed to eliminate prejudice in the workplace has actually been morphed into one of its most powerful instruments. Prejudice, by definition, indicates judgment based on the cover rather than the book. As long as affirmative action exists, books will be gauged in terms of their covers’ appearance, regardless of the quality of their text. And employers are thus prevented from hiring someone enough to make a fair decision.

In this way, inclusion encourages unjust bias. But in other instances, it has also prohibited society from harboring potential talent.

Following his retirement, former Colorado football coach Bill McCarty found Promise Keepers, an organization devoted to promotion of the Bible, but not inclusion. His crime? McCarty envisioned a program run by men, run for men, and run with an intent to confer spiritual status on the organizations that hired and paid him. Women were barred from meetings because issues pertaining to their needs wouldn’t be discussed.

Sure, he could have created an equally powerful Promise Keepers chapter on behalf of women exclusively. He could have reserved a role for wives every bit as powerful as those of husbands. But not when inclusion is be a vehicle upon which unaffiliated and altogether dangerous minority viewpoints gain momentum.

Since the inception of affirmative action, society has regrettably quashed the acceptable level of minority representation with peremptory quotas. Granted, deserving minority candidates should never be denied access to job opportunities commensurate with their level of expertise and qualifications. However, we would understand serving minority candidates, by virtue of inclusion, be awarded positions for which they are unqualified, be at the expense of more skilled applicants.

The homosexual community is an example of such a community within society in general as any. They have pressed the opportunity to serve in the military. They have sought positions of leadership within the current administration. Yet, apparently, a plea on behalf of the homosexual community attempted to earn president Bush’s proposed tax cut for religious organizations committed to social service, within which they would have an understanding limited role.

But life is a series of choices, all of which have definite consequences. Choosing to engage in the homosexual lifestyle could result in the forfeiture of privileges for which its proponents implore. Choosing to engage in any other kind of homophobia could result in any person on earth without being a good neighbor to the people who have been good neighbors to you.

The Black Student Union at Holy Cross allows students of all racial backgrounds to attend its meetings and activities, although its chief objective is to preserve and promote African-American culture. However, since the organization exists primarily for blacks, it would absolutely justify excluding other racial groups from membership.

One can only wonder about homosexuals, women, ethnic minorities, or anyone else advocating inclusion? Is it really sticking their noses where they don’t belong? Is it not an infringement upon the rights of others?

To be Christian in these times is to emulate the spirit of Jesus and play our part in bringing about the triumph of peace over violence, of love over oppression. To be Christian is to transcend the temptations of revenge. Two thousand years ago, Jesus taught this, and most people today still accept this unorthodox view just as pacifists are today.

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