

“Responding to Root Causes - Not Symptoms: White Supremacy as a Root Cause of Racism”

By

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Problems are solved most effectively by identifying and responding to root causes. For example, medical doctors are most successful when they identify and treat directly the root cause of an illness. A manager on a production floor can prevent production flaws when the root cause of the flaw is identified and corrected. Therefore, it seems anomalous that the response to Black American problems is, quite often, to treat symptoms, not root causes.

Getting down to brass tacks, most Americans will tell you that racism persists, and that racism contributes to the adverse outcomes that Black Americans experience. Moreover, if they are true to themselves, most Americans will identify the root cause of racism as “White Supremacy.” That is, racism exists because of the unfounded notion that Whites are superior to Blacks. Given that most Americans conclude that White Supremacy is a root cause of problems that Black Americans face, why are so many efforts initiated to solve Black American problems without addressing this root cause?

Black Americans are instructed that if they become educated, then racism goes away for them. They are told that if they are able to acquire enough wealth, then racism goes away for them. Granted, a portion of the Black American population has been able to acquire education and/or to obtain a certain amount of wealth such that racism becomes somewhat less problematic for them. However, why should anyone in America be denied opportunities (assuming that they qualify for the opportunity), and have their life’s aspirations dashed as a result of racism which has White Supremacy as its root cause.¹

White racists, that is White Supremacists, will argue that there are no barriers to opportunity and no boundaries to advancement in America because there are laws to prevent discrimination. Two responses to this contention are worth entertaining: (1) If a law is required, then the society has a problem that needs to be addressed by attacking the root cause; and (2) a law, alone, is insufficient to resolve a societal problem. On the latter point, consider that, to be effective, each law must be buttressed by enforcement. How many cops do we have on the street to prevent traffic violations? Compare that number with the number of “cops” in our society who are tasked with preventing discrimination?

So we have identified White Supremacy as a root cause of Black Americans problems, correct? The logical next question that should come to mind is “How do we eradicate White Supremacy?” It would take a lengthy discourse to describe completely how White Supremacy should be dismantled. However, a few basic, but key, steps toward eradicating White Supremacy in America include:

¹ An assumption here is that White Supremacy applies only to Whites of a certain breeding and stature. That is, if you are trailer poor and White, you too do not enjoy the benefits of being “White.”

1. Revising the economic, political, educational, and social circumstances that permit White Americans to operate from a position of White Supremacy.
2. Conducting a radical restructuring of the psychological and cultural milieu that creates, maintains, and extends a White Supremacy mentality in America.
3. Remedying past wrongs that were committed under the cover of White Supremacy and create an “even playing field.”
4. Infusing America (communities, places of worship, schools, and workplaces) with a psychology and culture that creates, maintains, and extends the truth of human equality.

Of course, this all sounds great from a theoretical perspective. On a practical level, wealthy individuals, particularly Whites, are opposed to such changes because they are bound to be the losers. On the other hand, these are the very individuals who are usually the first to tell you that racism and White Supremacy is wrong. Yet, they are also the first to make excuses about operationalizing changes that would eradicate racism and White Supremacy at the root.

Unfortunately, it is this type of hypocrisy that will ultimately contribute to the unraveling of the America that we know today. Why? Because a nation cannot grow and remain strong when its foundation is hypocritical. In addition, many Americans are becoming more and more dissatisfied because they recognize that material wealth alone, especially when it is obtained by exploiting others through White Supremacy, does not bring satisfaction. Finally, those who are the recipients of harm caused by White Supremacy are coming to learn to respond to the root causes of their problems, not just the symptoms.

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