

BEN & JERRY'S/KAEPERNICK ARE DISABLING BLACKS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on how African American youth are being upended by their so-called allies:

There is no racial or ethnic group in American history that has made significant socio-economic success without first believing in their ability to do so. Most of them faced bias and discrimination at one time or another—some more than others—but all of them overcame adversity by plugging away, refusing to let the forces of bigotry get the best of them. That is why it is obscene to see the so-called allies of African Americans sell them a narrative that effectively immobilizes them, leaving them wallowing in victimhood.

Ben & Jerry's has paired with Colin Kaepernick to promote the most destructive environment imaginable for African Americans to negotiate. If they intentionally sought to disable blacks, they could not do a better job than their recently launched endeavor. I stumbled upon their effort quite by accident.

While walking to work the other day, I noticed a huge billboard sponsored by Ben & Jerry's outside Penn Station. It sported a big portrait of Kaepernick with his fist clenched featuring the inscription "I Know My Rights" in large letters. This is a marketing strategy for a new Ben & Jerry's dessert, one that feeds into Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Camp project; the latter makes available online for purchase such items as "I Know My Rights" t-shirts, socks, hoodies, wind jackets, track pants and handbags.

For many years, I taught African American students, both at the elementary and collegiate level, and was personally involved with them in after-school programs and athletic events. I know the hardships that many of these students

endured and how they struggled to overcome them. I also saw them succeed in Catholic schools. They succeeded in large part because they were not coddled, not indoctrinated into a cult of victimhood. Indeed, much was demanded of them, and most rose to the occasion.

The worst thing we can do to black students is to convince them of their inefficacy, or their inability to take command of their lives. It is psychologically debilitating. That is what Ben & Jerry's and Kaepernick are doing. By instructing black youth to focus exclusively on their rights, saying not a word about responsibilities—either to themselves or society—they are enfeebling them, rendering them hopeless.

Beating up on whitey may yield ephemeral pleasure, but it is no prescription for success. When George Floyd was killed, the ice cream makers and the retired athlete jumped on the bandwagon, arguing that what happened was the result of systemic racism and white supremacy. Both called for the police to be defunded; Kaepernick called for the prisons to be emptied as well.

It is not easy to see how Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Camp is to succeed by adopting these proposals. Included in his "10-Point System" are such goals as "You Have the Right to be Safe" and "You Have the Right to be Alive." He needs to go into Chicago on a weekend night, bullhorn in hand, and tell the black community that these outcomes can best be achieved by getting rid of cops and jails.

Ian Rowe is a black scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who for the last decade ran a network of public charter schools in the South Bronx and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Last month he wrote an article that nicely sums up why minority students succeed or fail.

"The American dream is premised on the idea that a young person can become an agent of her or his own destiny. This can

only happen if vital mediating institutions like strong families, schools and faith-based organizations demand excellence, and shape the character of this rising generation to build self-sufficiency and resilience.”

Furthermore, Rowe notes that “a growing number of young people are being led to believe that structural barriers around race, class and gender have rigged the system against them, and that they are powerless to compete at the highest level because of immutable characteristics like their race.”

He is absolutely right. And for this outrageous condition we can thank the likes of Ben & Jerry’s and Colin Kaepernick. Ultimately, they and their ilk are doing far more damage to African Americans than the Klan could ever hope for.