

SALVATION ARMY ELITES TURN LEFT

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on his report on The Salvation Army:

The Catholic League's headquarters is located directly across the street from Penn Station and Macy's in New York City. Every Christmas season we look forward to The Salvation Army men and women in uniform ringing their bells, and often dancing to Christmas music, aside their red kettles, collecting money for the needy. Unfortunately, there have been some organizational changes that are giving lots of people pause this Christmas season.

As always, it is the elites who are the problem. The average volunteer is just as good as ever, doing God's work.

Earlier this year, the International Salvation Army issued a lengthy report, "Let's Talk About Racism," that is aimed at everyone associated with the organization. It is meant as a discussion guide.

Part of it is commendable: Scripture is frequently cited on the need to treat everyone equally, regardless of race. But it is interposed with the same kind of critical race theory polemics that is cause for concern all across the nation. Instead of combating racism, it is unwittingly contributing to it.

The report is no longer available on the internet, [but we obtained a copy](#) before it was taken down by The Salvation Army. It was taken down because of the backlash the report engendered. On Thanksgiving Day, the top brass issued a statement, "The Salvation Army's Response to False Claims on the Topic of Racism." This was simply dishonest.

Instead of apologizing for adopting the politics of the hard-core left, the elites doubled down by lashing out at its critics.

“They [the critics] have claimed that we believe our donors should apologize for their skin color, that The Salvation Army believes America is an inherently racist society, and that we have abandoned our Christian faith for one ideology or another. Those claims are simply false, and they distort the very goal of our work.” Not so fast.

In the Introduction to the report, on p. 3, advice is given to their flock, or what they call Salvationists. One of the items suggest that they “Lament, repent and *apologize* for biases or racist ideologies held and actions committed (my italic).” This is more than an assumption: throughout the document, as will be detailed, the understanding is that white people are racists, thus necessitating the need to “apologize.”

It is similarly disingenuous to say that the critics are wrong when they say that “The Salvation Army believes America is an inherently racist society.” On p. 3 in Appendix D, it explicitly says of America that “Our foundations were built on racism, and it is still strongly felt in every aspect of American life.” There is no other way to read that other than to say that “America is an inherently racist society.”

While it would be unfair to say The Salvation Army has “abandoned [its] Christian faith for one ideology or another,” it is true that its deep dive into critical race theory has created several blind spots. For example, on p. 1, Appendix A, it offers a morally neutral interpretation of the Affordable Care Act.

One would think that a Christian organization would at least mention, if not condemn, the ObamaCare healthcare mandate forcing religious nonprofits, such as the Little Sisters of the Poor, to include abortion-inducing drugs in their

healthcare plan. But there is no such mention.

It is abundantly clear that the authors of this report are generally ignorant of both the natural and social sciences. Indeed, it reads like a tract, not a document informed by science.

On p. 2 of the Introduction, it says race and racism “have no basis in science or biblical thought.” On p. 2 of Session One, it says, “Race is not biological. It is a social construct.”

It would be more accurate to say that the consensus in scientific circles is that the term race has both genetic and environmental roots.

A.L. Kroeber, the distinguished cultural anthropologist, was clearly aligned with those who emphasize nurture over nature, yet even he admitted that “race is a valid biological concept.” Furthermore, he studied under the early 20th century anthropologist Franz Boas, who, while adhering to a belief in cultural relativism, nonetheless said that race was “a scientific concept [that] applies only to the biological groupings of human types.”

If race were purely a social construct, why is it that racial groups differ widely on their susceptibility to certain diseases? There is more at work than mere environmental matters when we learn that sickle-cell anemia is more prevalent among African Americans than it is whites.

Why is it that this disease affects 1 in 13 African Americans but only 1 in 100 Hispanic Americans? Sickle-cell anemia is a function of hemoglobin A (HbA), the usual form of hemoglobin, and hemoglobin S (HbS), a variant group. Is hemoglobin a social construct? If it were, then why in my doctoral training in sociology was hemoglobin never mentioned?

A more honest approach, to cite one example, is found in an article in the October 26, 2020 medical publication, *Stroke*.

"Identifying Genetic and Biological Determinants of Race-Ethnic Disparities in Stroke in the United States" was authored by five men and women who hold PhDs and MDs. One of their conclusions gets directly to my point. "Although the Black-White disparities in stroke have been known for at least a half century," they write, "only recently have studies focused on biological and genetic factors that contribute to racial disparities in stroke."

In other words, the notion that race is nothing more than a social construct is plainly false.

In the Introduction, the term racism is given a fairly standard definition, but on p. 3, Session One, the report slides into politics. Racism is defined as "The prejudiced treatment, stereotyping or discrimination of POC [People Of Color] on the basis of race."

If a sociology student of mine were to offer this definition, he would fail. Since when does racism apply only to "People Of Color"? According to this definition, "People Of Color" are incapable of being racists. That would mean that Louis Farrakhan, the notorious black anti-Semite, is not a racist. No one believes this save those drunk on ideology.

The world is not divided between white racists and their victims. Indeed, to imply as such is a prime example of racism. Furthermore, the term "People Of Color" is meaningless. Asians are at the top of the educational and socio-economic scale, and African Americans are at the bottom. So what exactly do they have in common? That they are not white?

On p. 5 of the Glossary we learn that a racist is "a person who belongs to a dominant or privileged group that discriminates against people of other races, or someone who believes that a particular race is superior to another."

The latter part is true, but it is absurd to imply that a

person cannot be a racist unless he belongs to “a dominant or privileged group.” Lori Lightfoot is the black mayor of Chicago and she expressly said in May 2021 that she would not grant interviews to white reporters (she rescinded the rule two days later amid a backlash). What she did was racist, and there is no getting around it. She discriminated against white reporters.

It is ironic to note that this report, which was written to combat racism, smacks of racism. The bias against white people is palpable. “Whiteness and White racialized identity refer to the way that White people, their customs, culture and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups are compared.” That is what it says on p. 6 of the Glossary.

This is a prime example of racism. Not only is “Whiteness” a contrived slang term designed to denigrate all Caucasians, there is no such thing as white “customs, culture and beliefs.” The customs, culture and beliefs of the Irish are not that of the Ukrainians. For that matter, it is racist to assume that the Chinese and Japanese share the same customs, culture and beliefs. They manifestly do not.

One of the biggest problems with this report—another clear reflection of critical race theory—is the propensity to see racism everywhere. On p. 3, Session 4, it labels as an example of “racial inequities” the fact that more blacks have died of COVID-19 more than whites.

One reason for this disparity is that the obesity rate among whites is 30.2% and among blacks it is 42.4%. This matters because there is a positive correlation between obesity and COVID-19, meaning the more obese someone is the more likely he is to get the disease.

Similarly, on p. 3, Session 2, the report offers as an example of racism the fact that blacks are much more likely to be incarcerated than whites, and that they don’t do nearly as

well in school. There is a reason for this: blacks commit a disproportionate amount of violent crimes and they test at the bottom in tests measuring educational achievement.

Lest someone think I am implying that blacks are naturally given to crime, or that they are not as intelligent as whites, let me hasten to add that that is not what I mean. Both conditions are easily explainable, and they have nothing to do with race.

It is the family that matters, not race. Men of any race who come from fatherless families are much more likely to be involved in crime, and students who are raised in one-parent families generally do not do as well in school as those raised in two-parent families. For reasons tied to public policies that have undermined the black family—policies advocated by the “anti-racists”—most black kids are raised in female-headed households.

On p. 3, Session 4, the report lists George Floyd as a victim of police brutality, and on p. 1 Appendix C it lists Michael Brown and Eric Garner (as well as three largely unknown persons) as victims of police racism. Yet in each case there were factors having nothing to do with race that led to their deaths. In the case of Brown, it has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the police did nothing wrong. Even the Obama administration’s Department of Justice came to this conclusion.

It is clear that the authors are in over their heads. On p. 4, Session 5, they say that it is a problem when people do not intermix with those of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This is astonishing. They have just unwittingly condemned the Chinese. Wherever they live, they choose to live in “Chinatowns” (quite unlike the Japanese who assimilate). Does this make them racists?

If this isn’t bad enough, the report ends with a list of

recommended books on the subject of combating racism, many of which actually promote the very racist ideas that this document promotes.

The Salvation Army elites have done a disservice to this great organization. They need to do more than withdraw this dreadful report: They need to make a public statement apologizing for the damage they have done to the status of the organization and a pledge never again to succumb to left-wing politics.

Contact the International Salvation Army: ihq-communications@salvationarmy.org