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The Fragility of White Fragility - Part 1

By Freddy Davis

Joy Reid, national correspondent for the MSNBC cable news network, and one of its news hosts, claimed that the black speakers who spoke at the 2020 Republican National Convention were "trotted out" in order to make white people "feel good about white nationalism." In other words, in her mind, it was an attempt by white people to use black people for political advantage.

Chelsea Clinton recently participated in a "Women for Biden" national organizing call with Massachusetts Democrat Representative Ayanna Pressley. In that call, she specifically stated that she wants her children to recognize that they are "white children of privilege," and is committed to raising them in a way to help "erode" that privilege throughout their lives.

What in the world is this all about? Regardless of whether or not we have achieved perfection in the area of race relations, the biblically based American ideal has always been to strive for a color-blind society – one in which people, in the immortal words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Throughout American history, huge strides have been made to move us in that direction. We have certainly not fully arrived at that goal, but at least we have it as a shared ideal to strive toward. And we have moved toward it in ways that are unprecedented in the history of the world.

Well, at least that used to be the ideal. It seems that with the increasing prominence of naturalistic beliefs in American society, the biblically based ideal has been pushed aside to be replaced by a

new one that views reality through a naturalistic lens – one that evaluates the value of groups (not individuals) based on the preferences of certain cultural elites.

One of the manifestations of this new ideal is the belief that all white people are racists, and that they live in a world where they are privileged. And to maintain that privilege, they resort to all kinds of immoral tactics. Based on an idea that seems to be ascending in society, these tactics are expressions of "White Fragility."

To more fully explain the concept of White Fragility, white sociologist Robin Diangelo wrote a book called *White Fragility*. Diangelo was formerly professor of multicultural education at Westfield State University in Westfield, Massachusetts. Since then, she has become a consultant and trainer on issues of racial and social justice – especially on the topic of white privilege.

Diangelo makes no bones about her own worldview perspective. She is a committed Naturalist, and self-identifies as a white progressive. She also does not shy away from the fact that she writes from a collectivist point of view – that the collective has priority over the individual. In fact, in order to make her case that all white people are racists, she actually admits that she is not able to do it on an individual basis, but must "generalize" her points in order to make her argument work. Additionally, she doesn't even try to give coherent reasons why her perspective is true or right. She simply accepts it as a doctrine of faith and asserts it to be fact.

You would think that those reading her book would at least want some objective reasoning as to why we should agree with her. I know the entire time I was

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reading I kept looking for that rationale – and was very frustrated that she never gave one. But, obviously, I was not her intended audience. She was writing specifically to white progressives who already buy into a naturalistic worldview – people who would simply accept her reasoning and follow like sheep. Apparently that has turned out to be a pretty good audience for her, as her book, as of this writing, has sold nearly 800,000 copies.

There was one other thing that I kept longing for as I read the book. I wanted to know what the end game should be. If I wanted to follow her lead and accept her premise that all white people are racist, what outcome should I be striving for? That kind of conclusion also never emerged. The closest she ever came to stating a desired outcome was "to have white people see their white fragility." Well, okay, but to what end? I still don't know – other than to feel bad about the fact that I am a white person, and about the white privilege that I have because I am white.

There is a serious problem, however, with the very notion of White Fragility. The problem is that it emerges from a set of beliefs that do not reflect reality. It begins with a false belief about the nature of ultimate reality, and based on that false belief, continues on with a false belief about the nature of man and the ultimate human beings can achieve in life.

Why Does Deangelo Use Naturalism as a Basis for Her Thesis?

I noted earlier that Robin Diangelo is a sociologist. Sociology is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society. This kind of study of human society does not automatically have a worldview bias. In fact, it is possible to study human society using the underlying

assumptions of any worldview. What will be different when using different assumptions are the conclusions that will be drawn concerning the nature of society. Every worldview perspective has its own unique way of evaluating the nature of human society.

Virtually every public educational institution in modern America now uses Naturalism as its underlying foundation for evaluating every subject area – including sociology. But when it comes to social sciences like sociology, Naturalism has a very serious problem. The naturalistic worldview asserts that the only thing that exists is the natural universe operating by natural laws. It is assumed that these natural laws can ultimately account for every part of reality. Naturalists, of course, acknowledge that human knowledge has not yet advanced far enough to have figured everything out, but ultimately, using the scientific method, we will be able to understand every part of reality.

So as social scientists, sociologists attempt to use the scientific method to study human society. The only problem is, there are non-material aspects to human society that cannot be studied using the scientific method. The best these "scientists" can do is conduct surveys and polling to determine trends and averages – but none of these kinds of evaluations are capable of determining *why* societies are the way they are. This does not, of course, keep sociologists from asserting conclusions "as if" they knew why particular outcomes emerge. But those conclusions are not actually based on scientific analysis – they are based on the naturalistic presuppositions of those researchers. They are philosophical statements, not scientific ones.

And such is the nature of Diangelo's conclusions about racism and White Fragility. She came to her conclusions based on beliefs that she brought into her research, not on any research it-

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self. So with that background, let's have a look at her beliefs about White Fragility.

What is White Fragility?

To begin understanding White Fragility, we need to have a look at Diangelo's notion of white privilege. To her, white privilege is defined as the societal advantage that comes with being part of the group that sets the social norms in a society. In America that would be white people. So, since white people established society's norms, anyone who is white is automatically conferred privilege, irrespective of wealth, gender, or any other factor – purely because they are white.

In her thinking, those who have this kind of societal advantage don't want to give it up, so they implement all kinds of measures to maintain it. Based on her beliefs, in order for white people to maintain their advantage, they have to set up systems that disadvantage all other groups. This has led to a societal system that particularly disadvantages people of color – especially blacks. This systematic societal structure is referred to as systemic racism. Diangelo considers that, based on systemic racism, ALL white people are racist since they are white and participate in white privilege – even if it is unintentional. It is her contention that the institutions of American society were specifically designed to reproduce racial inequality.

Diangelo considers that there are many elements to this systemic racism, but it begins with basic cultural values. She states that if you are a white person and are against illegal immigration, for traditional family values, against school bussing, and for societal advancement to be based on merit, you are racist. That is because these values prop up white people's standing in society and keep black people from advancing.

White Fragility, then, is defined as the discomfort and defensiveness that white people feel when they are confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice – particularly when they are personally called out on it.

The upcoming part 2 of this article will go more in-depth into the implications of this horrific anti-biblical teaching for believers.

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