

What White Supremacy *Really* Means

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

White supremacy isn't predicated on white people flourishing, [sic] it's just about white people doing better than everyone else. – David Dennis, Newsone.com, July 27, 2018, “Russia Won Because It Understands America’s Obsession with White Supremacy.”

In his excellent book, *The Ethnic Myth*, scholar Stephen Steinberg demonstrated that throughout history, poor and working-class Whites in the U.S. often kicked their best interests to the curb if it meant maintaining their status above Black people. Indeed, White supremacy is largely about identity and *psychology*.

Some of President Donald Trump’s most loyal supporters are poor, White, uneducated paranoid conspiracy theorists. They believe that making America great again largely means bringing a White man back to the White House. (Even a White billionaire.)

These are the same people that bought into the birther notion that Obama was not a U.S. citizen. They believed he was a secret Muslim with ties to extremist Muslims. They made all kinds of racist remarks about him and his wife.

What is truly remarkable is that many of these Trump supporters are *dependent* upon Obamacare. However, in pursuit of White privilege, they are willing to jeopardize their health and their lives.

It is this kind of attitude that led the Black clinical psychologist Bobby E. Wright to suggest that racism is a mental illness. Not surprisingly, most White psychologists did not accept his proposal. Still, it raises the question of why it is that so many Whites are willing to sabotage their lives just to keep others on the bottom. That simply does not seem to be sane behavior.

For most African Americans, the accumulation of wealth has been a colossal failure. For example, according to a story dated September 28, 2017 on the website of the *Washington Post*, White families have about 10 times the net worth of Black families. However, what is especially frightening is that, according

to a story dated September 13, 2017 on the website of the *Guardian*, the median wealth of Black Americans will fall to zero by 2053!

White supremacists are delighted by news of this kind. No matter how poor they might be, they can always identify themselves as belonging to the dominant group. They can feel better about themselves knowing that, regardless of how badly they might have it, there are many others that are suffering even more than they are.

For White supremacists, race trumps everything, including economics and patriotism. This was made especially clear when Trump rallied White bigots by disparaging the family of an American Muslim that died fighting on behalf of the U.S.

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, Trump verbally attacked a Muslim Gold Star family. He antagonized Khizar Khan and Ghazala Khan, parents of Humayun Khan, who, at age 27, died in Iraq in 2004 as he tried to save other soldiers in a car bombing.

It is hard to imagine what more one would have to do to earn the title “hero.” Yet, here was Trump suggesting that Ms. Khan was subservient to Mr. Khan and afraid to speak up about her son’s tragic death. At no point was it clear that Trump and his minions were willing to applaud the fallen soldier’s sacrifice. On the contrary, they seemed to view Captain Khan as just another Muslim undeserving of any special credit. What should have been obvious evidence of Trump’s disrespect for military members, instead fired up his rabid base.

With the exception of Crispus Attucks, the first person to die in the American Revolution, Black patriots have never counted much in the eyes of White supremacists. For example, after W.W. I, many U.S. soldiers returning to the States were victimized by racist abuse, including killings.

White supremacists consider themselves to be *more* American and more patriotic than non-White Americans. They consider non-White Americans to simply be along for the ride as Whites drive the nation to its proper destiny.

Trump has shown that there is now no need for dog-whistle racism in which White supremacists speak to one another in code. In fact, that is why Trump left his Republican competitors in the dust. They were unwilling or unable to descend to Trump's racist depths.

Trump's most loyal supporters – White evangelicals – are those that have the greatest objections to the browning of America. Many of them believe that it is bad for the U.S. that Whites are expected to become a minority during the 21st Century. They are running scared and they will continue to support Trump and his ilk.

White supremacists are not the only ones that feel a need to look down upon others. For instance, extremist Muslim males feel culturally and psychologically obligated to oppress women, even though there is much evidence that equal opportunity for women translates into better societies for all. Many, if not most, sexist Muslims would rather suffer in poverty than bring about equal opportunity for women.

As long as many Whites feel the need to look down upon non-White people, White supremacy will be a problem. It is not primarily about economics. It is primarily about psychology and self-worth by any means necessary.