

June 18, 2015

Victor Davis Hanson in an essay points out the politics and hypocrisy of the left's charges of racism and sexism.

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... Fourth, sexism and racism are abstractions of the liberal elite that rarely translate into praxis. Barack Obama could have done symbolic wonders for the public schools by taking his kids out of Sidwell Friends and putting them into the D.C. school system. Elizabeth Warren could have cemented her feminist populist fides by vowing to stop flipping houses. Feminist Bill Clinton could have renounced all affairs with female subordinates. Eric Holder could have vowed never to use government jets to take his kids to horse races. In solidarity with co-eds struggling with student loans, Hillary Clinton could have promised to limit her university speaking fees to a thousand dollars per minute rather than the ten thousand dollars for each 60 seconds of chatting that she actually gets, and she might have prefaced her public attacks on hedge funds by dressing down her son-in-law. ...

Some of our favorites have comments on Rachel Dolezal - the fake black. Peter Wehner is first.

There is something comedic and pathetic about the story of Rachel Dolezal. Ms. Dolezal, 37, is the president of the NAACP local chapter in Spokane, Washington and a part-time Africana Studies professor at Eastern Washington University. It turns out that after claiming for years that she was black – including on applications, posting pictures on a Facebook page of an African-American man she falsely claimed was her father, and insisting that her adopted brother (who is black) was her child – Ms. Dolezal is actually white. Her birth certificate proves it. And her biological parents, Ruthanne and Lawrence Dolezal, have confirmed it.

“Rachel has wanted to be somebody she’s not. She’s chosen not to just be herself but to represent herself as an African American woman or a biracial person. And that’s simply not true,” Ruthanne Dolezal said. Her mother said Rachel began to “disguise herself” in 2006 or 2007.

This interview shows Dolezal being caught in her lie. It also seems quite likely that her claim that she’s received racially motivated hate letters and pictures was a ruse. (Police are still investigating, but say that whoever placed the mail must have had access to the mailbox, as it was not processed through the regular mail.) ...

Jonathan Tobin is next.

... it is precisely the sort of race-baiting activism that Dolezal (who was an active participant in the Baltimore protests over the killing of a black man by the police) has engaged in that makes such a goal unattainable. Ironically, rather than working to create a post-racial society in which the barriers between the races are demolished, Dolezal and many of her adopted comrades in what now styles itself the civil rights movement seek to entrench the divides between us and even to enshrine them in law. It is the advocates of affirmative action and other counter-productive race entitlements that hold onto the notion that America is a country primarily motivated by old hatreds long after such notions have become marginal or altogether discarded. Rather than the virtually non-existent supporters of Jim Crow being the problem, it is the Al Sharptons and their lesser-known acolytes such as Dolezal who do the most to render us a nation divided by race in 2015. ...

John Hinderaker quotes a comment to one his Power Line posts.

... Maybe there is a silver lining to the Rachel Dolezal / Sen. Elizabeth Warren race frauds. If racial identity and gender identity have become matters of personal preference, i.e., how you choose to identify yourself is how the world should treat you, then the entire race-based / gender-based affirmative action apparatus could be brought to its knees. Suppose all the Asian students denied admission to Harvard decided to check the “African-American” box on their applications, instead of the “Asian” box? When challenged, they would simply say, “Well, I always felt more African-American than Asian; heck, I’ve never even been to Asia.” Suppose every single “White” or “Asian” student randomly checked a “Latino,” “African-American” or “Native-American” box on their applications? How would the affirmative-action apparatus sort out what the applicant’s “real” races are? Would they administer blood tests? Demand photographs (which would be far from conclusive)? How would they deal with the ever-increasing numbers of applicants with mixed racial origins?

If self-declaration is all that's necessary, then why shouldn't all students declare the "race" that maximizes their chances of admission? A mass protest of this nature would expose the affirmative-action apparatus for what it is: a quota system based upon self-proclaimed ethnic origin. What if an entire class of high-school seniors all agreed to check the same box, as a form of protest? "We're all Native Americans, here!" What would the race-baiters do? ...

Kevin Williamson writes on the Trump entrance in a piece titled "Witless Ape Rides Escalator."

... Donald Trump, being Donald Trump, announced his candidacy at Trump Plaza, making a weird grand entrance via escalator — going down, of course, the symbolism of which is lost on that witless ape. But who could witness that scene — the self-made man who started with nothing but a modest portfolio of 27,000 New York City properties acquired by his millionaire slumlord father, barely out of his latest bankruptcy and possibly headed for another one as the casino/jiggle-joint bearing his name sinks into the filthy mire of the one U.S. city that makes Las Vegas look respectable, a reality-television grotesque with his plastic-surgery-disaster wife, grunting like a baboon about our country's "brand" and his own vast wealth — and not see the peerless sign of our times?

On the substance, Trump is — how to put it gently? Oh, why bother! — an ass. Not just an ass, but an ass of exceptionally intense asininity. China? "China's leaders are like Tom Brady, and the U.S. is like a high-school football team," Trump says. And so, we should do what? ...

... We've been to this corner of Crazytown before. If we're going to have a billionaire dope running for the presidency, I prefer Ross Perot and his cracked tales of Vietnamese hit squads dispatched to take him out while Lee Atwater plotted to crash his daughter's wedding with phonied-up lesbian sex pictures. ...

Speaking of crackpots, **Bjørn Lomborg** has ideas about how Pope Ignoramus could really help the poor.

Pope Francis's concern for the poor is clear, so it is understandable that climate change is the topic of his forthcoming Encyclical — a Papal letter that is sent out to the world. Climate change will hit the most destitute people first and worst.

But the Pope after his letter is officially published, he should tread carefully. The climate policies of today will do little for the poor.

A cruel truth is that almost every significant challenge on Earth hits the poor more than the wealthy: hunger, a lack of clean drinking water, malaria, indoor air pollution. The question then is how we make the most difference for the most vulnerable.

A reasonable starting point is to listen to the world's citizens. A United Nations survey of 7.5 million people found that many other issues are deemed more urgent. The top priorities were education, health, jobs, corruption and nutrition. Of 16 problems, the climate was rated the lowest priority.

One reason may be that today's climate policies themselves have a cost, which predominantly hits the poor.

Cuts in electricity consumption require price hikes that hurt the worst-off and elderly. Relying on expensive green energy sources like wind and solar power makes electricity pricier and less available for those who desperately need it.

The biggest problem with today's climate change policies is that they will cost a fortune for very little good. ...

The cartoonists have fun with the two frauds - Rachel and Donald.

National Review

Sexism and Racism Are Leftism

In our time, sexism and racism have become the province of the rich.

by Victor Davis Hanson

Discrimination by sex and by race are ancient innate pathologies and transcend particular cultures. But the American idea of *sexism* and *racism* in the 21st century — unfailing, endemic, and institutional discrimination by a majority-white-male-privileged culture against both women and so-called non-white minorities — has largely become a leftist construct.

We can see how these two relativist -isms work in a variety of ways.

One, the frequent charge of racism and sexism is predicated not so much on one's gender and race as on one's gender, race, *and* politics. Certainly, few on the left worried much about the slurs against Sarah Palin during and after her vice-presidential run. America's overclass in the media and leftist politics constructed a sexist portrait of a clueless white-trash mom in Wasilla, Alaska, mindlessly having lots of kids after barely graduating from the University of Idaho. Even Bill Maher's and David Letterman's liberal armor would not have withstood leftist thrusts had, *mutatis mutandis*, the former called Hillary Clinton a c—t or the latter disparaged Ms. Clinton as “slutty flight attendant” and joked that, when a teen, Chelsea Clinton had had sexual relations with a Yankee baseball player in the dugout. Ironically it was the by-her-own-bootstraps lower-middle-class Palin who braved the frontier, no-prisoners, male world to become governor of Alaska; in real terms, she is the true feminist. In contrast, according to doctrinaire feminism, Hillary Clinton does not measure up. She has largely clung, in mousy fashion, to her two-timing husband, excused his serial and manipulative philandering with young women of less clout and power, traded on his political nomenclature, and piggy-backed on his career.

The Black Caucus rarely if ever comes to the defense of Justice Clarence Thomas when, periodically, liberal commentators suggest that he was and is unqualified, and is largely a token black conservative. No one suggests that the *New York Times* is on an anti-Latino crusade against Marco Rubio in trying to fashion a story of recklessness from the paltry evidence of his receiving one traffic ticket every four years. Had candidate Mitt Romney suggested, as did Senators Joe Biden and Harry Reid, that Senator Barack Obama was a “clean” and “light-skinned” black man without “a Negro dialect,” he would have been considered little more than a Clive Bundy buffoon and would have had to drop out of the Republican primary.

It appears that leftism assumes that racist and sexist speech by liberals constitutes good people's lapses of judgment and tact — not, as in the case of conservatives, valuable windows into the dark hearts of bigots. In other words, the idea of sexism and racism is not absolute, but

relative and mostly socially massaged and constructed by politics. Had President Bill Clinton declared during the O. J. trial that if he had had a second daughter she would have resembled Nicole Simpson, the media and popular culture would have excused such a sick Obamism as a quirky slip — in a way that it would not have if a Bob Dole had uttered the same banality and thereby supposedly revealed his poorly suppressed racist proclivities.

A second tenet of socially constructed racism and sexism is “white privilege,” which usually translates into “white male privilege,” given that women such as Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Warren are rarely accused of being multimillionaire white elite females who won a leg up by virtue of their skin color. But if whiteness ipso facto earns one advantages over the non-white, why in the world do some elite whites choose to reconstruct their identities as non-white? Would Elizabeth Warren really have become a Harvard law professor had she not, during her long years of academic ascent, identified herself (at least privately, on universities’ pedigree forms) as a Native American? Ward Churchill, with his beads and Indian get-up, won a university career that otherwise might have been scuttled by his mediocrity, his pathological untruths, and his aberrant behavior. Why would the current head of the NAACP in Spokane, Wash., a white middle-class woman named Rachel Dolezal, go to the trouble of faking a genealogy, using skin cosmetics and hair styling, and constructing false racist enemies to ensure that she was accepted as a victimized black woman?

The obvious inference is that Ms. Dolezal assumed that being a liberal black woman brought with it career opportunities in activist groups and academia otherwise beyond her reach as a middle-class white female of so-so talent. Critics will object that we are really arguing in class terms as well as racial terms: Privileged whites play on society’s innate prejudices against darker-skinned minorities by positioning themselves as light-skinned, elite people of color. That is a Pandora’s box that is better left unopened — given that Harry Reid and Joe Biden have already unknowingly pried open the lid on these matters in ways that would transcend Barack Obama and equally apply, for example, to Eric Holder or Valerie Jarrett.

Suffice it to say that in our increasingly intermarried, assimilated, and integrated culture, it is often hard to ascertain someone’s exact race or ethnicity. That confusion allows identity to be massaged and reinvented. That said, it is also generally felt among elites that feigning minority status earns career advantages that outweigh the downside of being identified as non-white in the popular culture. That was certainly my impression as a professor for over 20 years in the California State University system watching dozens of upper-class Latin Americans — largely white male Argentinians, Chileans, and Brazilians — and Spaniards flock to American academia, add accents to their names, trill their R’s, and feign ethnic solidarity with their students who were of Oaxacan and Native American backgrounds.

Poor George Zimmerman. His last name stereotyped him as some sort of Germanic gun nut. But had he just ethnicized his maternal half-Afro Peruvian identity and reemerged as Jorge Mesa, Zimmerman would have largely escaped charges of racism. He should have taken a cue from Barack Obama, who sometime in his late teens at Occidental College discovered that the exotic nomenclature of Barack Obama radiated a minority edge, in a way that the name of his alter ego, Barry Soetoro, apparently never quite had. If, in America’s racist past, majority culture once jealously protected its white privilege by one-drop-of-blood racial distinctions, postmodern America has now come full circle and done the same in reverse — because the construction of minority identity, in all its varying degrees, is easily possible and, in ironic fashion, now brings with it particular elite career advantages.

Third, when we look at questions of class, we see again that racism and sexism are largely leftist constructs and not empirical terms describing millions of Americans who are supposedly

denied opportunity by the white establishment because of their gender or race. The CEOs in the industries of sexism and classism are for the most part wealthy and privileged — and their targets are usually of the middle class. When Michelle Obama labors to remind her young African-American audiences of all the stares and second looks she imagines she still receives as First Lady, she is reconstructing a racial identity to balance the enormous privilege she enjoys as a jumbo-jet-setting grandee who junkets to the world's toniest resorts with regularity. The 2016 version of Hillary Clinton is, at least for a few months, a feminist populist, and has become so merely by mouthing a few banal talking points. Apparently the downside for Hillary of being a woman is not trumped by the facts of being a multimillionaire insider and former secretary of state, wife to a multimillionaire ex-president, mother of a multimillionaire, and mother-in-law to a multimillionaire hedge-fund director. Hillary can become a perpetual constructed victim, denied the good life that is enjoyed by a white male bus driver in Bakersfield making \$40,000 a year.

Given the construction of race and gender, the children of Eric Holder and Barack Obama will be eligible for affirmative-action consideration out of reach for an 18-year-old white male in Provo, Utah. As a general rule, when advising classics majors who wished to apply to Ph.D. programs, I assumed that a white male needed a near-perfect GRE score and GPAs, to avoid being rejected out of hand as a middle-class so-so white man from Fresno State. (I reminded them that the "system" assumed their white privilege had given them advantages from preschool onward that the Ivy League and the University of California system now had to adjust for.) For my minority classics students, on the other hand, admission was rarely a problem, despite the fact that many were of a higher social class than their mostly rejected white counterparts.

Fourth, sexism and racism are abstractions of the liberal elite that rarely translate into praxis. Barack Obama could have done symbolic wonders for the public schools by taking his kids out of Sidwell Friends and putting them into the D.C. school system. Elizabeth Warren could have cemented her feminist populist fides by vowing to stop flipping houses. Feminist Bill Clinton could have renounced all affairs with female subordinates. Eric Holder could have vowed never to use government jets to take his kids to horse races. In solidarity with co-eds struggling with student loans, Hillary Clinton could have promised to limit her university speaking fees to a thousand dollars per minute rather than the ten thousand dollars for each 60 seconds of chatting that she actually gets, and she might have prefaced her public attacks on hedge funds by dressing down her son-in-law. Surely the lords of Silicon Valley might have promised to keep their kids in the public schools, and funded scholarships to allow minorities to flood Sacred Heart and the Menlo School.

Charges of racism and sexism have little to do with demonstrable racial and sexual prejudice on the part of a white-male establishment. They are relative, not absolute, phenomena, and more often constructed by political beliefs and careerist concerns than observed independently. Such concepts are often entirely divorced from class reality, and often have more to do with illiberal privilege than with actual exclusion.

Contentions

[Rachel Dolezal, Ethnic Politics and the World of Make Believe](#)

by Peter Wehner

There is something comedic and pathetic about the story of Rachel Dolezal. Ms. Dolezal, 37, is the president of the NAACP local chapter in Spokane, Washington and a part-time Africana

Studies professor at Eastern Washington University. It [turns out](#) that after claiming for years that she was black – including on applications, posting pictures on a Facebook page of an African-American man she falsely claimed was her father, and insisting that her adopted brother (who is black) was her child – Ms. Dolezal is actually white. Her birth certificate proves it. And her biological parents, Ruthanne and Lawrence Dolezal, have confirmed it.

“Rachel has wanted to be somebody she’s not. She’s chosen not to just be herself but to represent herself as an African American woman or a biracial person. And that’s simply not true,” Ruthanne Dolezal [said](#). Her mother said Rachel began to “disguise herself” in 2006 or 2007.

[This interview](#) shows Dolezal being caught in her lie. It also seems quite likely that her claim that she’s received racially motivated hate letters and pictures was a ruse. (Police are still investigating, but say that whoever placed the mail must have had access to the mailbox, as it was not processed through the regular mail.)

The reason this story is significant is that it so perfectly represents the absurdity of the American Left today. There’s the obsession with racial and ethnic politics, to the point that this [very white woman](#) would attempt to start a “new life” in which she airbrushed out of history her real father, invented a black father and began to darken her skin and hair. It wasn’t enough to support a political and cultural cause; she had to pretend she was black. She had to be part of the African-American sisterhood, to the point of re-inventing who she is. That is what gave her validation.

But that’s not all. Ms. Dolezal, [in a later interview](#), was unapologetic about her deception. Indeed, she *still* maintains she’s black, even though she’s white. We don’t really understand, you see, the “definitions of race and ethnicity.” Which, according to Dolezal, don’t have anything to do with race and ethnicity. Or even reality.

In part of her world – the progressive, academic world of the left – words are emptied of objective means. It’s necessary to jettison “logocentrism” and “structuralism.” Everything is determined by “narrative.” You get to make things up as you go along. Barack Obama, who is also a product of the academy, [shows the same tendencies](#). So has Senator Elizabeth Warren, who claimed to be Native American [even though she was not](#). Words are infinitely elastic; they mean only what you say they mean.

Except, of course, they don’t. Words have actual meaning and objective truth exists, even if people like Ms. Dolezal denies it. White really isn’t black. It tells you an awful lot about the times in which we live that this proposition has to be defended. But here we are.

Contentions

[Rachel Dolezal and the Real Divide Among Americans](#)

by Jonathan S. Tobin

On the surface, it’s difficult to view Rachel Dolezal as anything but yet another depressing example of just how far the left’s push for the deconstruction of meaning and fact can go. Her fraudulent attempt to pose as a black woman and a victim of discrimination may not have stopped with lies on official applications but might even have extended to false claims of harassment. Yet yet her masquerade has not been greeted with universal condemnation. With the much-publicized acceptance of Caitlyn Jenner as a woman, many are asking why we can’t

treat race — which is to some extent a social construct rather than a rigid divide between people — as similarly malleable. If she wants to think of herself as black, who are we, the thinking goes, to tell her she can't? Understandably, many African-Americans as well as others are not prepared to accept this willingness to treat issues of identity in such a cavalier fashion. But is there something in this argument that might point the way toward a better society? If there is, it completely undermines the entire politics of grievance to which Dolezal has dedicated her life.

A strong argument against the Dolezal equals Jenner formula comes today from black author Tamara Winfrey Harris [who writes in the *New York Times*](#) to protest Dolezal's actions. According to her, the real problem with her bizarre journey from white to black was made possible by the legacy of segregation and racism in which a "one drop" rule allowed anyone with even partial African ancestry to be viewed as black. She's right about that since most African-Americans, to one extent or another, have both black and white ancestors. Though such laws are thankfully consigned to the country's sordid past, the persistence of racism in any form, however marginal to mainstream culture and political reality (i.e. a black president and a black female attorney general) makes many blacks still wary of anything that harkens back to those memories. The problem in her view is that while Dolezal might be able to get away with pretending to be black, it is still impossible for most blacks to pretend to be white. And so long as that is true, such impersonations strike her as a vestige of racial privilege rather than a free choice that should be respected, if not honored.

As Harris writes:

Being able to shift one's race is a privilege. Ms. Dolezal's masquerade illustrates that however much she may empathize with African-Americans, she is not one, because black people in America cannot shed their race. We cannot proclaim the black race a nebulous concept, while strictly policing whiteness and the privileges of that identity. I will accept Ms. Dolezal as black like me only when society can accept me as white like her.

She has a point. But if the goal of our society is, as Martin Luther King Jr. memorably put it, to judge people by the "content of their character rather than the color of their skin," why can't a more enlightened America drop the entire effort to divide people by race? Harris would answer that racism is too great an obstacle and even in its much-diminished current state, it's possible she's right. Much as we would like to say that in a free country, every person should be able to choose their race as easily as they can choose their religion, blacks are not white and persons as Caucasian-looking as Ms. Dolezal was before she began darkening her skin and altering her hairstyle are still white.

But let's leave appearance aside for a moment and ask ourselves if we would like to live in a country where race was a matter of choice rather than something imposed on us. That may strike many of us as being as counterintuitive as a man wanting to be a woman but if Rachel Dolezal truly wants to be a black woman, neither society nor the law should seek to interfere with her so long as she doesn't do so in a manner that harms others or consists of telling or swearing to lies.

But in that theoretical world in which that might happen, it is precisely the sort of race-baiting activism that Dolezal (who was an active participant in the Baltimore protests over the killing of a black man by the police) has engaged in that makes such a goal unattainable. Ironically, rather than working to create a post-racial society in which the barriers between the races are demolished, Dolezal and many of her adopted comrades in what now styles itself the civil rights movement seek to entrench the divides between us and even to enshrine them in law. It is the advocates of affirmative action and other counter-productive race entitlements that hold onto the

notion that America is a country primarily motivated by old hatreds long after such notions have become marginal or altogether discarded. Rather than the virtually non-existent supporters of Jim Crow being the problem, it is the Al Sharptons and their lesser-known acolytes such as Dolezal who do the most to render us a nation divided by race in 2015.

The point here is that a society that would be prepared to treat Rachel Dolezal's white origins and identity as a mere detail that she could discard at will is one in which the racist cause to which she seems to have dedicated herself makes impossible. Though there is much about this story that has the flavor of a troubled mind rather than a coherent vision of a better society, those who either condemn or support Dolezal would do well to ponder just how much the sort of racial hucksterism that many of her comrades in the civil rights movement does to make the rigid divisions between Americans permanent.

Power Line

[Rachel Dolezal: The Silver Lining](#)

by John Hinderaker

A reader writes, expanding on a point that I made [here](#):

Maybe there is a silver lining to the Rachel Dolezal / Sen. Elizabeth Warren race frauds. If racial identity and gender identity have become matters of personal preference, i.e., how you choose to identify yourself is how the world should treat you, then the entire race-based / gender-based affirmative action apparatus could be brought to its knees. Suppose all the Asian students denied admission to Harvard decided to check the "African-American" box on their applications, instead of the "Asian" box? When challenged, they would simply say, "Well, I always felt more African-American than Asian; heck, I've never even been to Asia." Suppose every single "White" or "Asian" student randomly checked a "Latino," "African-American" or "Native-American" box on their applications? How would the affirmative-action apparatus sort out what the applicant's "real" races are? Would they administer blood tests? Demand photographs (which would be far from conclusive)? How would they deal with the ever-increasing numbers of applicants with mixed racial origins?

If self-declaration is all that's necessary, then why shouldn't all students declare the "race" that maximizes their chances of admission? A mass protest of this nature would expose the affirmative-action apparatus for what it is: a quota system based upon self-proclaimed ethnic origin. What if an entire class of high-school seniors all agreed to check the same box, as a form of protest? "We're all Native Americans, here!" What would the race-baiters do?

I think that's right. The whole corrupt racial spoils system is in danger of collapsing. Which is why the more perceptive leftists are heatedly denying that Rachel Dolezal can be black, no matter how she feels. Consistency be damned, when money and power are at stake!

National Review

Witless Ape Rides Escalator

Donald Trump is in the race.

By Kevin D. Williamson

Donald Trump may be the man America needs. Having been through four bankruptcies, the ridiculous buffoon with the worst taste since Caligula is uniquely positioned to lead the most indebted organization in the history of the human race.

The Trump conglomerate is the Argentina of limited-liability companies, having been in bankruptcy as recently as 2009. To be sure, a lot of companies went bankrupt around then. The Trump gang went bankrupt in 2004, too, and in 2001. Before that, Trump was in bankruptcy court back in 1991 when his Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City — the nation's first casino-cum-strip-club, an aesthetic crime against humanity that is tacky *by the standards of Atlantic City* — turned out to be such a loser that Trump could not make his debt payments.

The closing of that casino has been announced at least twice — it was supposed to shut its doors in December, but it limps on.

Donald Trump, being Donald Trump, announced his candidacy at Trump Plaza, making a weird grand entrance via escalator — going down, of course, the symbolism of which is lost on that witless ape. But who could witness that scene — the self-made man who started with nothing but a modest portfolio of 27,000 New York City properties acquired by his millionaire slumlord father, barely out of his latest bankruptcy and possibly headed for another one as the casino/jiggle-joint bearing his name sinks into the filthy mire of the one U.S. city that makes Las Vegas look respectable, a reality-television grotesque with his plastic-surgery-disaster wife, grunting like a baboon about our country's "brand" and his own vast wealth — and not see the peerless sign of our times?

On the substance, Trump is — how to put it gently? Oh, why bother! — an ass. Not just an ass, but an ass of exceptionally intense asininity. China? "China's leaders are like Tom Brady, and the U.S. is like a high-school football team," Trump says. And so, we should do what?

" . . . "

Trump's is a fill-in-the-blanks agenda: He claims to have a plan for defeating ISIS, but he cannot say what it is for reasons of operational security for the mission that *exists only in his mind*. He assures us the plan is "foolproof," but whoever coined that word had never met a fool like Donald Trump. Immigration? Build a wall and force the Mexicans to pay for it.

How to do that?

" . . . "

The one thing worse than Trump's vague horsepucky is his specific horsepucky, i.e., his 1999 plan to impose a one-time tax — everybody knows how good Washington is about "one time" uses of power — on the wealth of all high-net-worth individuals and institutions. A 14.25 percent tax, he calculated, would retire the national debt. And what about institutions that don't have 14.25 percent of their net worth in ready cash — to take a totally random example, let's say a poorly run real-estate concern with a lot of illiquid assets and unmanageable debt payments eating up all its ready cash?

“ . . . ”

Trump says that he cannot discuss the details of his agenda because of — his word — “enemies.” Who are these enemies?

“ . . . ”

Perspective? Trump predicted that we may be heading toward a stock-market crash worse than the one in 1929, but: “I remain extremely optimistic about Atlantic City.”

We’ve been to this corner of Crazytown before. If we’re going to have a billionaire dope running for the presidency, I prefer Ross Perot and his cracked tales of Vietnamese hit squads dispatched to take him out while Lee Atwater plotted to crash his daughter’s wedding with phonied-up lesbian sex pictures.

I have a theory about Trump and his delusions, based, I’ll admit, on pure superstition. There’s an ancient belief, one that persists into our own time, that our names exert occult influence on our lives. And Trump’s name, while potentially comical — “Don-John” — doesn’t offer much in the way of scrying. But his father’s middle name was — true fact — *Christ*. Fred Christ. Obama’s arrival was announced by a man called Emanuel, but The Donald was brought into this world by Christ himself — Fred Christ. How could a man like that *not* have a messiah complex?

Of course, when Trump sings “How Great Thou Art,” he sings it in a mirror.

The problem with messiah complexes is that there’s no way to know whether you are going to rise on the third day unless somebody crucifies you. Trump has announced, and I say we get started on that.

USA Today

What Pope Francis should do to really help the poor

How can we best aid the world's most vulnerable?

by Bjørn Lomborg

Pope Francis's concern for the poor is clear, so it is understandable that climate change is the topic of his forthcoming Encyclical — a Papal letter that is sent out to the world. Climate change will hit the most destitute people first and worst.

But the Pope after his letter is officially published, he should tread carefully. The climate policies of today will do little for the poor.

A cruel truth is that almost every significant challenge on Earth hits the poor more than the wealthy: hunger, a lack of clean drinking water, malaria, indoor air pollution. The question then is how we make the most difference for the most vulnerable.

A reasonable starting point is to listen to the world's citizens. A United Nations survey of 7.5 million people found that many other issues are deemed more urgent. The top priorities were education, health, jobs, corruption and nutrition. Of 16 problems, the climate was rated the lowest priority.

One reason may be that today's climate policies themselves have a cost, which predominantly hits the poor.

Cuts in electricity consumption require price hikes that hurt the worst-off and elderly. Relying on expensive green energy sources like wind and solar power makes electricity pricier and less available for those who desperately need it.

The biggest problem with today's climate change policies is that they will cost a fortune for very little good. The toughest global warming policy today is the European Union's commitment to [cutting 20%](#) of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. This will cost [\\$235 billion](#). And cut temperatures at the end of the century by a measly 0.1°F.

This doesn't mean that we should ignore climate change. There are two compelling actions that should be part of the Pope's agenda to serve the poor.

The first is an [end to fossil fuel subsidies](#). Especially in poor countries, governments spend a fortune making oil cheaper. These subsidies mainly help the middle class and the rich — the people who can afford a car. The subsidies increase the amount of oil that is used, making air pollution and climate change worse. Phasing out subsidies for fossil fuels would not only help the planet, it would free money to spend on education and health.

The second necessary policy is a big global increase in green energy research, to speed the day when renewable energy sources can outcompete fossil fuels. Let's fund the basic research that will make green energy too cheap and easy to resist.

But we also need to recognize that the actions that would most help the world's poor are not climate policies.

The Copenhagen Consensus Center commissioned [research](#) from economists to review the United Nations' 169 proposed targets that will replace the [Millennium Development Goals](#) and shape development spending for the next 15 years. These '[Sustainable Development Goals](#)' are hugely important for the planet because they will direct an estimated [\\$2.5 trillion](#) in development spending until 2030, as well as countless trillions in national budgets, so it's important we get them right.

One big problem is that 169 targets is just too many. Analysis by a panel including several Nobel laureate economists [established](#) that reducing the list of development targets to just nineteen of the most important investments would generate four-times more good than trying to do all 169.

So what are the policies that would really make the real biggest difference for the world's poorest?

One is boosting international trade by getting rid of the policies that stop one country trading with another. Lowering trade restrictions [reduces](#) poverty and triggers rapid income growth, making people much richer. Trade also helps the flow of ideas and technology.

Another chief way of transforming lives is one that is unlikely to be embraced by the Catholic Church: achieving universal access to contraception and family planning.

At an annual cost of [\\$3.6 billion](#), allowing women control over pregnancy [would mean](#) 150,000 fewer maternal deaths and 600,000 fewer children being orphaned this way.

And a third area where money should be spent is [nutrition](#). This is especially critical for young children. A good diet ensures brains and muscles develop better, producing life-long benefits. Well-nourished children stay in school longer, learn more and end up being much more productive. This is an area where the Catholic Church has [shown leadership](#) already.

These policies — ensuring freer trade, greater access to family planning, and nutritional interventions — cost a fraction of expensive, inefficient climate policies. When helping the world's poorest is the goal, these are the investments that would truly make the biggest difference.

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RACIAL CATEGORY

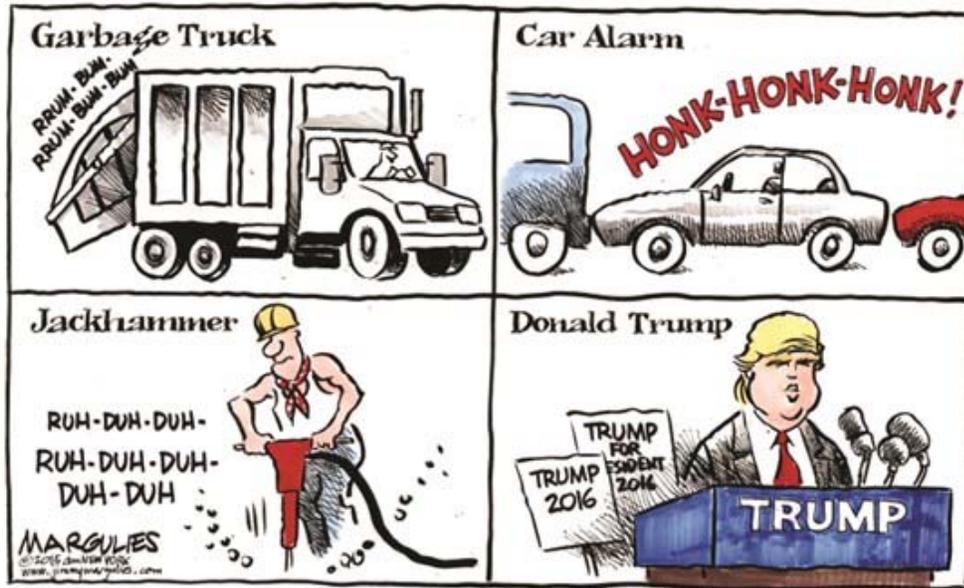
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