



Getting Together

for social justice

WINTER 2008

This newsletter is focused on resources for addressing racism. (For copies of previous newsletters, please go to the [newsletter archives](#).)

Where We Stand: Racism in 2008

In 2004 the American Journal of Public Health reported that in the 1990s nearly 900,000 African Americans died from causes that could have been prevented had health care provision been race-neutral. In other words, nearly 100,000 African Americans a year died because of the impact of racism.¹ The numbers who died from other racism-related direct and indirect causes is assuredly many times higher. The number of racism-related deaths of Native Americans, Latinos and Southeast Asians is also large, if less well documented.

Just about every day a new study crosses my desk documenting the continuing, large-scale, and devastating impact of racism on individual lives and on our society in general. When I wrote my book *Uprooting Racism* in 1996 I was appalled by the numbers. When I revised and expanded the book in 2002 the disparities in health, education, incarceration rates, housing, job discrimination, and social exclusion had deteriorated substantially. Today they are even worse. Literally thousands of people of color are being killed by racism every day, and yet well-meaning white people can argue about whether racism occurs or not and continue to deny or minimize its impact and blame people of color for “their” problems.

We are now engaged in two wars in which the deaths of Afghanis and Iraqis are not even considered serious enough to document. Massive expenditures on militarism have led to widespread and systematic cutbacks in social services and our social infrastructure, leading to further deterioration in the lives of many people of color in the U.S. More people of color (as well as more white people) are homeless, hungry, without health care, and in poverty. Affirmative Action has been gutted and the backlash against the gains of the civil rights movement continues to effectively stifle discussion of current patterns of racism in the country.

In *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism*², the authors document how preschool children begin to negotiate their identities around relationships based on race, culture, language, and national identity. The children of color are already experiencing racism from the white children and the white children are already building identities of superiority and entitlement. In *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*³, Ann Ferguson documents how African American boys are marked for failure (and eventual incarceration) by well-meaning adults—even by some who are African American themselves, in one liberal, integrated school system. It is clear that by the end of elementary school every child in the United States knows her or his place in the racial hierarchy and is negotiating racial identities on a daily basis. And yet most white adults continue to ignore this reality and to avoid confronting the incontrovertible impact of racism in our lives and communities. The majority of us also fail to help our children understand and interrupt the cycle of racism that they are already enmeshed in.

When the Democrats gained control of Congress after the 2006 elections, they announced a major agenda for the first 100 days of the new administration. Yet when a racial impact analysis was done on their agenda it turned out that few of their action items would benefit people of color and many of them would actually increase racial disparities.

A new report (2008) by United for A Fair Economy, looking at the current housing crisis, documents the massive transfer of wealth that is occurring from people of color to white people. They estimate the total loss of wealth for people of color

to be between \$164 and \$213 billion for predatory loans taken during the past eight years. With this transfer far from over, they estimate that this already represents the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern US history.⁴

We live in a time of war, empire, and environmental catastrophe, of Katrina, Iraq, hungry children, Afghanistan, AIDS, homelessness, cancer, and the destruction of Native American sacred sites. We have to ask ourselves if what we are doing to bring justice into the world is commensurate with the challenges we face. Unless strategic anti-racist action is an integral component of what we are doing, we can be assured that it is not.

There have always been people of color and white allies working for racial and economic justice. This newsletter is a reminder that much work remains to be done.

¹Steven H. Woolf, MD, MPH, Robert E. Johnson, PhD, George E. Fryer, Jr, PhD, MSW, George Rust, MD, MPH and David Satcher, MD, PhD. "The Health Impact of Resolving Racial Disparities: An Analysis of US Mortality Data". December 2004, Vol 94, No. 12 | 2078-2081.

²Ausdale, D.V. and J.R. Feagin. *The First R. How Children Learn Race and Racism*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.

³Ferguson, Ann. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

⁴Rivera, Amaad, et. al. *Foreclosed: State of the Dream 2008*. Boston: United for a Fair Economy, 2008. Available online at http://www.faireconomy.org/issues/racial_wealth_divide/foreclosed_state_of_the_dream_2008_0.

SPECIAL PRICING: "UPROOTING RACISM"

"**Uprooting Racism** is a uniquely sensitive, wise, practical guide for white people struggling with their feelings about race."

—Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*.

"**Uprooting Racism** hits at the heart of one of America's most complex problems—systemic white racism—which holds all colors and races in bondage. This is a great book, written with insight and courage."

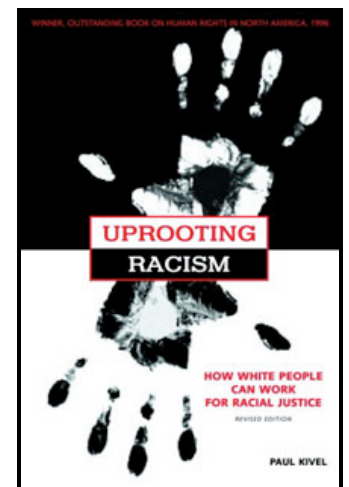
—Morris Dees, Southern Poverty Law Center.

Winner, Gustavus Myers Award for Outstanding Book on Human Rights

An excerpt from *Uprooting Racism*:

In the United States, people of color experience acts of violence such as rape, battery, economic discrimination, lack of police protection, police brutality, poor health care, and housing and job discrimination due to racism. There is no time that a person of color is immune to harassment, discrimination, or the possibility that she or he will be attacked. Money and other accoutrements of power afford some protection, but not completely and not always.

During the first few years that I worked with men who are violent, I was continually perplexed by their inability to see the effects of their actions and by their ability to deny the violence they had done to their partners or children. I only slowly became aware of the complex set of tactics that men use to make violence against women invisible and to avoid taking responsibility for their actions.



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I find it a constant effort to notice that people of color don't share many of the economic and other benefits I enjoy from being white. This exercise helps white people understand how racism works in our favor, and on many different levels.

The exercise is for all white participants, or for mixed groups in which the white people participate and the people of color observe. Since white privilege—the specific kinds of economic, social, and political advantages that white people gain at the expense of people of color—is generally invisible, this exercise helps those of us who are white see and acknowledge just how extensive and pervasive those benefits are.

[*Read the entire exercise...*](#)

SUGGESTED RESOURCES ABOUT RACISM

These resources are mostly aimed at white people stepping up as allies in the struggle for racial justice.

Books

A few of the many good recent books for white allies:

Thomas, Barb, and Tina Lopes. *Dancing on Lives Embers*. Between the Lines, 2006.

Smith, Chip. *The Cost of Privilege: Taking on the System of White Supremacy and Racism*. Fayetteville, NC: Camino Press, 2007.

Farrow, Anne, et. al. *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2006.

Van Ausdale, Debra and Joe Feagin. *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism*. New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2002.

Lui, Meizhu, et. al. *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Wealth Divide*. New York: New Press, 2006.

Noguera, Pedro and Jean Yonemura Wing, eds. *Unfinished Business: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in our Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006.

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. 2nd ed. Soft Skull Press, 2007.

And a related and important resource:

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence eds., *The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge: South End Press, 2007.

Videos

[*The Color of Fear*](#), directed by Lee Mun Wah (Stir-Fry Productions)

[*Follow Me Home*](#), directed by Peter Bratt (New Millennium Films)

[*Race: The Power of an Illusion*](#), a three-part documentary series created by Larry Adelman (California Newsreel)

[*Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*](#), directed by Shakti Butler

Organizations

[People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#)

[Project South](#)

[Western States Center](#)

[AWARE](#)

[Catalyst Project](#)

[Highlander Research and Education Center](#)

Conferences

[Raising Change: A Social Justice Fundraising Conference](#)

[White Privilege Conference](#)

[NCORE—National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education](#)

[NAME—National Association for Multicultural Education](#)

[Facing Race](#)—a national conference sponsored by the Applied Research Center and the Center for Humanities, CUNY Graduate Center

Publications

[ColorLines](#)—the national newsmagazine on race and politics, published by the Applied Research Center

[More links...](#)

THE CATALYST PROJECT



Building on the foundation established by Sharon Martinas with the Challenging White Supremacy trainings, the Catalyst Project is launching the Anne Braden Anti-racist Training Program for white anti-racist activists and organizers. Paul is an advisor to the Catalyst Project and in this picture he is with Catalyst Project staff and the mentors who will be assigned to the Anne Braden program participants during a recent mentor training. For more information about Catalyst Project or the Anne Braden program, visit www.collectiveliberation.org.

ON THE WEBSITE

We have updated our [articles](#) and [resources](#) pages to include exercises and articles on racism including:

[Adulthood](#)

[Assessing Public Policy Issues and Political Candidates](#)

[The Benefits of Being White](#)

[The Costs of Racism to White People](#)

[The Culture of Power](#)

[White Benefits? A Personal Assessment](#)

Our daughter, SAM Luckey, is flying high with Ringling Bros as part of the Flying Caceres flying trapeze act. Many of you will have a chance to catch the show and watch her soar this year in the cities below.



SAM's
2008
Ringling
Bros
Circus
BLUE
TOUR
schedule

(For a full schedule with dates check [here](#).)

Richmond and Norfolk, East Rutherford, Uniondale,
New York, East Rutherford, NJ, Philadelphia,
Providence, Hartford, Trenton, Hershey, Wilkes
Barre, Council Bluffs, IA, Colorado Springs, Las
Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson, Fresno, Los Angeles,
Anaheim, San Diego, Oakland (August 14-17) San
Jose, Portland, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, Rosemont, IL, Chicago

