

Mission Statement

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To free the prisoners,
To rebuild nations,
To bring peace among
brothers,
To make music in the heart.
-Howard Thurman

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Green Economy Leaves Minorities in the Red

Posted September 4th, 2009 by editor

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The New Multi-Billion-Dollar Green Economy Leaves Minorities in the Red, Creating Eco-Apartheid

Global climate change is a process—not an event—that our children will inherit and live with throughout the 21st Century. Spawning a new nomenclature, lifestyle, culture and economy, it is imperative that concepts like alternative energy, ecosystems and biological agri-science are included as integral parts of today's progressive instructional curriculum.

But are they?

According to a highly critical article by [Van Jones](#), the former President of Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, now President Obama's Green Jobs Czar, "Green is rapidly becoming the new gold. The LOHAS (lifestyles of health and sustainability) sector is growing like crazy: It was a \$229 billion piece of the US economy in 2006. ...But unfortunately, the LOHAS sector is probably the most racially segregated part of the US economy — in terms of its customers, owners and employees. Changing that could create better health, more jobs and increased wealth for communities that need all three."1

Not only are blacks and browns not a part of the new green economy, they are the consummate uninformed consumers, or, as one environmentalist stated, they are "eco-parasites."

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According to the Department of Health Services, County of Los Angeles, "Food insecurity, defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods..." is experienced by "22% of lower income households (defined ... as 300% of the federal poverty level.... This equates to over 400,000 households with food insecurity, of which 141,000 included someone who had experienced hunger in the past year."³

Jones writes, "The climate crisis is galloping from the margins of geek science to the epicenter of our politics, culture and economics. As the new environmentalists advance, only two questions remain: whom will they take with them? And whom will they leave behind?"²

I couldn't have said it better, but I just want to add that where there is a will there is definitely a way. Previous generations have produced innovators and inventors of color who contributed greatly to society in spite of all odds. Slave-born George Washington Carver taught Midwest farmers how to improve soil through crop rotation, invented over 300 products that could be developed from peanuts, and 115 uses for the sweet potato. Victor Ochoa, a Mexican revolutionary, invented the Ochoaplane, a precursor to the modern helicopter. In the late 1990s, Mexican-American Victor Celorio, patented the "Instabook Maker" a technology that now allows e-book publishers to print electronic books offline, cheaply and quickly.

With an emphasis on standardization in traditional public schools, this century's inventors will most undoubtedly come from small, personalized high-performance schools that celebrate innovation and support individual achievement and from communities that support their efforts.

How can the new Green Economy be introduced to tomorrow's leaders and innovators within the highest need communities, to those youngsters least apt to study or practice environmentalism at home or in school?

Here's just one simple idea: With time restraints and set and structured classroom activities, vermicomposting (harvesting worm castings out of table scraps and other organic products) can increase awareness of vital environmental issues and provide a setting for the ideal after school, home or weekend project that can blossom into much, much more. Vermicomposting is, indeed, earth science studies from the ground up!

But that's just one idea. Just one!!! This is a multi-billion-dollar industry whose time has come and there are a thousand ideas



that can evolve the science that haven't been discovered yet. The question remains, will our black and brown inner city youngsters be able to capitalize on the new green economy? With our help, the answer is "Yes They Can."

1-2) "Beyond Eco-Apartheid: Is the Green Movement too White?" Van Jones, former President Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, <http://www.ellabakercenter.org/page.php?pageid=41&contentid=253>,

3) "L.A. Health: Food Insecurity," County of Los Angeles, Department of Health Services, http://www.lapublichealth.org/wwwfiles/ph/hae/ha/lahealthfoodinsec_0304.pdf

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