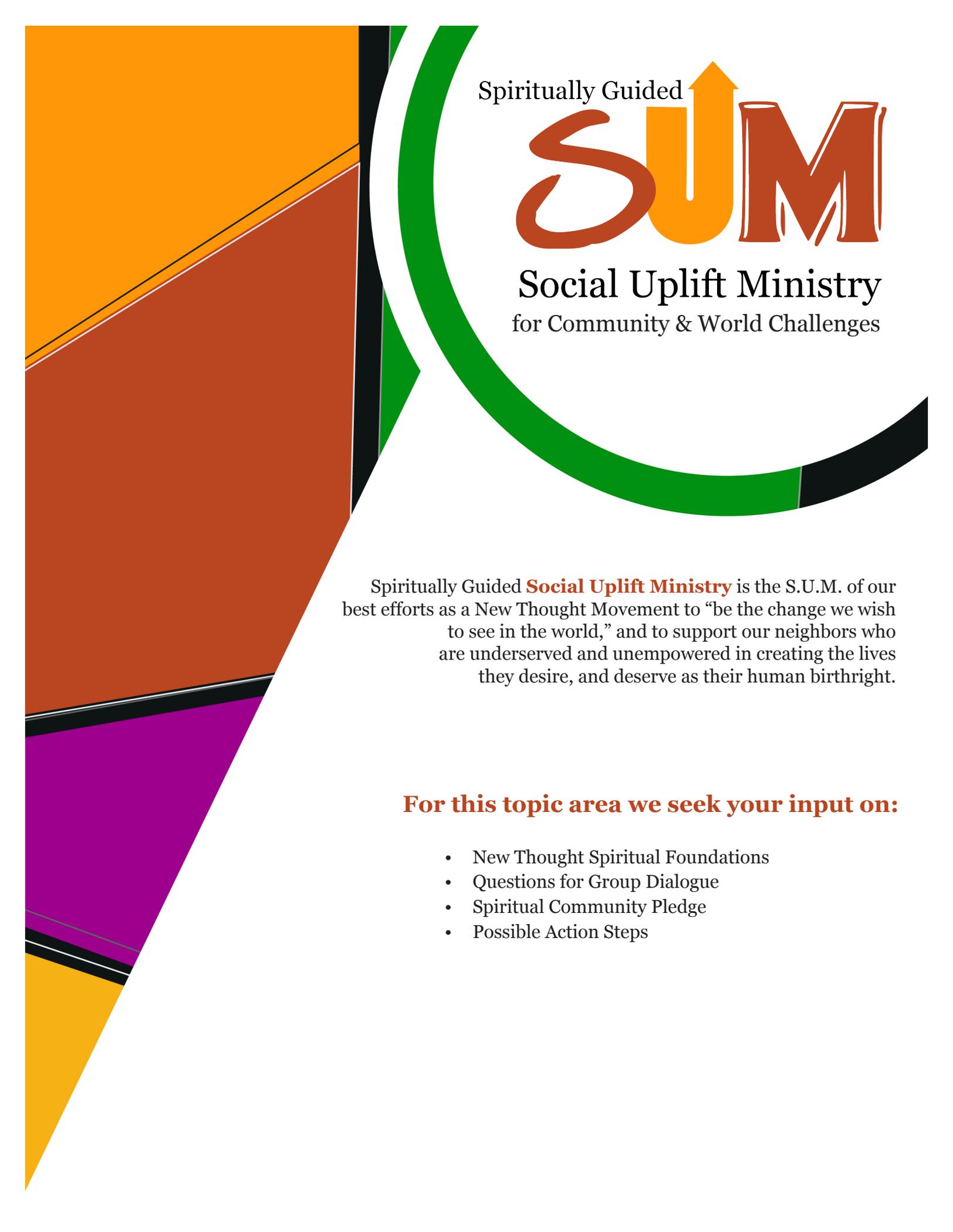




Healing Racism and Upholding Ethnic Fairness

Gathering Your Wisdom for AGNT's Community Action Series





Spiritually Guided

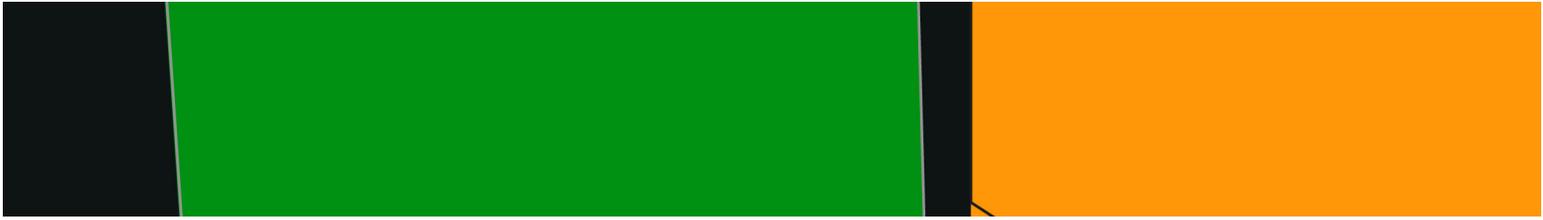
SUM

Social Uplift Ministry
for Community & World Challenges

Spiritually Guided **Social Uplift Ministry** is the S.U.M. of our best efforts as a New Thought Movement to “be the change we wish to see in the world,” and to support our neighbors who are underserved and unempowered in creating the lives they desire, and deserve as their human birthright.

For this topic area we seek your input on:

- New Thought Spiritual Foundations
- Questions for Group Dialogue
- Spiritual Community Pledge
- Possible Action Steps

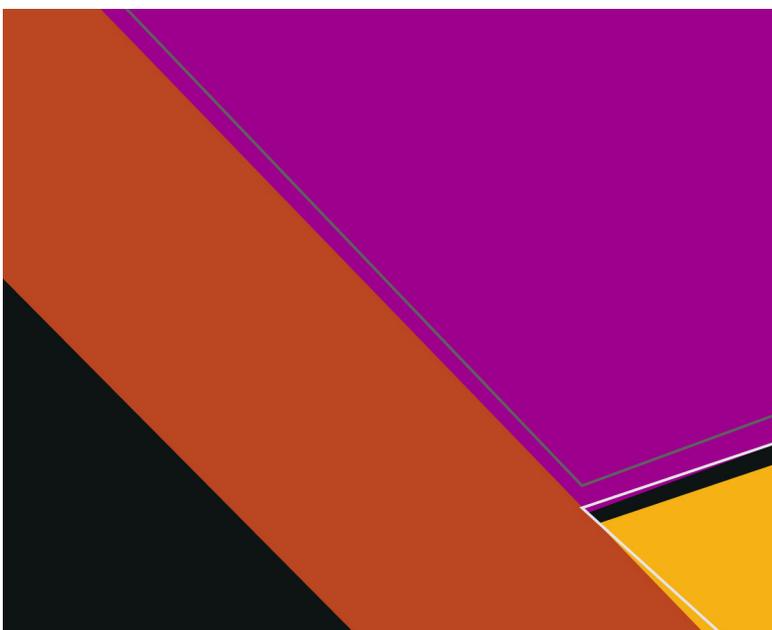


Why Spiritually Guided Social Uplift Ministry? (S.U.M.) We Become Whole by Doing Our Part

As New Thought communities, our spiritual practice calls us to be agents for social change. Without a supportive community, social change work can be draining, confusing, unsustainable, frustrating, and scattered. The Association for Global New Thought provides a simple but transformative approach to doing social change work, bringing together small groups of friends and colleagues to focus on an issue that connects the congregation, the local community, and AGNT. A Spiritually Guided **Social Uplift Ministry** (S.U.M.) is a place to pray, meditate, build trust, take risks, make mistakes, achieve goals, learn together, and deepen the connection between social change and spiritual growth. Spiritually Guided S.U.M. becomes a home base from which we engage with the world and return for reflection, discussion, and renewal. “S.U.M. is greater when we all do our parts,” and connects us to higher self expression, calling us into right relationship as we walk beside our partners and endeavor to co-create the beloved community.

What Happens Here?

By following the leadership of communities most impacted by injustice, Spiritually Guided Social Uplift Ministry models restorative justice and builds local capacity for social change. The following list serves as guidelines for groups.

- Building relationships of trust and accountability with communities most impacted by injustice by showing up and staying in the relationships for the long haul
 - Remembering that the liberation of everyone and everything is inherently connected, and together, we are on a learning journey toward it
 - Getting out of your comfort zone (materially, emotionally, and physically)
 - Contemplating the gifts you are going to receive while accompanying, instead of how you will give, help, teach, tell, or fix
 - Unlearning patterns of dominance, like taking charge, leading, making decisions, etc.
 - Walking together while navigating differences in a loving, respectful, trusting relationship
 - Being challenged together, encouraging one another’s spiritual growth
 - Asking for and lending empathic support
 - Moving beyond asking to acting
 - Disrupting the systems and structures of oppression—with integrity and in authentic community with those most impacted, following their leadership
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Spiritually Guided Activism for Racism and Ethnic Fairness

CONDITION

Many use racial and ethnic differences to spread fear, hate, and judgment that separates people. Racism is a social construct based on false categories of separation and has been used as a systemic tool to perpetuate oppression in our nation and around the world.

UNDERLYING BELIEF CREATING THE CONDITION

Separation/lack of unity. Lack and competition. People can be put in categories that are used to discriminate. Scarcity thinking. "Exceptionalism," or the belief that some peoples inherently are less valuable or deserving of dignity, resources, and equity.



SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Ernest Holmes: *“Unity does not mean uniformity.”* We are all one through the Divine and yet that oneness does not mean sameness. Each person is a direct and equal emanation of the Divine, unique, perfect, whole, and complete in our diversity. All are endowed with equal access to the prosperity and love of the Divine.

PRAYER

God is all there is. We are One.
God is alive within each person.
We belong to each other. We are each unique and of equal value. Multiplicity within our Unity is beautiful. The more deeply connected we are the more expansive the human experience. We respect and honor all beings. Each being is free to express according to their innate value, not limited by definition of their race or ethnic identity. Everyone is always an expression of the Divine. There is enough of everything for everyone. I am grateful for the feeling of unity with all people. I release, knowing it is done, and so it is.



QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DIALOGUE

Critical Opportunities **CHALLENGES**

Have you ever been accused of being racist? How did it make you feel? Did it change your behavior? Why or why not? Who are you most afraid of having conversations about race with? Do you have any idea why?

Guiding Principles **VALUES**

What personal experiences (which may include your family and friends' experiences) inform your beliefs about racism and ethnicity? Are the values you cherish consistent with those beliefs?

Transformative Practices **METHODOLOGY**

When you hear people in your circles making biased comments, do you speak up? Why or why not? Would role play or consistent discussion in a safe space be helpful in helping you evolve your behavior and choices in the face of confrontation? In confrontational settings, how can we encourage radically honest conversations that are grounded in personal humility and acknowledge that we're all learning?

Social Embodiment **OUTCOMES**

How might bias be currently showing up in your immediate environment and experience, including your spiritual community? What do you think it would take to create a society that values racial and ethnic diversity? Can you think of anything you are already doing, or that your spiritual community could do together toward that effort?



PLEDGE:

We acknowledge that there are still deep racial divisions in America that must be overcome and healed and commit to engaging people from all racial, ethnic, religious and identity groups in genuine efforts to increase understanding, communication, caring and respect for one another. We will work to find ways to reinforce and honor our common humanity and create space to celebrate the distinct differences that make our communities vibrant.



Healing Racism and Upholding Ethnic Fairness

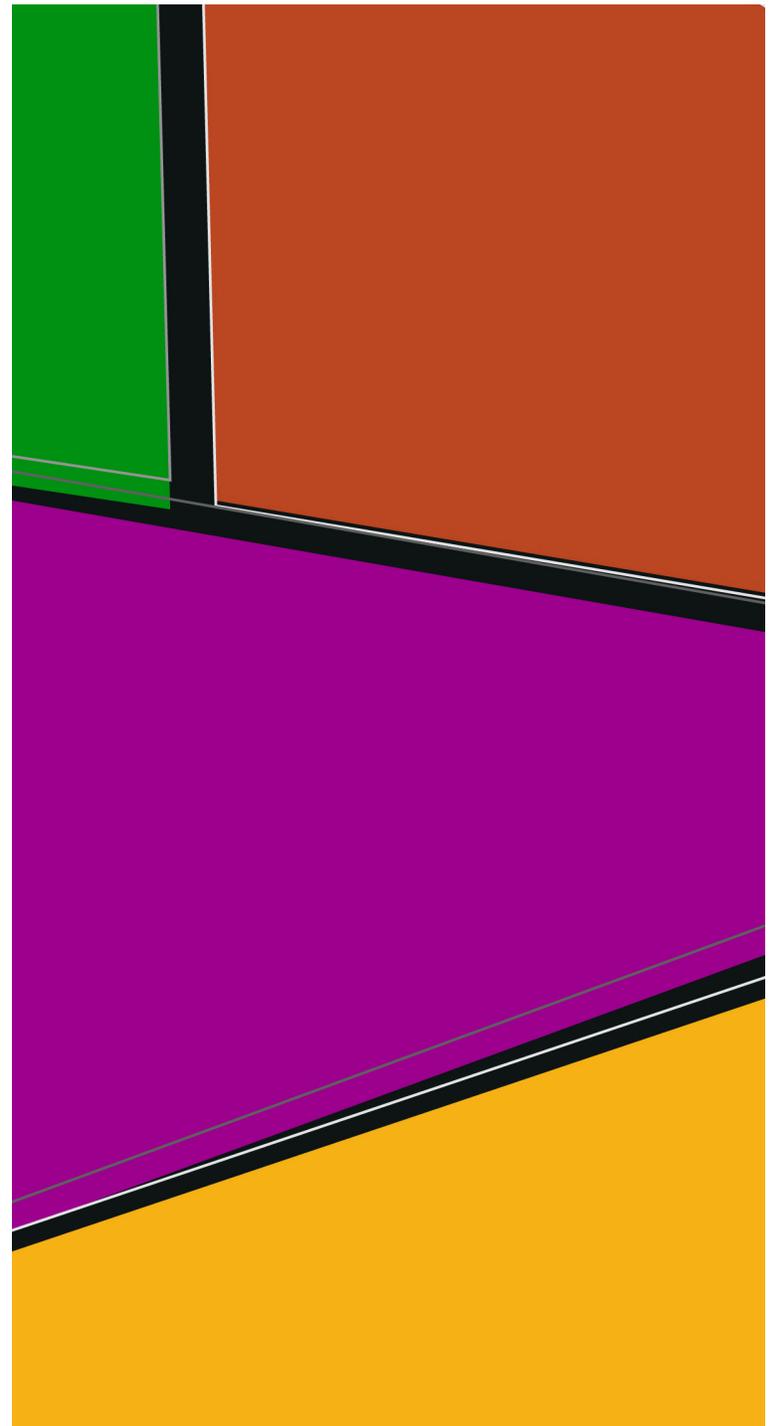
Although racism is almost universally condemned across the political spectrum, what exactly constitutes racism (and what merits the label of “racist”) is not so clear. What these words actually mean is the subject of ongoing, often heated disagreement.

Conservatives generally equate racism with either an endorsement of one’s own racial group’s superiority or another racial group’s inferiority. Thus racism, for conservatives, is primarily what lies in one’s heart. From this point of view, only someone who has acted out of overt and conscious prejudice towards members of a different racial group can be legitimately identified as “racist.” There is frequent frustration among conservatives about how both (inadvertent) interpersonal encounters and structural inequality are labeled “racist” by progressives, despite no evidence of underlying hostility or negative bias.

Over recent decades, progressive academics and cultural commentators have advanced a more comprehensive definition that goes beyond conscious intent to the unconscious ways that people and institutions may reflect underlying, subconscious bias and hostility. From this perspective, it’s understandable that centuries of racial inequity would leave unacknowledged, implicit habits that are not only not intentional but may not even be in our awareness. Such habits and cognitions are sometimes referred to as “racial bias” or “implicit bias” rather than “racism.” But even then they are generally viewed by progressives as part of the racist ideology that pervades American society.

From this latter perspective, racism is much more ubiquitous than the racism more narrowly defined by the former definition – and thus draws

more constant attention. This kind of constant attention has provoked a backlash from those who see its presence exaggerated. Writes one conservative columnist, “the word racism is like ketchup. It can be put on practically anything and demanding evidence makes you a ‘racist.’”



Healing Racism and Upholding Ethnic Fairness

willing to do the hard work of confronting and overcoming this kind of “institutional racism,” we will not make the full progress we need.

It is more critical now than ever that white communities begin to focus on the politics of race and racism; “white privilege” has perpetuated racial inequality and race-driven political resentments in ways most white people simply aren’t aware of. Constructive attention to the issues of white privilege and their psychological effects on societal norms can change the national discussion about race and racism so that current realities might more closely align with the principles that most citizens cherish.

From a more conservative view, arguments of institutional racism, however well-intentioned, may cause more harm than good. Following the same example, accusations of institutional racism within school districts often lead to deep divisions and increased anger - alongside little willingness of aggrieved parties to take personal responsibility for their financial situations, their neighborhoods, or the education of their children. If it was true that systemic racism was the root cause of all the other problems, this would likely all be worth it - but conservatives see these accusations of institutional racism as abstract and incredulous attempts to connect dots in line with progressive ideology.

SOURCE: www.allsides.com/topics/racism-racist

Progressive academics and activists also draw a distinction between interpersonal bias and “institutional racism.” The latter is defined as a set of policies which maintain racial inequalities. According to this perspective, even policies that are written in race-neutral language can be categorized as “institutional racism”. For example, the system of funding schools primarily through property taxes is ostensibly race-neutral. Because communities of color are disproportionately born into systems of poverty, and because kids typically go to neighborhood schools and our neighborhoods are racially segregated, the practice of funding schools with property taxes means that children of color are more likely to go to schools with fewer resources for books, school supplies, and teacher salaries - all of which could qualify as “institutional racism.” From this point of view, until we are

