Does President Obama’s momentous election victory signify a new, post-racism American era? Some observers, such as a New York Times science editor, think so. But, unfortunately, this claim is premature for a host of reasons.

1. It took “a perfect storm” of interlocking factors to elect Obama.
2. Many bigots actually voted for Obama.
3. Two logical fallacies underlie this too-optimistic view.
4. Racist attitudes and actions repeatedly occurred throughout the campaign.
5. White Southern and older voters both demonstrated that rank racism remains.
6. Increased turn-out of young and minority voters was crucial.

So, what changes in American race relations may take place during the Obama presidency?

Thomas Pettigrew received his Ph.D. from Harvard University where he taught for 25 years. He has conducted intergroup research throughout the world and has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, and Stanford’s Research Institute for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity. Pettigrew has received the Lewin Award, the Allport Intergroup Research Award twice, the Sydney Spivack Sociological Award for Race Relations Research, the Distinguished Scientist Award of the Society for Experimental Social Psychology, and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Academy for Intercultural Research.

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