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TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC" ADDRESSING VIOLENCE: Are We Grasping at Straws?



By Stephen L. Bakke  March 27, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

An editorial and columnist report about an incident of downtown random violence got me to thinking about how we approach the problem of violence. The attempts being made are worthy, but I think we need to take a closer look at some societal "shifts" which are occurring.

Here's my response:

Addressing Violence: Are We Grasping at Straws?

The March 26th editorial, "Addressing violence in downtown Mpls." talked of the random St. Patrick's Day "sucker punch" by a passing hoodlum, and roving "flash mobs" of young people. Columnist Jon Tevlin gave an excellent report on the incident earlier in the week.

The editorial noted that in spite of much caution taken to avoid such an incident, it happened anyway. We learned about the many worthy programs being created by a coalition of downtown "stakeholders" including law enforcement, the Downtown Council, schools, businesses, etc.

Downtown Council President Steve Cramer was quoted stating, "As a community we must agree to define such behavior as outside the bounds of what we will accept. We simply won't tolerate it....." That got me thinking about "outside the bounds of acceptance."

I think that starts to get at the root of the issue, but perhaps we are ignoring some important problems because their examination fosters accusations of political incorrectness. Nevertheless, I believe these deserve examination as to their impact on hatred, racism, and violence:

- Have government programs institutionalized "urban poverty plantations" as breeding grounds for violence?
- Has a de-emphasis on family structure led to changes in attitudes affecting violence?
- Have dysfunctional lifestyles become more acceptable?
- Has morality been redefined?
- Has a reduction in moral absolutes led to an expansion of acceptable activities?

Institutionalized poverty, changes in attitudes about violence, wider definition of acceptable lifestyles, redefinition of morality, expansion of acceptable activities – do these fit into the dreadful equation of violence?

Think about it! Please!