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SEGREGATION THEN – NOW IT'S ENFORCED SEPARATION WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

By Steve Bakke  March 10, 2018



Here's what provoked me:

A report in the Minneapolis newspaper updated us on efforts to remove the “Coffman” name from the Coffman Memorial Union at the University of Minnesota. University President Coffman was involved with segregating University student housing many decades ago. It reminded me of something that's going on right now.

Here's my response:

Segregation Then – Now It's Enforced Separation What's the Difference?

A March 9 report in the Star Tribune, dealt with a very straightforward issue. Its title was “*U student body wants Coffman name off building.*” University President Coffman was involved with segregating student housing at the University of Minnesota.

Thankfully, the U of M, and virtually all other institutions, reversed many of those symbols of racism, not in small measure because of the inspired teaching and example of a great American – Martin Luther King Jr.

While I make no defense of racist actions taken by the University, I do bemoan that in some ways we've come full circle. Many modern institutions are rejecting some of what MLK taught us in America. One of his major legacies was a dream that we would deemphasize our racial differences and judge people by the content of their soul.

What we are seeing now is enforced separation at some colleges and universities. Let me give some examples. AT UCLA, “color blindness,” the idea that we shouldn't obsess about another's race, is defined as a microaggression, and is discouraged. In line with this, at some colleges and universities we are beginning to see what is called “identity-based” housing. This amounts to segregated housing for the traditionally oppressed – e.g. sexual orientation, race, culture, gender, etc. And I've found reports of some classes limiting enrollment to specified minorities.

We had segregation “way back when.” We now have enforced separation at many colleges and universities. What's the difference?