

IGNORANCE EQUALS EDUCATION?

I had a very interesting conversation with a young African-American man recently. A bright, articulate, educated young man, he owns his own business and is the defacto Operations Manager for a very successful minority-owned business. He drives a new car, his wife drives a foreign import luxury car, and he sends his children to a private school.

Apparently, he was somewhat disturbed by a news article he had seen or heard regarding an alleged case of discrimination resulting in a lawsuit. He said *“racism and discrimination is a plague affecting America and something needs to be done about it!”*

I asked him, “How would you describe racial discrimination in America? Give me some examples.”

He trotted out the usual ubiquitous explanations and examples... “People are refused jobs”... “People who disagree with Obama”... “People who question Muslim terrorism”... “People who use the N word,” etc., etc.

I was persistent, *“Give me a specific example. When and how have you, or any black person you know, personally been subjected to overt racism or racist behavior?”*

He was forced to admit that neither he, nor anyone he knew personally, had ever been subjected to overt racism or racist behavior by whites, nor been called the N word – except by other Blacks.

I said, *“Can I ask you something?”*

“Sure,” he said.

I paused a moment... *“Have you ever seen a segregated water fountain?”*

He laughed, *“A segregated water fountain?”*

“Yeah,” I said, *“You know those things you drink out of in public places, like parks and malls.”*

“You’re kidding right?”

“Nope, used to drink out of them all the time, in *segregated parks,*” I replied.

“Segregated parks?!”

“Sure! You don’t think Blacks and Whites used the same parks, or playgrounds and schools do you?”

“Well. I knew about schools, but parks and stuff, too?”

“Yes... and by the way, our schoolbooks came used from the white schools.”

“Get out!”

“Yep.”

I continued, "Have you ever been in a "Colored" entrance, restroom, or cemetery?"
"C'mon Ben, you are putting me on! You mean you had separate entrances and restrooms for coloreds, and even *cemeteries!*?"

"Of course! And how's this for a joke... dead people, blind people, and even crazy people had separate institutions. You don't think blind people and dead people being segregated is funny?"

"Was it all over the US?"

"No, mostly just the South, but the North had some problems too – after a lot of us moved up there."

My friend continued, "How bad was it, and until when?"

"Well, until the time the US entered WWII, it was pretty extensive."

"Like, how extensive?"

"Well, let me name a few more for you besides schools and restrooms. There were restaurants, hotels, train cars, waiting rooms, elevators, hospitals, swimming pools, prisons, and, oh yes, even God...you had segregated churches too."

"Well, could black people get into Heaven with white folk?"

"Yeah, and then we would all be "washed whiter than snow," so no problem, right?"

He just looked at me.

(True story)

Now tell me again what was it was you were saying about modern day "racism" and "discrimination" in America?