

'Most segregated hour' is 9:30 Sunday morning

■ Kokomo has more than two black churches.

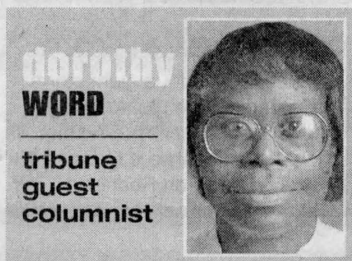
Some statements seem to take on a life of their own and stay around forever. Perhaps that is why someone observed: "A word is dead when it is said - some say. I say it just begins to live that day!" Repeating familiar statements, quoting them, can often reinforce or clarify a point you want to make.

A quotation belongs to whoever wants to use it. But sometimes you may not know the source of a particular quotation. For example, people who say, "The eleven o'clock hour on Sunday mornings is the most segregated hour in America" - might be shocked to know they are quoting Malcolm X!

When I moved to Kokomo in 1996, I learned that "the eleven o'clock hour on Sunday mornings" was NOT "the most segregated hour." It was 9:30 a.m.! I had always attended churches ranging in size from tiny to small. Living in Kokomo, I decided, just out of curiosity, to visit some BIG churches.

Being new in town, I wanted to visit a big church that was easy to find. I found one that happened to be a white congregation. Privately, the assistant minister told me I should go to Second Baptist. She said there was already one black attending her church. At the next big church, during the "Fellowship time," I was urged to attend Wayman Chapel in Colored Town.

I visited a few more big churches, then some middle-



sized. The names "Second Baptist" and "Wayman Chapel" were brought up repeatedly, saying in effect that Kokomo had only two black churches. What an insult to Kokomo's other black churches, implying that they did not exist or were not worth mentioning!

Of course, they are all worthy

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of recognition: Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, Disciples of Christ Worship Center, Grace Memorial Church of God in Christ, Fountain of Life Worship Center, Cathedral of Praise Bible Way, New Bethel, Strait Gate, Zion Missionary Baptist Church and several others.

Hindsight tells me that those apprehensive church-goers who felt an urgency to direct me away from their churches had a mindset that made them feel duty-bound to guard their status quo. The good news is those

vocal church-goers are a small minority who do not speak for nor represent all white church-goers.

Martin Luther King's statement, "I have a dream," resonates into this 21st Century - quoted by blacks, browns, whites, Jews, Catholics, Protestants and others. Rev. Woodie White, the first black United Methodist Bishop of the Indiana Area, is among the many who quote King's uplifting words. In fact, every year, Bishop White writes a letter to Martin Luther King Jr. giving an account of how far America has come in realizing The Dream.

"Martin, I write at the beginning of this new millennium, with both gratitude and expectation. Yet not without a profound sadness. Race seems a persistent problem or challenge....Sadly and surprisingly, hate crimes today, Martin, are crimes of the young."

Bishop White writes that he is grateful America has changed for the better, but America is not yet a land where all its citizens are valued and accepted. He continues, "Racism is fundamentally a dispute with God. Inferring that God made a mistake when creating the human family as diversity instead of uniformity. The Church and religion have failed to address the issues of racism as sin and therefore intrinsically evil. This has eternal consequences!"

The Bishop remains hopeful because sometimes fairness and justice prevail. In conclusion he tells Martin, "I still hold fast to The Dream of a better America and a better tomorrow."

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