

“Why Migrate South?”

The past couple of decades have seen a reverse migration pattern as Black Americans left northern states to which they had migrated over the last century only to return to former southern slave states. There are a variety of factors that contributed to this pattern: A search for more friendly environs (i.e., the recognition that purveyors of racism in America are not limited to southern Whites); employment opportunities; and a desire to reunite with relatives that remained in the south. All of these are logical responses to existing conditions—to a point.

Where these responses defy logic is in the context of scientific predictions concerning global warming. Scientists are contending that the globe will face a warming trend with warmer temperatures reaching higher and higher latitudes. Warmer climates portend more severe weather patterns (higher costs for insurance due to increased and more severe natural disasters), increased demand for energy to make life bearable (higher costs for energy), and greater demand for dwindling water resources (higher costs for water and related goods and services).

In spite of these predictions, Blacks continue to migrate in the southerly direction. Why? Four reasons come to mind. First, Blacks may not be fully aware of predictions related to global warming. Second, Blacks may know about these predictions, but reject them as being inaccurate. Blacks may know about the predictions, believe that they are true, but adopt an irrational response by ignoring the predictions. Fourth, and finally, Blacks may or may not know about the predictions, may or may not believe that they are accurate, but because they have no long-term plan, they are simply blown like dust by the wind to southern states.

It is difficult to believe that Blacks are unaware of predictions about global warming. Given trends in media consumption by Blacks, it is nearly impossible for them not to know. So we may reject reason one. As for reasons two and three, it is probable that Blacks may not view predictions about global warming as accurate. Why? Because it is uncommon to find Blacks who have a strong background in the physical sciences. Given the tendency to base decisions on existing knowledge, as opposed to undertaking research to develop informed decisions, Blacks are ill-equipped to make rational decisions in response to “global warming” predictions. As for the fourth reason, it has been argued, that one of the most critical and pressing issues facing Black Americans—this nation within a nation—is that Blacks have no overarching long-term strategic plan. As a result, Blacks continue to leave the frying pan of the north for the coming fire in the south.

Meanwhile, other groups in the nation move northward and westward to Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington where few Blacks live and where conditions are likely to be more favorable for longer periods of time should predictions about global warming prove accurate.

Like it or not, time and history move forward. Blacks have come too far and have overcome too much to make the types of missteps that appear to be unfolding with respect to global warming. Black leadership should awaken to the need for a longer-term vision for Black America, which can be implemented to save the generations. If that leadership wants to consider a response to global warming in a religious context, it should recall that Abraham was a scientist whose people ultimately migrated to Cana(an)da.

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