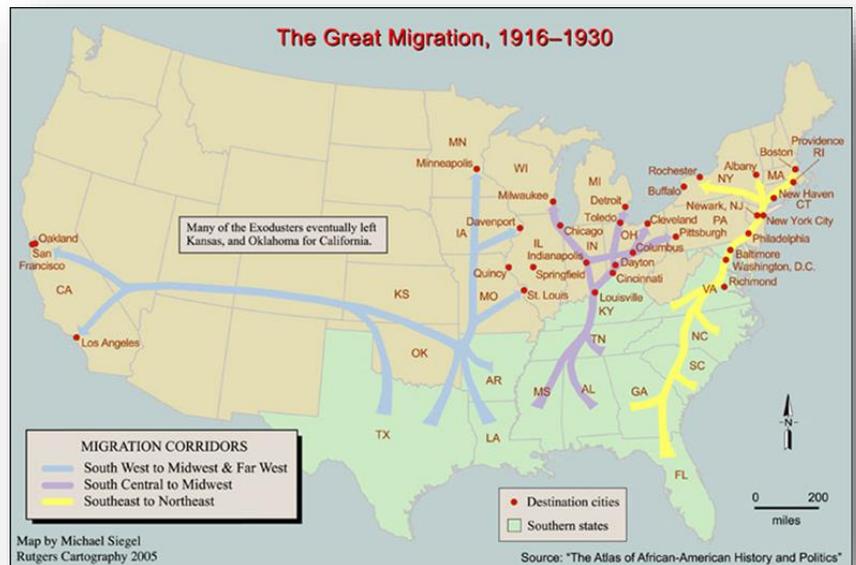
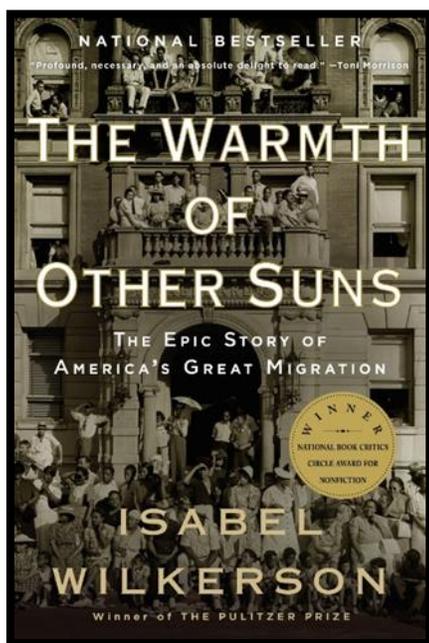


One of the many delights of life at CBF is the experience of having been “parachuted” into African American life in ways beyond anything I had ever experienced before (and into American Jewish life as well, here at OMI). I’m learning new things all the time!

One of those new learnings has to do with “The Great Migration” of African Americans from the South to other parts of the country from about 1915-1970, as well as “The New Great Migration” of African Americans from the North back to some parts of the South since 1965. I’d had some small intuition about these things, but I’m embarrassed to say that I had never given them a great deal of thought until this summer.

The precipitating event for these new discoveries was reading Isabel Wilkerson’s Pulitzer-Prize winning book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*. I don’t remember how I ran across the book, but its many accolades, including being named by the *New York Times* as one of the best non-fiction books of all time, aroused my curiosity, and I just finished reading it last week.

While there have been other books that treated this Great Migration, notably *The Promised Land: The Great Migration and How It Changed America*, by Nicholas Lemann of Columbia University, *The Warmth of Other Suns* is distinguished by the fact that its author, Isabel Wilkerson, is herself a child of the Migration, which causes the book to be a great deal more empathetic and compassionate than Lemann’s book is reputed to be.



Named to more than thirty “Best of the Year” lists, *The Warmth of Other Suns* has been called “an intimate epic,” interweaving large-scale sociological observations of the Migration and its effects with three biographies of persons who were part of this Migration. These three persons left the South in three different decades for three different destinations, impelled by similar desires to escape oppression and to “breathe free.”

From 1915-1970, nearly *six million people* participated in this migration, mostly rural folk at first, and more urban folk as time went by. Wilkerson’s account of the Migration is done through the lives of “**Ida Mae Gladney**, who in 1937 left

sharecropping and prejudice in Mississippi for Chicago, where she achieved quiet blue-collar success and, in old age, voted for Barack Obama when he ran for an Illinois Senate seat;



sharp and quick-tempered **George Starling**, who in 1945 fled Florida for Harlem, where he endangered his job fighting for civil rights, saw his family fall, and finally found peace in God; and **Robert Foster**, who left Louisiana in 1953 to pursue a medical career, the personal physician to Ray Charles as part of a glitteringly successful medical career, which allowed him to purchase a grand home where he often threw exuberant parties.

“The Warmth of Other Suns describes this trio’s first treacherous and exhausting cross-country trips by car and train and their new lives in colonies that grew into ghettos, as well as how they changed these cities with southern food, faith, and culture and improved them with discipline, drive, and hard work.”

For many years, “commentators routinely demeaned these migrants as the dregs of a failed society. Even the distinguished black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier fretted over the ‘ignorant, uncouth and impoverished’ throngs that had invaded his beloved Chicago. Arguments raged for decades about the tangled pathology of black families divided from their rural roots and thrown together in dead-end Northern slums. ‘The migrants were cast as poor illiterates,’ Wilkerson says, ‘who imported out-of-wedlock births, joblessness and welfare dependency wherever they went.’”

But more recent scholarship, Wilkerson notes, tells another story. Today, these black migrants are viewed as a modern version of the Europeans who flooded America’s shores in the late 1800s and early 1900s. What linked them together was their heroic determination to roll the dice for a better future.

“It is no surprise, therefore, to find census data showing that blacks who left the South had far more schooling than blacks who stayed. Or that the migrants had higher employment numbers than Northern-born blacks and a more stable family life, as shown by lower divorce rates and fewer children born outside of marriage. Put simply,” Wilkerson says, “the well-known ‘migrant advantage’ has worked historically for Americans of all colors.”



I found the book to be quite powerful, both as a testimony to African American courage and grit and as witness to non-African American prejudice and hatred. It is a riveting read.

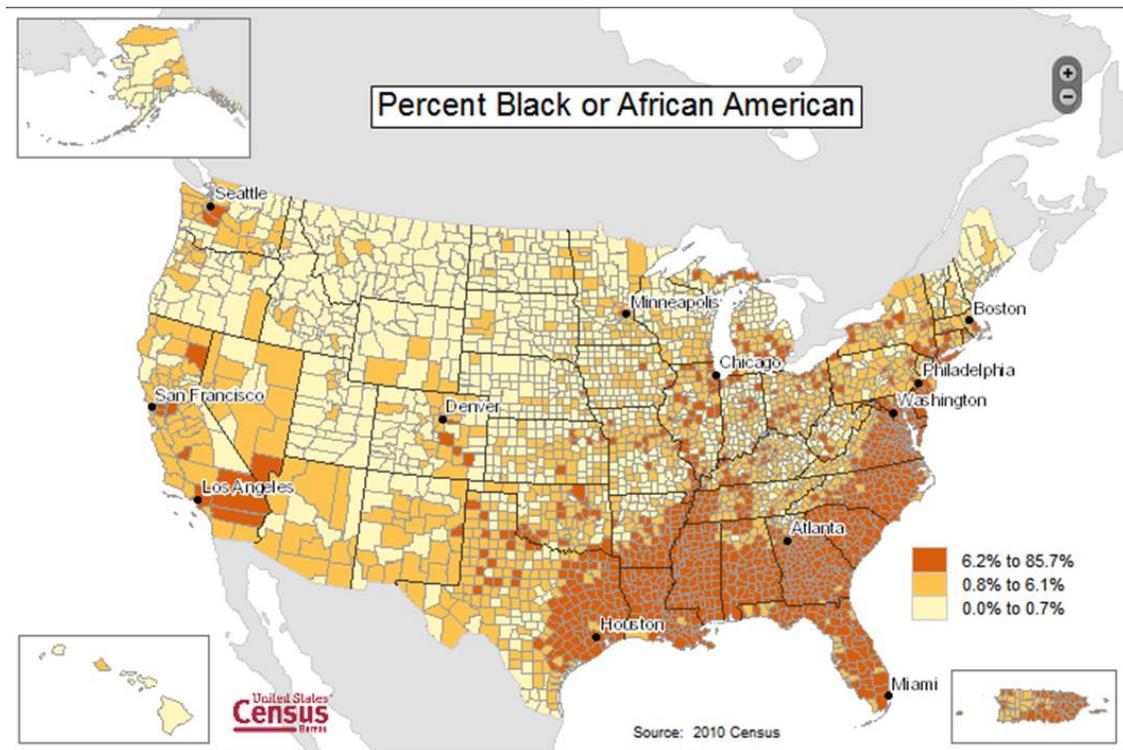
Dave

Postscript:

According to Wikipedia, “The **New Great Migration** is the term for demographic changes from 1965 to the present which are a reversal of the previous 35-year trend of black migration within the United States. Since 1965, deindustrialization of cities in the Northeastern and Midwestern United States, growth of jobs in the ‘New South’ with lower costs of living, family and kinship ties, and improving racial relations have all acted to attract African Americans to the Southern United States in substantial numbers. As early as 1975-1980, seven southern states were net black migration gainers. African-American populations continue to drop throughout much of the Northeast, particularly with black emigration out of the state of New York, as well as out of Northern New Jersey, as they rise in the Southern United States.

“College graduates and middle-class migrants make up a major portion of the new migration. For instance, from 1965–2000, the states of Florida, Georgia, and Texas attracted the most black college graduates. The only state outside the former Confederacy that attracted a sizeable migration of black college graduates was Maryland, the majority of the population growth being in the counties surrounding Washington D.C. In that same period, California was a net loser of black migration for the first time in three decades. While the migration is still in progress, much data is from this prior 35-year period.

“The New Great Migration is not evenly distributed throughout the South, being concentrated in states that have the most job opportunities, especially Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, and Texas. Other southern states including Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Alabama, and Arkansas have seen little net growth in the African American population from this ‘return migration.’”



The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know

O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

Week thirty: KEEPING LIFE IN FOCUS

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Focus. That single word holds the key for success in so many different endeavors of life. This was at the heart of Paul’s own interest when he challenged us to “*set our minds on things above*” in the Colossian letter (3:2). It was also at the heart of his message to the Philippians when he said, “*This one thing I do*” (KJV).

The powerful Federal Express company, headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee, exploded into worldwide prominence by simply bringing focus to one thing—overnight deliveries. Southwest Airlines is one of the nation’s leading air carriers today primarily because of its single focus on low-cost coach travel with on-time performance. And who could talk about the element of focus without mentioning the Starbucks coffee chain. When all other coffee shops were busy dispensing all types of food services, Starbucks simply developed coffee shops with a focus on, of all things, coffee!

Focus is fundamental to spiritual success as well as business success. Keeping the main thing the main thing in the midst of a multitude of other things is always a challenge for a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the key elements to spiritual growth is the ability to obtain and then maintain focus in the Christian life. Focus will lead us to do four things.

FOCUS WILL PUT OUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER

Paul said, “*This one thing I do*” (Philippians 3:13 KJV). Not ten things, not five things, not even two things. But “*this one thing I do.*” First, you define your goal, and then it begins to define you.

FOCUS WILL GIVE US A FORWARD MIND-SET

Too many of us today spend most of our time looking around us or, worse yet, looking behind us. It gives us a forward mind-set. Paul’s focus led him to possess a wise forgetfulness about the past and enabled him to make sure his reach continued to exceed his grasp.

FOCUS WILL SET US ON THE SECOND MILE

Focus brings a passion to our work that instills within us a desire to do what is required—and then some. Paul said, “*I press.*” This word *press* carries with it the idea of an intense endeavor, much like an avid hunter who is pursuing his prey.

FOCUS ENABLES US TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING

One of the most valuable assets focus will bring to us is the ability to know where we are headed. Paul said he was pressing toward “*the goal.*” This word is a translation of the Greek word *skopos*, from which we get our English word *scope*. Like the scope on a rifle, focus will enable us to get our goals and priorities in the crosshairs.

So what is your goal in Christian living? What is in the crosshairs of your scope? As you memorize this verse this week, meditate on Christ and on Him alone. Put Him in the crosshairs and do that “one thing” you do, for the glory of His name. Keep your life in focus by keeping Christ in the center of it.