

No Place to Lay Your Head

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney
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Are African-American people Democrats or are they Republicans?

If you look at current voting patterns, you could make the argument that African-Americans are Democrats. In the 2008 Presidential election, African-Americans overwhelmingly voted for President Barack Obama by a whopping 96%.

I don't know any political party that wouldn't be salivating at the thought that a specific voting demographic would guarantee them 51% of their votes every year. Such is the case of the African-American vote.....minus the salivation.

The African-American vote, by and large, has consistently been given to the Democratic Party for the last several decades without any true accountability or guarantees.

How did this come about?

I mean, it was Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party that fought against slavery and provided Negroes freedom through the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation.

How could Negroes abandon their loyalty to a political party that set them free on paper?

Remember, it was the Republican Party that chose to receive disenfranchised Southern 'Dixiecrats' into their party, in order to expand their base and influence in the South. The

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Republican Party made it a point to sacrifice Negro support; instead, adopting a strategy to expand their base by embracing Southern 'Dixiecrats', who were strongly in favor of the continued enslavement and ill-treatment of Negro people.

As a direct result, the Democratic Party capitalized on an opportunity to provide a makeshift home for a disrespected and disillusioned group of Negro people, kicked to the curb by a Republican Party that no longer considered them politically relevant.

The Negro has now morphed into the African-American, seeking to find acceptance in a political party that scooped them up on the rebound like a jilted lover. If you look at the Democratic Party today, you see that African-Americans are treated like the girlfriend or boyfriend, more than the spouse.

There are many interest groups within the Democratic Party that have caused African-Americans to fall to the bottom of the barrel when it comes to the needs and interests of African-Americans.

African-Americans have become more like the person that receives that 2 a.m. phone call after the club, rather than the person who strongly believes the relationship matters and there is a commitment between the two parties. Look at the key positions within the Democratic Party and in the current Obama administration and you will see where African-Americans fair. Contrast what is happening in the Democratic Party and the Obama administration, to what occurred during the Bush administration and in the Republican Party.

Regardless of how you feel about George W. Bush, it is fact the he had several African-Americans occupy several of the highest posts in his administration; General Colin Powell as his Secretary of State (2001-2005), Condoleezza Rice as his National Security Adviser (2001-2005) and Secretary of State (2005-2009), Rod Paige was over the Department of Education (2001-2005) and Alphonso Jackson as head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (2003-2008). Powell, Rice and Paige were the first African-Americans to serve in their respective positions.

To his credit, President Obama has appointed Eric Holder as the nation's first Black attorney general over the Department of Justice and former Dallas mayor Ron Kirk as the nation's first

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U.S. Trade Representative. When President Obama spoke to the group of African-Americans a few years ago, he told them to quit whining and complaining, kick off their bedroom slippers and put on their marching boots. The question is: What are African-Americans being asked to march for?

The Republican Party has pretty much conceded the black vote to the Democratic Party, but I am not so sure that is a smart move.

African-Americans need to strongly consider whether their vote is all the Democratic Party wants. African-Americans seem to be silenced by the voices of other interest groups within the party and are becoming more like an old relic than a non-negotiable fixture.

Do they want African-Americans to play a major role within the party or do they just want to tell them to vote straight ticket Democrat and then go somewhere and sit down, like a good lil' group of Negroes?

African-Americans better wake up and demand more for their vote. I don't want to see African-Americans wandering around like a transient, looking for a place to lay their head.

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