

## ED THE VIKING, GREENLAND, AND GLOBAL WARMING

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Ed Iverson said it, not us. In his second column rejecting global warming in the *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* (Feb., 24&25), he said that he “may be as dumb as a rock,” but he is selling himself a little short. Iverson is not dumb, and neither is George W. Dumb people don’t get into Yale and Harvard or received advanced degrees.

Iverson and Bush are, however, both incredibly dense and also deluded by political and religious ideologies. Bush and his advisors blindly believe that the free market will miraculously solve the problems with health care, social security, and global warming.

In earlier columns, Iverson praises free markets and condemns socialists, but he does not seem to realize that his pastor, Doug Wilson, as an Old South Agrarian, rejects them. But in all other ways, Iverson apes his pastor in contrariness and argument style.

Wilson’s number one debating rule is “Never concede a point.” This rule has a corollary: “Sometimes don’t even acknowledge a point has been made.” In the aftermath of my debate with Wilson on abortion in 1983, Wilson’s dishonesty was clearly demonstrated.

So when scientist Petr Kuzmic charged that Iverson had confused cold regional weather with global climate change, Iverson, in his second column, blithely ignores Kuzmic’s point, and gleefully points out that a number of showings of “Eeyore” Gore’s movie were cancelled because of severe cold weather.

In his first column (Feb.,10&11), Iverson was proud that his Viking ancestors were able to settle Greenland and thrive there during relatively warmer times. In his second column he failed to acknowledge that several readers had written to explain that this warmer period, as well as the Little Ice Age that followed, was a regional rather than global phenomenon.

Viking Ed could have also verified that the rate of global warming since the Industrial Revolution is ten times as great as the rate of warming during the Medieval Warm Period (900-1200), which was most likely caused, as one of our local writers stated, by abnormal solar activity and volcanic eruptions.

Iverson perhaps did not want to tell us why his ancestors either froze or starved to death in their Greenland settlements in the early 1400s. Every new sod house built consumed ten acres of already overgrazed land, and summers for growing winter fodder grew shorter and shorter. In the end few of any of their livestock were making it through the longer, colder winters.

Their fanatical bishop warned them that they would go to Hell if they fished the well-stocked waters, or wore the warm clothing of the natives. *Skraeling*, the Old Norse word for “skin,” was a term of derision for the skin-clad Inuit, but the fashionable artificial skin imported from Europe failed to keep the domesticated Vikings warm as the temperatures began to drop. Again, these people were not dumb; they were just dense and deluded. As an author in recent *Sierra* magazine article on Greenland remarked: “Adaptation was not a Viking virtue.”

Greenland’s clerics and gentry insisted on eating beef, even though cattle require higher quality fodder than sheep or goats. Visitors can now see the ruins of 168 stalls for cows at the bishop’s barn, as opposed to several stalls at the poorer farms. Here the peasants had to content themselves with seal meat to stave off starvation.

Iverson is dead wrong when he claims that both Antarctica and Greenland are gaining ice mass. James Hansen, NASA’s top climate scientist, reports that each area lost about 52 cubic miles of ice in 2005 alone. Between 2003 and 2005 100 billion tons of ice melted off Greenland’s glaciers, which amounts to 20 billion tons of fresh water pouring every year into the North Atlantic, where the very delicate Gulf Stream may be significantly disrupted.

Satellite surveys of Greenland show that the area of melting ice has increased 50 percent, and that the volume of calving icebergs has doubled. The number of ice quakes registering 4.6 and higher on the Richter Scale has gone from 7 in 1993 to 28 in 2005.

Greenland’s Jakobshavn Glacier has retreated 9 miles since the 1920s, and many bays that used to be frozen are now ice free all year. The snow line in Greenland once was 2,000 feet, but now it has risen to 3,300 feet.

In 2005, at nearby Ellesmere Island in the Canadian Arctic, a 27 square mile ice shelf 120 feet thick broke off and drifted away. The wet ice in ice flows and icebergs melts

much faster than land ice. This ice is much more dangerous to shipping and also a hazard for offshore oil rigs.

The fact that a huge oil field, larger than the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, has been discovered in Greenland's coastal waters presents at least a double irony: (1) any oil rigs built there would be threatened by ice bergs; and (2) many more ice bergs would be produced by the global warming caused by burning the new oil.

Finally, I must chide Iverson for his reference to radio carbon dating as a way of verifying a warmer Greenland. In order to protect their Young Earth Theory, Biblical creationists such as he have always denied the validity any and all scientific dating techniques. But lack of intellectual honesty is par for the day as the Ignorant Right takes on professional expertise in all areas of academic investigation.