

Diaspora and rootedness

By [David Williams](#)

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[It was a blog post from a wise soul](#) that struck me, if only because it struck so close to home.

The idea behind it: that folks who are looking to serve Jesus should be willing to get themselves out of their localized comfort zone, and travel to wherever it is that God is calling them. It was also a message to congregations, calling them to break out of their desire to take the easiest path, choosing those who they know and are in relationship with, rather than making the more difficult call to reach out to an unknown.

God calls us to be like Abram, to leave the land of our upbringing and to seek the new. God calls us to be like Moses, busting loose from the chains of enslavement and casting ourselves out in search of the land of promise. Jesus calls us to set aside our fields and our obligations, and to follow.

It's a real and true thing, and individual and corporate unwillingness to break out from those boundaries can stifle us, leaving us to stagnate and decline. It is true.

Yet a thing can be true, and at the same time the completely opposite thing can be true.

As one who has chosen to stay where I have found myself, I struggle with the idea that the Creator of the Universe is the impetus behind our always moving to new lands in search of our calling.

[Because the cultural norm is diaspora.](#) Everyone moves everywhere, because that's how our economy is structured. It's how we do things.

You move for work, because that culture is one that makes you move. A corporation or organization or sociocultural expectation demands that you break from family and tribe, uprooting yourself and your immediate family to seek your livelihood in

another place. It happens, and then it happens again.

That network of organic relationships you've created? They must be set aside as we are shuttled from place to place like industrially kept bees on a flatbed, moving through roaring winds from one strange field to another, continuously forced to adapt and re-adapt to new surroundings.

We are a people continuously driven from land and family, uprooted and disconnected from a sense of place and home and hearth. Sure, we can simulate those organic connections through social media, and emulate ties to tribe through convenings and gatherings and conclaves which we attend, while the communities around us fade from view.

Sometimes, though, what our churning, industrial, consumer culture expects of us is not human. Sometimes, those demands are worth defying.

And in our culture, staying is harder. It requires sacrifice, of ego, of advancement, of reputation. It requires building relationships that you cannot flee.

I was reminded of this by dear old contrarian Jeremiah and that field he insisted on buying, right as Jerusalem was falling to the onslaught of Babylon. Sure, everyone was being driven from the land, dragged off into exile. It's exactly what Jeremiah had been going on about for so long. Doom! Despair! But that, that is when a prophet digs in and fights against the tide.

In a shattered, scattered time, resistance can come in intentional rootedness.

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