

# Why Relocate?

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## Zechariah 8:3-23

Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts? Thus says the LORD of hosts: behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness." Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in, for I set every man against his neighbor. But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong" For thus says the LORD of hosts: "As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD." And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth shall be to the house of Judah seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace. "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.' Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

## **Zechariah 8:3-5**

This is what the LORD says: “I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”

“In God’s vision of a just and peaceful city, the old folks sit in the streets with their canes in their hands and the children play around them. This is how human society was made to work, and God says he’s going to make it happen.”

John Perkins

Welcoming Justice

# **Zechariah 8:3-23**

## ***“Why Relocate?”***

- 1. God is There*
- 2. God’s People Are There*
- 3. To Become the Beloved Community*
- 4. To Be a Blessing to the World*

# 1. God Is There

## Zechariah 8:3

This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

# 1. God Is There

## John 1:1-2, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

# 1. God Is There

- Perkins – “Jesus did not commute but he came and dwelt among us. To be an effective community developer I must relocate into the community of need. I must live among those I am serving.”

# 1. God Is There

- LaVerne Stokes – “When everyone else forgot about Sandtown, God never forgot about us”

# 1. God Is There

Relocaters, Returners, Remainers will...

*Experience the Suffering*

“Great leaders for social change enter into the pain of the people who have the pain, and they bear that pain with the people in the pain. Leadership today removes you from the pain.”

# 1. God Is There

Relocaters, Returners, Remainers will...

*Experience the Joy*

LaVerne Stokes – “Sandtown is a place of faith; there’s a wealth of joy here”

# 1. God Is There

Relocaters, Returners, Remainers will...

*Work for Justice/Speak for the  
Poor/Marginalized*

Leonard Pitts Jr – Miami Herald – Jan 31

- “Who speaks for America’s poor?  
Nobody”

# 1. God Is There

“Who speaks for the poor? Who raises a voice when they are marginalized? Who cries out when they are abused by police and failed by schools? Who takes a stand when they are exploited by employers and turned away by hospitals?”

As near as I can tell, no one does.”

# 1. God Is There

Relocaters, Returners, Remainers will...

*Be Evangelized/Changed*

## **Genesis 12:1**

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.”

# 1. God Is There

## Genesis 12:4-5

So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

# 1. God Is There

## Hebrews 11:8-9

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise

# 1. God Is There

## Hebrews 11:10, 13

For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

# 1. God Is There

## Hebrews 11:14-16

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

## **2. God's People Are There**

### **Zechariah 8:4-5**

This is what the LORD Almighty says:  
“Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”

## **2. God's People Are There**

### **Zechariah 8:7-8**

This is what the LORD Almighty says:  
“I will save my people from the countries  
of the east and the west. I will bring them  
back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my  
people, and I will be faithful and righteous  
to them as their God.”

## 2. God's People Are There

- Perkins – “It may sound simple, but I think you’ve got to have neighbors you talk to and get to know before you can love your neighbor as yourself.”

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Zechariah 8:9-10**

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “You who now hear these words spoken by the prophets who were there when the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD Almighty, let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built. Before that time there were no wages for man or beast. No one could go about his business safely because of his enemy, for I had turned every man against his neighbor.”

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Zechariah 8:11-12**

“But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past,” declares the LORD Almighty. “The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people.”

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Zechariah 8:13-14**

“As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Just as I had determined to bring disaster upon you and showed no pity when your fathers angered me,” says the LORD Almighty,

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Zechariah 8:15-17**

“so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Zechariah 8:18-19**

Again the word of the LORD Almighty came to me. This is what the LORD Almighty says: “The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.”

### **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

So what does it take to make beloved community happen? I really believe that it begins with a place. I've preached relocation all my life because the communities I've been part of have been abandoned. Everybody left, so I called them to come back. But my real concern is for the place. If the church is going to offer some real good news in broken communities, it has to be committed to a place.

### **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

We can't just be a commuter church in the community.

If you care about a place, you'll care about the kids in that place.

When you're committed to a place, you also care about the beauty of the place.

### 3. To Become the Beloved Community

As we commit to our communities, we also need to learn how to see them as economic places. People need work, good housing, education and health care. So the church has to invest its resources in developing the community. All of this is crucial to creating the conditions that are necessary for beloved community.

### **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

That's why community development has been so important to me all these years. The church can't organize the perfect community. If people aren't drawn by the cords of love to a vision of beloved community, you can't force it on them. But we can organize for justice. We can develop a community so that there is a place for people to know one another.

### **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

That's the work God has given us to do. Only God can send the rain, but we can till the ground by committing to a place and making sure people can flourish there.

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Isaiah 65:20-21**

“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.”

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Isaiah 65:22-23**

“No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.”

# **3. To Become the Beloved Community**

## **Isaiah 65:24-25**

“Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

# 4. To Be a Blessing to the World

## Zechariah 8:20-21

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.’”

# 4. To Be a Blessing to the World

## Zechariah 8:22-23

“And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’”

## **4. To Be a Blessing to the World**

We're in a crisis of not having a prophetic witness to our society; it will take people who are willing to move in and suffer with people with the problems.

“This is a time for rebuilding. I pray that every Christian, young and old alike, would have the courage to give themselves fully to God’s movement toward reconciliation and the beloved community in society.”

John Perkins