



# SOUTH AFRICA, WE'RE HERE TO STAY

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*The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and speaking to the nation of Israel He said to them, "Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Marry and have children; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease." Jeremiah 29:5-6.*

There is such a definitive nature to this scripture: establish yourself and reproduce. Without a doubt, whatever place we find ourselves in, God is telling us to position ourselves for increase. There is even a double emphasis in this scripture. Multiply. And if you were unsure what this means: it means do not decrease. When you read this you cannot help but think it feels like it's written to us as South Africans here in 2019. Take it as God's word to you: don't go anywhere, settle down and multiply. In fact, don't just build houses - live in them. Don't just plant gardens - eat of their fruits. And don't just marry - have children, and let your children have children. God is in the business of establishing multi-generational impact players and He uses ordinary men and women to bring about extraordinary feats. That's you and me.

The issue with not settling down and living with your bags half packed, is that you're unable to build anything that has real impact. Each of us is wired to influence others. The circle of influence may vary, whether it be your family and friends, work colleagues or business partners, but each of us has influence. How we use it is important. As a nation we need everyone committed to the long term; committed to the future of our country, to the call of God on their lives and committed to obeying Christ.

I am intrigued by the instance in Mark 11 when Christ, seeing the fig tree, after being expectant for fruit yet finding none, cursed it. Christ, no matter the season, expects fruit. As Christ followers imitating Christ, we too should live with a healthy expectation that we are fruitful in all seasons. For it's by the grace of God that He produces fruit in us, and the outworking of that translates into growth, into influence and into impacting people's lives beyond ourselves and for the greater good.

Jeremiah 29 verse 7 completes this text by saying: "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." This is both an instruction and a promise and when we see scripture like this it ought to shape a pattern of living for us.

These are my takeaways:

1. God has placed us in this city and nation; it's not by chance. Seeking the welfare of the city means we are to protect it, to look out for and be an ambassador for our city and nation.
2. Praying for our city and nation is important because there is a transactional element that happens when we pray: we bring our city and nation to God and He puts a deposit in us. It's in this position that we become influencers in our nation, commissioned by God and aligned with His agenda.
3. As the welfare of the nation increases, so too will ours. This extends beyond just the social feel-good impact and also includes the prosperity and wealth of the nation. I love this because it speaks into alignment across all people, both the public and private sector. There should be no place for selfish ambition and riches at the expense of our nation.

As a nation we are poised for growth. We are readying ourselves for greater things. The rooting out of corruption and the public confession of state capture is part of the preparation for where God is taking us as a nation. And it's a direct result of the prayers of this nation. Let's continue to hold up our nation in prayer.

We are in for greater things. I love the prophetic nature of that declaration. Greater things for our church, greater things for our families, for our businesses and for our nation.

South Africa, God has called us here!