

Sojourners we are: no exemption – Asaolu O. S. (asaolu@yahoo.com)

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Text - 1 Chronicles 29:15 - *For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.*

Introduction: A Sojourner is a foreigner dwelling in another country regardless of whether he is travelling stranger or resident alien. In other words, whether such has a transit visa or resident permit, he is considered as an alien with limited rights compared to the citizens of the host country. Thus, every sojourner has to plan and pray to achieve success in his sojourn and hopefully relocate back home someday. Even within a country, people go live in a distant community as settlers relative to indigenes. How many of us are natives to the land in which we reside? The New Testament reiterates the brevity of human life (James 4:14) as a sojourner on earth.

Thesis: Why would someone become a Sojourner? People relocate or become sojourners for various reasons,

1. To realize their potential when convinced they have a calling that cannot be fully realized in their homeland. They want to change or impact the world and need a platform to launch their ideas e.g. Abram – Gen 12:4-6. Such include those who also travel to acquire knowledge or skills in certain professions which are often faced with challenges such as loneliness, acclimatization, bereavement (Gen 23), etc.
2. To seek greener pastures when they faced with economic hardship in their homeland e.g. Elimelech’s household – Ruth 1:1-7 Unfortunately, life sometimes, is not always as rosy as envisaged in foreign land. Many continue to bear hardship rather than face shame for returning home “empty-handed” but who knows God’s plan? The latter end of Naomi was better in her homeland than it could have been had she remained in Moab!
3. For refuge or safety when a tyrant has taken over power or their homeland, some seek asylum elsewhere or embark on self-exile. We see such situations with David (1 Sam 21:10), Joseph the foster dad of Jesus (Mt 2:11-15; 19-23) and Aquilla who had varied experiences under a Roman ruler akin to what some now face in the western world (Acts 18:1-3)
4. Out of curiosity and love of tourism, trade or as assigned work e.g. as ambassador or expatriate worker e.g. Preachers, officials of multinational and envoys of international organizations or nations.

How should Sojourners be treated? Fairly, not oppressed -Exo 12:49; 22:21, Deut 1:16, Mt 25:35, Lk 10:33

How should Sojourners live:

1. They need to respect the host community, and observe the laws. Becoming trouble makers as some Muslims do in the West isn’t proper complaining about food, holidays, etc. You can always go back home or move elsewhere if you refuse to adjust to a nation. Just last week a Moroccan man was deported from France for desecration of a monument to their war heroes.
2. To be hopeful of returning to their real home later. Even those banished from their nation look forward to favourable circumstances such as pardon or change of power in govt. to allow them possibly return someday. Thus, seeing that our lives on earth is temporal, we should aspire and prepare for the afterlife, desiring to reunite with our Maker.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. - Hebrews 11:13-16

Conclusion: The greatest questions for scholars is ‘why are we here?’ which the Bible addresses that we are God’s representatives and stewards that will give account. As a non-Christian, one is a foreigner to the promises and abode of God –Eph 2:12. Obey to gospel to be part of his exclusive nation. Live honourably and be law-abiding wherever you reside but above all, seek to please God to secure an eternal residence in the age to come; this world and this life will pass away -1 Pet 2:9-15 [Watch sermon delivery on facebook.com/unilagcoc]