

In chapter eleven of *“Self, Society, and Behavior”*, Michael Rynkiewich examines migration, diaspora, as the two primary ways that people relocate from one part of the world to another, and the “constant flow back and forth of food, ideas, and persons” known as transnationalism. Sometimes people are pulled to new places by opportunities, other times they are pushed out by war or disaster. Rynkiewich notes that groups from all continents have seen the (in some cases forced) migration of their people, be it Africa, Asia, or Europe.

Due to the “disintegration” model, it was previously believed that migrants were overwhelmingly susceptible to disillusionment as the pressure and challenges presented by the new culture mount. Rynkiewich points out that new studies show migrants are much more adaptable and go from strength to strength. He discusses how each generation of migrants interacts with the host culture, moving from tension to hybridity, to sometimes fully identified with the new culture. Rynkiewich notes the distinction of migrants with diaspora communities, which settle, form their own distinct community, and stay connected with their homeland. Because a diaspora community seeks to resist full assimilation into the society at large, the community must continually wrestle with the construction of their identities in and among both cultures.

From a missiological standpoint, the church needs to resist the urge to view migrants and diaspora communities with suspicion. Rynkiewich is right to point out how the Christian tradition is one that has grown as a result of diaspora communities and migrants and has richly benefited them. How might the local church welcome, serve, and partner with diaspora Christian communities? And how might the church minister to individuals that have come to New York and formed diaspora communities with the intention to resist assimilation, while honoring their stories and culture?