



OUT OF THE CITIES!

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“There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually, by residing in the city.” Country Living, p. 13.

There are many reasons that may be set forth as arguments in favor of the family having its home in a rural location. These have been clearly and fully set forth in *Country Living*, but they are not recognized alone in the Spirit of Prophecy writings. Many educators and writers have sung the praises of the advantages of country living. We shall enumerate six major reasons here:

1. Best Family Environment

There is little need of arguing the point that a rural environment furnishes the most favorable conditions for rearing a family. It is greatly to the advantage of the children to grow up surrounded by the works of nature and by the activities of a rural home.

Even with the introduction of the television set into the rural home, the country atmosphere is more conducive to health and spirituality; and routine chores, et cetera, are helpful users of leisure time.

No practical person would argue that the country home relieves the parents of all problems in the rearing of their children, but none will challenge the premise that the country home, with its interest and activities and its isolation from temptations of the city, greatly lessens the problems in rearing the family.

How much better it is for active boys to employ some of their spare time gardening, caring for the animals, cutting wood, repairing the fences, making furniture, doing the plumbing, and so forth, rather than for them to find their recreations on the street, at the neighbor's house with their friends, spending an inordinate amount of time viewing television, or perhaps at the theater or bowling alley.

How much better for our growing girls to devote some of their spare time to the constructive activities of the rural home than to find time on their hands perhaps to be spent reading worthless books, watching the “tube” or attending some place of amusement. Then, too, the Christian will seek to locate himself in an environment that will contribute to, and not detract from, his making progress in his own personal Christian experience.

2. Missionary Opportunities

We believe that we are in a world that is going down to its doom. We have a responsibility to make known to others that which is to take place and to help them to prepare for the coming of the Lord. All about us in rural communities are families who know nothing of our message. Again and again calls have been sounded through the Spirit of Prophecy for Seventh-day Adventists



to enter such communities, make their homes in the villages and towns or in the country locations, and by their consistent lives and their missionary endeavors let their light shine. Note the Spirit of Prophecy counsel on this point:

“There are thousands who might enter the harvest field who are now religiously idle, and as a result, go crippling their way to heaven, expressing their doubt whether they are Christians. . . . I want to say to many, You are waiting for someone to carry you to the vineyard and set you to work, or to bring the vineyard to you, that you may experience no inconvenience in labor. You will wait in vain. . . . I think how the angels must feel seeing the end approaching, and those who claim to have knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, huddle together, colonize, and attend the meetings, and feel dissatisfied if there is not much preaching to benefit their souls and strengthen the church, while they are doing literally nothing. . . . If their temporal, financial prospects are not as prosperous by moving to localities where the truth has not been proclaimed, or where there has been but a glimmering of light, will they not be doing just the work that Jesus has done to save them?” Christian Service, pp. 179-180.

3. Elements of Self-destruction

Life in the large cities is becoming highly complex. The further people get from God’s plan in their living, the more they become entangled. Part of the web constituting the elements that not only are detrimental but also lead to destruction is the fact that every individual in the city becomes dependent upon many other individuals. Any interruption in normal functions of service may lead to inconvenience and even to actual suffering.

Within these cities also the labor organizations have a much stronger position than in rural areas. At the slightest offense a strike may be called, which not only makes life uncomfortable, but at times imperils life itself. Not only do the strong labor factions exert their influence upon the consumer, but their activities may involve lines of employment in which we are engaged.

This places a Christian in a very awkward position, recognizing as he does the principles of Christianity within the golden rule, and being coerced to join in activities contrary to the basic principles of Christianity. So the cities with their ever-enlarging problems, filled with vice and corruption, contain in themselves the elements of self-destruction.

4. Object of Enemy Attack

It is no secret that in times of war the metropolitan areas are the object of enemy attack. Knowing as we do that no peace plans will be permanent, we should give careful thought to the factor of choosing a safe location for our homes.

Though in times of peace it may sound well to assert that it is cowardly to think of running away from danger, yet the Christian, above everyone else, will be the first to plan for the security of his family. We would not think much of the parent who, in time of disaster, would leave his family uncared for, making little or no provision for their safety. Is the informed Christian, who knows from the sure word of prophecy that troublous times are coming and that there will be great distress in the cities, any less responsible in the matter of planning for the well-being and security of his family? We think the reader will agree that he is equally responsible.

The Lord Himself is interested in the comfort and safety, the well-being and security of His children. God in His love has presented to us a picture of the troublous times before us, and has repeatedly counseled us as to the proper provisions we should make to avoid suffering and perhaps loss of life itself in these troublous times.

It is no indication of cowardice therefore to turn our back upon the congested centers of populations, and choose a rural location for our homes.

5. The Object of God's Wrath

Akin to the suffering that will come in the great centers of population in times of national emergency is the suffering resulting from the destruction in the great cities as God allows certain judgments to overtake them. Some have supposed that the destruction that falls as a judgment from God will come at the end of the world, but from the sure word of prophecy it is made clear to us that there will be great distress in centers of population as the wickedness of the cities reaches a certain point, and also as God through this means endeavors to arouse the inhabitants in these cities to the times in which we live and the need of making a preparation for the coming of the Lord. Note carefully these words recorded in 1906:



“I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression and sinful in the extreme, will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, by flood. All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God. His unseen agencies will cause destruction, devastation, and death.

All the accumulated riches will be as nothingness.

“Calamities will come—calamities most awful, most unexpected; and these destructions will follow one after another. If there will be heeding of the warnings that God has given, and if churches will repent, returning to their allegiance, then other cities may be spared for a time. But if men who have been deceived continue in the same way in which they have been walking disregarding the law of God and presenting falsehoods before the people, God allows them to suffer calamity, that their senses may be awakened. . . .

“The Lord will not suddenly cast off all transgressors or destroy entire nations; but He will punish cities and places where men have given themselves up to the possession of satanic agencies. Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God’s indignation, because some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.” *Evangelism*, p. 27.



6. Avoid Colonization

It is not God’s purpose that Christians should gather in great centers to enjoy many advantages and remain idle. Whether these centers be the large metropolitan areas or the village in which is located a large denominational institution, there is the constant danger of colonization, and Seventh-day Adventists are called to scatter. The messenger of the Lord has written of this:

“Many of the members of our large churches are doing comparatively nothing. They might accomplish a good work if, instead of crowding together, they would scatter into places that have not yet been entered by the truth. Trees that are planted too thickly do not flourish. They are transplanted by the gardener, that they may have room to grow, and not become dwarfed and sickly. The same rule would work well for our large churches. Many of the members are dying spiritually for want of this very work. They are becoming sickly and inefficient. Transplanted, they would have room to grow strong and vigorous.

“It is not the purpose of God that His people should colonize, or settle together in large communities. The disciples of Christ are His representatives upon the earth, and God designs that they shall be scattered all over the country, in the towns, cities, and villages, as lights amidst the darkness of the world.” *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 244.

There are thousands who might remove to rural locations where they could continue their present employment in gaining a livelihood or take up new employment, and through the demands that would be made upon them, let their light shine in the darkened area and thus gain great benefits in their own spiritual experience. Other reasons might be mentioned why Seventh-day Adventists should choose a rural location for their homes. There are great blessings in store for families who select an environment for their homes among the objects of God's creation and as far as possible isolated from the many temptations and allurements in the cities.

God's Promises to Help

"The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities." Country Living, p. 24.

There are many who would like to move to the country. But they ask, How can we do it? We have no large savings account; our family expenses consume about all our income; we know little of how to cultivate the soil. How can we move to the country? To such we would say that if it is the Lord's will that you should live in a rural location, at the proper time God will open the way. From the Spirit of Prophecy we have this admonition already noted above: "The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities."

This is an issue we are not to force. All rash and careless moves are to be avoided. We must know where we are to go and what we are going to do for a livelihood when we get there. On the other hand, we are not to sit idly waiting an opportunity to present itself. We are warned that "ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues." Ibid., p. 11. It is said that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." We must show our faith and determination by taking the first steps.

The First Steps

Among the first steps are those that will prepare the family for country living. Before a move is made, study should be given to all that is involved. Read books and periodicals bearing on the subject. Make use of the public library. Hold meetings for discussion. Get a supply of the literature for free distribution or at a nominal cost from the United States Department of Agriculture, or from your county agent. One excellent brochure offers this wise counsel: "In farming, ten dollars' worth of borrowed brains will save you ten thousand dollars' worth of borrowed trouble."

Then pray about it. After placing the matter before the Lord, you may properly begin to look for a country home site. Let the search for the plan be a family project. Some families will buy a piece of land and will arrange to have a home erected; others will buy land with buildings already on the property. Every step should be entered into carefully, intelligently, and prayerfully.

The Lord is deeply interested in all these matters that have to do with our welfare. He is the One who sounds the call for Seventh-day Adventists to seek country homes, and He is interested in our finding the kind of place that will suit our needs.

It is essential that we make a move in the right direction. How do we know what God may have in store for us if we do not begin to look around to see? There is much to be gained by getting the mind set toward the country. This will hasten the actual move to the new site. The family that waits for every question to be answered and every door to be opened will make no move. On the other hand, make no hasty move. Do not allow yourself to be stampeded into buying until you are sure you have found the right place. In all this experience there is much to be gained in waiting on the Lord.

Earnest Faith and Diligent Work

In our experience the Lord required us to exercise faith, but great care should be taken to see that this faith is not presumption. It has been the experience of many who, under the conviction that they should choose a rural environment for their homes, have begun to take steps in the right direction that the Lord in a remarkable way has opened doors before them. We should not conclude by this that to make the move successfully most diligent labor and exertion are unnecessary.

We cannot sit down and fold our hands, and thus obtain those things the Lord would have us secure. While waiting and reading and keeping our eyes open for the right place, why not begin a garden? Some places, even in the city, have a little space for a garden; or arrangements can be made for use of a portion of a vacant lot. The experience gained in working the soil may save many a mistake when the work is begun in earnest in a larger way, and from the start it will prove a blessing.



Country living is not easy living, but neither our bodies, nor minds, nor our souls are benefited by a life of ease or inactivity. Country living means activity. But with thorough planning this can be held to that amount of exercise that is beneficial. Those only who are first convinced in their hearts that it is God's will for their best good that they should move to the country and who are ready and willing to sacrifice and to labor diligently to make such a program a success can confidently expect success.

Although we have been told that families should move to the country as the Lord opens the way, we also have been informed that "many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way." Ibid., p. 25. Perhaps there must be some delay in taking the steps we would like to take. Be that as it may, let us make a beginning—a proper beginning.

A Time for Seeking Counsel

In this matter there is great need of counsel with those who have had practical experience in these things. With this we must mingle sound judgment and common sense.

We must not let our enthusiasm blind us to the task ahead and to that which will be required to make a success of country living. Nor must we lose sight of trying situations that may come in life through following God's plan for His people in country home ownership. The chapter in Country Living entitled "Guided by God's Providences" should be read and reread by the family anticipating moving into the country. It is highly essential that no rash moves be made. None must in his endeavors and sincerity move presumptuously and then have occasion to regret the steps he has taken. There need be no great losses, with their resulting discouragement, if we seek counsel and move cautiously.

We close this article with two important paragraphs from the cautions found in Country Living:

"Let everyone take time to consider carefully; and not be like the man in the parable who began to build, and was not able to finish. Not a move should be made but that movement and all that it portends are carefully considered--everything weighed. To every man was given his work according to his several ability. Then let him not move hesitatingly, but firmly, and yet humbly trusting in God.

"There may be individuals who will make a rush to do something, and enter into some business they know nothing about. This God does not require. Think candidly, prayerfully, studying the Word with all carefulness and prayerfulness, with mind and heart awake to hear to the voice of God. . . . To understand the will of God is a great thing." Page 26.

