

Country Living for Adventists



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Country Living for Adventists is a response to the question asked by fellow Adventists as to when is the time to leave the cities. There is a compilation of Ellen White writings on the subject in a booklet called *Country Living* published by our Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1946 – in order not to confuse this with that booklet, herein the title *Country Living for Adventists* is adopted. While both booklets call Seventh-day Adventists from city to country living, the view taken herein is that the time to leave the cities is between the 1888 Sunday Bill and before the coming actual Sunday Law. It will be too late to seek country living at Sunday law. This view is derived from the writings of Ellen White.

Character building as reason for country living

Of all the reasons one can give for country living, the overarching reason is so that we develop a Christ-like character necessary to stand through the final days of earth's history. For Seventh-day Adventists, who when Sunday Law is passed will participate in the climax of the now swelling loud cry, we must have developed Christ-like characters and

sealed. Our characters are now being moulded either for the mark of the beast or for the seal of God. Country living is the best environment for developing a Christ-like character. In the cities, “the work of character building is tenfold harder for both parents and children” {9LtMs, Ms 8b, 1894, par. 45}.

We read of our Lord Jesus, of Abraham, of Jacob, of Joseph, of Moses, of David, and of Elisha – all were reared and lived in country homes, and that is how they developed heavenly characters to stand faithfully for God in their days of this earth’s history.

We are told that our Lord Jesus was brought up in a country home: “What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, gladsome service; the hour of study at His mother’s side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul’s communion with God – these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus” {MH 365.3}.

Great men of faith, that we read about, lived in country homes: “So with the great majority of the

best and noblest men of all ages. Read the history of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, of Moses, David, and Elisha. Study the lives of men of later times who have most worthily filled positions of trust and responsibility, the men whose influence has been most effective for the world's uplifting." "How many of these were reared in country homes" {MH 366.1-2}.

Like the faithful that have lived before us, we are to live in country homes to be changed into Christ's image: "I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into country places. Here there await rich blessings for those who will grasp them. By beholding the scenes of nature, the works of the Creator, by studying God's handiwork, imperceptibly you will be changed into the same image" {10MR 263.2}.

"Instead of the crowded city, seek some retired situation where your children will be, so far as possible, shielded from temptation, and there train and educate them for usefulness" {ST Dec 7, 1882, par. 7}. "It was not God's purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements" {15LtMs, Ms 12, 1900, par. 2}.

“Life in the cities is false and artificial. The intense passion for money getting, the whirl of excitement and pleasure seeking, the thirst for display, the luxury and extravagance, all are forces that, with the great masses of mankind, are turning the mind from life's true purpose. They are opening the door to a thousand evils. Upon the youth they have almost irresistible power” {Ministry of Healing, 364.1}.

“There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually by residing in the city. Faith, hope, love, happiness can far better be gained in retired places where there are fields and hills and trees. Take your children away from the sights and sounds of the city, away from the rattle and din of street cars and teams, and their minds will become more healthy. It will be found easier to bring home to their hearts the truth of the Word of God” {20LtMs, Ms 76, 1905, par. 7}.

If no one in a hundred can be improved by living in the city, it is presumptuous for any true Adventist, after this light is given, to continue living in the city.

AD66 parallel with 1888 calls to leave the cities

The popular view among Seventh-day Adventists is that the time for us to leave the cities is in the future at the coming Sunday Law. This popular

view stems from their reading of what Ellen White wrote in the *Testimonies* number 32, published in 1885 and reprinted in 1889. They, sadly, disregard the basic principle of understanding the Testimonies. Here is the rule for understanding the Testimonies, as given by Ellen White herself: “The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as Scripture is explained by Scripture” {18LtMs, Lt 73, 1903, par. 7}. Applying this rule reveals that the time for true Adventists to leave the cities is between the 1888 Sunday Bill and before the coming enactment of Sunday Law.

Here is the statement: “The time is not far distant, when, like the early disciples, we shall be forced to seek a refuge in desolate and solitary places. As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains” – printed 1885 {T32 220.3}; reprinted 1889 {5T 464.3}.

The statement draws a parallel from the signal to leave the city in the time of the disciples when Rome sieged Jerusalem and applies it to our time. Here is

how Ellen White describes the signal: “When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed” {GC 25.4}. There were two sieges, the first being the sign to leave the city.

The signal for the disciples to flee from the city was given by our Lord Jesus. In Matthew 24:15-16, Christ told His disciples: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:). Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” As to what that “abomination of desolation” would be, we find further details in Luke 21:20: “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” Armies threatening to desolate the holy city was a signal that the desolation of the city was near, and the disciples were to flee to the mountains. In old days, in tactics of war, armies could compass cities, build trenches,

and try to starve people inside the city. Christ told His disciples to flee when they see this tactics used.

Roman armies came to Jerusalem in AD66 and they compassed around Jerusalem. For some reasons, they withdraw, which made it possible for God's people to flee. The Judean Christians who heeded what Christ had said, left the city and went to live in the country. In AD70 the Romans returned and destroyed the city. "Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign" {GC 30.2}.

How do the siege of old Jerusalem relate to us today? "As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains" – 1885 {T32 220.3}; 1889 {5T 464.3}.

In prophecy, the United States, a lamb-like beast (Revelation 13:11), is to pass a national Sunday Law in honour of the Papacy, a leopard-like beast (Revelation 13:2). "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth

and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12). By a universal Sunday decree, “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark” (Revelation 13:17). An attempt to pass a national Sunday Law in the United States was made in 1888.

We read of the 1888 Bill: “For many years sunday legislation had been on the statute books of several states. Early in 1888, senator HW Blair, of New Hampshire, introduced into the united states congress a bill that, if passed, would have enforced in all federal territories the observance of sunday as a day of worship. An amendment to the constitution to that effect had also been proposed. For several years national sunday legislation threatened religious freedom in the United States” {3BIO 376.4}.

The Sabbath truth provoked the 1888 Blair Bill. “At a meeting held on Sabbath day, April 3, 1847” {LS 100.1}, Adventists were led by the Spirit of God to proclaim in earnest the Sabbath truth – “this enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth” {LS 101.1}.

Enraged, but unable to “refute the Sabbath truth,” Sunday-keeping churches formed confederacies to ask the United States to enforce the Sunday worship in honour of the Papacy. Of these confederacies

was the National Reform Association, founded in 1864 by eleven Sunday-keeping churches in the United States. “The purpose of the National Reform Association” was “to reverse the First Amendment of the United States Constitution so as to allow Congress to make laws respecting an establishment of religion, and prohibiting the free exercise thereof” {AMS March 1887, page 19.6} and that the “success of National Reform will assure in this nation the development of *a living image of the Papacy*” {AMS March 1887, page 20.8}. Another confederacy, the National Women’s Christian Temperance Union (NWCTU), was formed in 1873. It was said “that the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union has adopted the National Reform Association, and is nursing its principles into stalwart proportions” {AMS September 1888, page 68.2}. “In 1888, at the request of the NWCTU and allied organizations, Senator Blair introduced into the United States Senate ‘a bill to secure to the people the enjoyment of the first day of the week, commonly known as the Lord’s day, as a day of rest, and to promote its observance as a day of religious worship.’ The bill met with considerable opposition throughout the country; and of this opposition ‘those who observe the Sabbath day’ were a part” {ARSH November 28, 1899, page

772.3}. But for having failed to become law, the Blair Sunday Bill had been heartily indorsed by the NWCTU and by the National Reform Association {AMS December 25, 1889, page 378.11}.

Just less than a year after the 1888 Sunday Bill failed, in 1889, writing about the work of the National Reform Association, which was a major backer of the Blair Bill, Ellen White wrote: "We must show to the world that we recognize, in the events that are now taking place in connection with the National Reform movement, the fulfillment of prophecy. That which we have, for the last thirty or forty years, proclaimed would come, is now here; and the trumpet of every watchman upon the walls of Zion should raise the alarm" {RH, January 1, 1889 par. 3}. "Prophecy represents Protestantism as having lamb-like horns, but speaking like a dragon. Already we are beginning to hear the voice of the dragon. There is a satanic force propelling the Sunday movement, but it is concealed" {RH, January 1, 1889 par. 4}.

Notice that what had been proclaimed over thirty years prior to 1888 was "now here" in 1889. Prior to the failed 1888 Sunday Bill there had been State 'blue laws' (Sunday closing laws), which continued to remain in force and protestant America resorted to giving 'teeth' to 'blue laws.' While in the failed 1888

Sunday Bill we were “beginning to hear the voice of the dragon”, in the state ‘blue laws’ we continued “to hear the voice of the dragon.” Thus in 1896, the United States Supreme Court in *Hennington v Georgia* (163 U.S. 299, 1896), Supreme Court Chief Justice Stephen Johnson Field, said that, “The prohibition of secular business on Sunday is advocated on the ground that by it the general welfare is advanced, labor protected, and the moral and physical well-being of society promoted.”

Less than a year after the United States Supreme Court gave some ‘teeth’ to state Sunday ‘blue’ laws in 1896, we find this statement made by Ellen White in 1897: “The protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country places” {12LtMs, Lt 90, 1897, par. 16}.

While in the time of the disciples Rome “set up idolatrous standards” in AD66 which was to the disciples a signal to leave the city, after 1888 when the protestant world honouring Rome “set up an idol sabbath” that was a signal for us to leave the cities. For the disciples: “When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground,

which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight” {GC 25.4}. For Adventists: “The protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country places” {12LtMs, Lt 90, 1897, par. 16}. Notice the parallel: the disciples were to flee when in AD66 Rome “set up idolatrous standards” and Adventists were to flee when after 1888 the protestant world “set up an idol sabbath.” The time for Adventists to leave the cities is not future but already begun. Notice that it was in 1897 when Ellen White said because the “protestant world have set up an idol sabbath” there was “necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities” {12LtMs, Lt 90, 1897, par. 16}. AD66 parallels with 1888.

Do not dismiss the parallel due to the common argument that the 1888 Sunday Bill was not passed into actual United States law, for if such argument is credible, then the same should be said of the AD66 siege that did not pass into actual destruction of Jerusalem. Both AD66 and 1888 incidents were “assumption of power” or threatening of action for future incidents. When the Christians saw the AD66

sign, they did not dismiss it as not actual destruction, they flee from the city: “Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem” {GC 30.2}. The Jews who presumptuously waited for the desolation of the city to come in AD70, perished in the city: “Terrible were the calamities that fell upon Jerusalem when the siege was resumed by Titus” {GC 30.2}.

Relentless calls after 1888 to leave the cities

That the failed 1888 Sunday Bill was equivalent to the AD66 first siege, is sure from the fact that it was soon thereafter 1888 that Ellen White made calls for Seventh-day Adventists to leave the cities. Here is a chronology of calls for true Seventh-day Adventists to leave the cities, as given by Ellen White:

In 1897: “When the power invested in kings is allied to goodness, it is because the one in responsibility is under the divine dictation. When power is allied with wickedness, it is allied to satanic agencies, and it will work to destroy those who are the Lord’s property. The Protestant world have set up an idol sabbath in the place where God’s Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy. For this reason, I see the necessity of the people of God moving out of the cities into retired country [places], where they may

cultivate the land, and raise their own produce. Thus they may bring their children up with simple, healthful habits. I see the necessity of making haste to get all things ready for the crisis" {12LtMs, Lt 90, 1897, par. 16} – this was after the Supreme Court gave ‘teeth’ to state blue laws (Sunday closing laws).

In 1898: “There is earnest work to be done for the children. Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon all the dwellers upon the earth, the Lord calls upon all who serve Him, those who are Israelites indeed, ‘Gather your children into your own houses; gather them in from the classes that are voicing the words of Satan, who are disobeying the commandments of God. Get out of the cities as soon as possible. Establish church schools. Gather in your children, and give them the Word of God as the foundation of all their education.’ Had the churches in different localities sought counsel of God, they would not need that I should write to them on this point” {13LtMs, Lt 58, 1898, par. 17}.

In 1899: “As God’s commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities, but not dwell in them” {14LtMs, Ms 85, 1899, par. 21}.

In 1900: “I could not sleep past two o’clock this morning. During the night season I was in council. I

was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God's appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children. Some were loitering, making no determined efforts. The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean.' Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself, and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next" {RH December 11, 1900, Art. B, par. 10}.

In 1901: "It seems cruel to establish our schools in the cities, where the students are prevented from learning the precious lessons taught by nature. It is a mistake to call families into the city where children and youth breathe an atmosphere of corruption and crime, sin and violence, intemperance and ungodliness. O, it is a terrible mistake to allow children to come in contact with that which makes such a fearful impression on their senses. Children and youth cannot be too carefully guarded from

familiarity with the pictures of iniquity so common in all large cities” {16LtMs, Ms 67, 1901, par. 23}.

In 1902: “Leave the cities, and like Enoch come from your retirement to warn the people of the cities” {17LtMs, Lt 182, 1902, par. 2}. “The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes; not by God’s people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth’.” {17LtMs, Lt 182, 1902, par. 15}.

In 1903: Ellen White clearly said in 1903 “the time has come” to leave the cities: “The time has come, when, as God opens the way, families should move out of the cities. The children should be taken into the country. The parents should get as suitable a place as their means will allow. Though the dwelling may be small, yet there should be land in connection with it that may be cultivated. Some families who have been separated may be united in such places” {18LtMs, Ms 50, 1903, par. 13}. “My warning is: Keep out of the cities. Build no sanitariums in the cities. Educate our people to get out of the cities into the country, where they can obtain a small piece of land, and make a home for themselves and their children” {GCB April 6, 1903, page 87.12}.

In 1904: “Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. We should now begin to heed the instruction given us over and over again: Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies” {19LtMs, Lt 5, 1904, par. 3}.

In 1905: “Let children no longer be exposed to the temptations of the cities that are ripe for destruction. The Lord has sent us warning and counsel to get out of the cities. Then let us make no more investments in the cities. Fathers and mothers, how do you regard the souls of your children? Are you preparing the members of your families for translation into the heavenly courts? Are you preparing them to become members of the royal family? children of the heavenly king? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? How will ease, comfort, convenience compare with the value of the souls of your children?” {20LTMs, Ms 78, 1905, par. 6}.

In 1906: “‘Out of the cities; out of the cities!’ — this is the message the Lord has been giving me.

The earthquakes will come; the floods will come; and we are not to establish ourselves in the wicked cities, where the enemy is served in every way, and where God is so often forgotten. The Lord desires that we shall have clear spiritual eyesight. We must be quick to discern the peril that would attend the establishment of institutions in these wicked cities. We must make wise plans to warn the cities, and at the same time live where we can shield our children and ourselves from the contaminating and demoralizing influences so prevalent in these places" {RH July 5, 1906, par. 10}. "Out of the cities, is my message at this time" {21LtMs, Lt 158, 1906, par. 1}. "Be assured that the call is for our people to locate miles away from the large cities" {21LtMs, Lt 158, 1906, par. 2}. "The Lord calls for His people to locate away from the cities; for in such an hour as ye think not, fire and brimstone will be rained from heaven upon these cities. Proportionate to their sins will be their visitation" {21LtMs, Lt 158, 1906, par. 3}.

In 1907: "The instruction is still being given, Move out of the cities. Establish your sanitariums, your schools, and offices away from the centers of population" {22LtMs, Lt 26, 1907, par. 2}. "Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it is becoming more and more evident that those who remain in

them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their souls' salvation" {22LtMs, Ms 115, 1907, par. 6}.

In 1908: "Who will be warned? We say again, Out of the cities. Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way" {23LtMs, Ms 85, 1908, par. 16}.

Calls to Noah to Lot to Disciples and Adventists

Combining the parallels in the days of Noah, the days of Lot and the days of the disciples, Ellen White says clearly that the same parallel apply to us today:

"Before the destruction of Sodom, God sent a message to Lot, 'Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.' The same voice of warning was heard by the disciples of Christ before the destruction of Jerusalem: 'When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains.' Luke 21:20, 21. They must not tarry to secure anything from their possessions, but must make the most of the opportunity to escape" {PP 166.3}.

“There was a coming out, a decided separation from the wicked, an escape for life. So it was in the days of Noah; so with Lot; so with the disciples prior to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so it will be in the last days. Again the voice of God is heard in a message of warning, bidding His people separate themselves from the prevailing iniquity” {PP 166.4}.

Do not fall for the deceptive common argument that the parallel to Lot is a warning message that does not pertain to the “out of the cities” message, for Ellen White affirms that it surely does:

“I could not sleep past two o'clock this morning. During the night season I was in council. I was pleading with some families to avail themselves of God's appointed means, and get away from the cities to save their children. Some were loitering, making no determined efforts. The angels of mercy hurried Lot and his wife and daughters by taking hold of their hands. Had Lot hastened as the Lord desired him to, his wife would not have become a pillar of salt. Lot had too much of a lingering spirit. Let us not be like him. The same voice that warned Lot to leave Sodom bids us, ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean.’ Those who obey this warning will find a refuge. Let every man be wide awake for himself,

and try to save his family. Let him gird himself for the work. God will reveal from point to point what to do next” {RH December 11, 1900, Art. B, par. 10}.

The conclusion to draw from our study is that the warning message given by Ellen White is to be understood as a parallel to the warning message to Lot, and the warning message given by Christ to His disciples regarding the Abomination of Desolation.

Large to small cities to rural districts in 1880s

Do not settle for leaving only the large cities, for that was only the first step for those in 1880s who first saw the signal to flee. Ellen White said to Adventists of her day that sign of “the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains” {5T 464.3}. Notice the move from cities was to be progressive: first leaving the large cities and moving to the smaller ones, and finally moving from the smaller cities to more secluded rural homes. We have already seen that Ellen White gave general call to come out of the cities in her day. But in later years, she began giving specific instructions

to leave the “large” cities. Notice this statement: “Get out of the large cities as fast as possible” {6T 195.1} – published in 1901. It follows that when we accept that in her day Ellen White called Adventists to leave large cities, then we do accept that the sign to leave the cities came back then. It is clear that the general call to leave the cities started in 1880s.

There are many doubting Adventists who are still unconvinced of leaving the cities, and they misunderstand the few statements where Ellen White encouraged families to move to cities to engage in missionary work. If we compare testimonies to testimonies in her writings, it becomes clear what Ellen White meant and there is harmony in her writings. Let us first lay out two of her most quoted statements that are often misunderstood:

“We see the great need of missionary work to carry the truth not only to foreign countries, but to those who are near us. Close around us are cities and towns in which no efforts are made to save souls. Why should not families who know the present truth settle in these cities and villages, to set up there the standard of Christ, working in humility, not in their own way, but in God's way, to bring the light before those who have no knowledge of it?” {RH September 29, 1891, par. 9}.

“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. They are to be missionaries for God, by their faith and works testifying to the near approach of the coming Saviour” {8T 244.3}.

In understanding the above, remember that Adventists were explicitly instructed “to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains” {5T 464.3}. This was confirmed in 1901 when Ellen White wrote, “Get out of the large cities as fast as possible” {6T 195.1}. It would then be in accordance with her counsel to live in smaller cities at that time. The view that would harmonise all the counsel on the subject would be that Ellen White must have been referring to missionaries in her day to move into “the smaller” cities. To suggest another interpretation, would be to suggest a glaring contradiction. Notice that the language in both of the passages quoted places these “cities” in the context of towns and villages: “cities and towns cities and

villages” {RH September 29, 1891, par. 9} and “towns, cities, and villages” {8T 244.3} in 1904.

Shall not the cities be warned?

What about taking the gospel to the cities? Must we live in the cities to preach to the cities? No! “The cities are to be worked from outposts.” Surely, Ellen White was passionate about reaching the lost in the cities with the gospel. Let us read few statements.

“Those who labor in the large cities need special advantages, that they may not be called to sacrifice life or health unnecessarily” {24LtMs, Lt 168, 1909, par. 8}. “I write these things because it has been presented to me as a matter of importance that our workers should so far as possible avoid everything that would imperil their health. We need to exercise the best of judgment in these matters. Feeble or aged men and women should not be sent to labor in unhealthful, crowded cities. Let them labor where their lives will not be needlessly sacrificed. Our brethren who bring the truth to the cities must not be obliged to imperil their health in the noise and bustle and confusion, if retired places can be secured” {24LtMs, Lt 168, 1909, par. 9}.

“Everywhere there are men who should be out in active ministry, giving the last message of warning to

a fallen world. The work that should long ago have been in active operation to win souls to Christ has not been done. The inhabitants of the ungodly cities so soon to be visited by calamities have been cruelly neglected. The time is near when large cities will be swept away and all should be warned of these coming judgments. But who is giving to the accomplishment of this work the wholehearted service that God requires? Many need to receive a special fitting up before they will be able to carry forward this work along right lines" {25LtMs, Ms 53, 1910, par. 4}. "To those who are specially set apart to warn the cities, ... move forward intelligently, making the Lord your dependence. Ask wisdom of God, and He will give it to you. Labor in the meekness and simplicity of Christ, for this will recommend you to those for whom you minister, and they will open their hearts to the message you bear" {25LtMs, Ms 53, 1910, par. 32}.

"God's people are not doing the work He would have them do for the cities. I have borne this testimony again and again until it seemed as if God's people were not going to do the work; but the cities must be entered. We must not let the people perish that do not know the binding force of God's law. We are responsible" {PUR, January 12, 1911 par. 3}.

The counsel of Ellen White was that while we continue to exert our efforts to reach the lost in the cities, we nevertheless work to relocate so that we could follow God's plan in our evangelistic outreach.

“The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes; not by God’s people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth’.” {17LtMs, Lt 182, 1902, par. 15}.

“As God’s commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities, but not dwell in them” {14LtMs, Ms 85, 1899, par. 21}.

Too late at Sunday Law to leave the cities

O that this writer could command language of sufficient force to make the impression upon the minds of fellow Seventh-day Adventists that it will be too late at Sunday Law for them to leave the cities! Whoever has a property in the city, who would not receive the mark of the beast, must have long sold it and bought a country property before Sunday Law, otherwise when the decree goes forth “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:17). A property in the city will be useless if not

converted into a country property before Sunday Law. At Sunday Law, Adventists will not be able to sell their city property to buy a country property and so their heart will be in the cities where their property is, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:34). The thought of walking away without selling their city property will crush their faith. If they flee without selling their city property, they will look back and their faith will turn into a pillar of salt.

“But 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. This is the light that is given me” {GCB April 6, 1903, page 88.1; RH April 14, 1903, par. 33}.

As “not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem” in AD70 because they “watched for the promised sign” in AD66 {GC 30.2}, so not one true Seventh-day Adventist Christian who watched for the 1888 sign will be living in the cities by Sunday Law. Surely it is “at the peril of their souls’ salvation” {22LtMs, Ms 115, 1907, par. 6} that the professed Adventists remain in the cities until Sunday Law.

Multitudes of professed Adventists still living in cities by Sunday Law shall condemn themselves and will fret themselves under the condemnation that they did not get out of the cities when they had the

chance. They will flee in fear and not having real faith in the country living truth. But a flight of fear and not of faith is sin, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). With such a sin-motivated flight out of the cities, coupled with the demands of their city-raised children or their own artificial city lifestyle needs, they will find it practically impossible to suddenly adapt to country living life and they will quickly turn back to the life of ease in the city and receive the mark of the beast in order to survive.

Professed Adventists living in cities by Sunday Law, who as a result receive the mark of the beast, will prove to have been apostates! “They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them” {GC 608.2}.

Concluding remarks

We must have Christ-like characters by Sunday Law to stand in that crisis. Country living is the best place for building Christ-like characters. Character building is tenfold harder in cities. It will be too late to leave cities for character building at Sunday Law.

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