

‘Asset’ -or- ‘Liability’ —A ‘Story’ of Two Families

Even if you haven’t been able to get a place in the country yet, start developing skills, collecting key equipment items, and learning how to do things without electricity or fossil fuels. It might be helpful to think: Are we going to be an ‘Asset’ or a ‘Liability’ to the group God connects us with? To illustrate this concept, let’s contrast two different families who are still living in the same large city at the time of the first national Sunday law in the U.S.A. Remember, this law marks the beginning of the Time of Trouble and is our signal to flee the large cities, (see Matthew 24:15-21, Luke 21:20-21, and *Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, page 464-465). This will probably happen *before* we are not able to buy or sell, so we will picture both families still being able to buy gas and flee from the city in their vehicles. For the purpose of our illustration, both of these families also know a third family that already lives in the country. This third family has generously ‘invited’ both of these families to come to their place if they don’t have anywhere else to go when its time to flee. They have also extended this same ‘invitation’ to several other believers as well.

Like Lot and his family, the first family in our illustration hasn’t prepared. When they reluctantly realized that it was time to flee —*NOW!*— they just grabbed a few personal items, got in their car and drove off, (probably repeating Matthew 24:17-18 to themselves). When they ‘showed up’ at the third family’s property, a place had to be found for them to stay. Since there were several others who had already accepted the third family’s ‘invitation,’ the first family ended up ‘living’ in a corner of the already overcrowded small farmhouse’s living room. By that time it was late in the day, so everyone worked to scrounge up some bedding for them to sleep with.

Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

Matthew 24:17-18

In the morning, everyone had a hearty breakfast, but the wife of the third family was overheard saying, “With this group, the food we have here won’t last long.” After breakfast there was a group meeting, during which chores for the day were assigned. But, the first family in our illustration had to be shown how to use the tools in the garden and orchard, how to safely cut firewood, and because they had frequently eaten out, they even had to learn how to prepare food ‘from scratch.’ So everything actually took longer to get done.

Often they were tempted to complain about the ‘sub-standard’ living conditions, the dirt, and the bugs. Because they were not used to physical labor, it was definitely a challenge for them just to do their part of the workload. Their inclination toward laziness together with their somewhat negative attitude tried the patience of the rest of the group. However as loving brothers and sisters in Jesus, they were willing to work with them and help them grow.

Their lack of preparation in all these areas definitely put additional strain on the already limited resources, as well as on the social and spiritual structure of the group. Because they had to be provided with even their basic necessities, because of their lack of practical skills, and because of their attitudes towards work and discomfort, they would have been a ‘Liability.’

On the other hand, like Noah and his family, the second family in our illustration did prepare. Although they had not been able to purchase country property of their own, they still did what they could. As they thought and prayed about their situation, they realized that when they had to flee they would probably be going to someone else's place in the country, and they determined that when they got there they would be an 'Asset' rather than a 'Liability.'

They lived in a 2nd story apartment, so they didn't have any yard. But they still wanted to get some experience 'raising their own provisions.' So, after thinking and praying about it, they started growing some simple vegetables in a couple of pots on their small balcony deck. Soon, their deck was crowded with as many containers as they could fit on it. They even had a dwarf fruit tree.

Realizing that 'Shelter' is the #1 Priority, they concluded that if they were going to truly be an 'Asset' they would somehow have to provide their own shelter. If not, they would have to depend on someone else for something to live in. Bringing their own shelter to stay in would contribute more toward them being an 'Asset' than *anything else*. So, they prayed, and did some research on various shelter options.

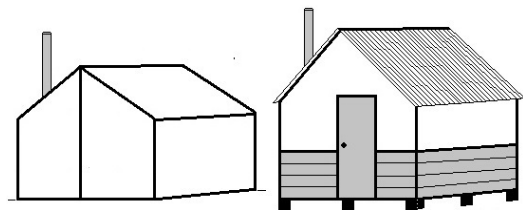
The first thing they thought of was to get an RV. Electricity for the electrical components could be provided by a simple solar panel set up. However, for heating and cooking, RVs are dependant on propane, which must be purchased. So, after they were no longer able to buy or sell they wouldn't have any heat, neither would they be able to cook indoors. Possibly, they could install a wood burning stove. But, the floor plans of most RVs simply don't allow for that. Besides, realistically, the smallish vehicle they already had would not be able to tow a travel trailer, and they could not afford a larger tow vehicle or motor home. So, they ruled out getting an RV.

After doing more research, they discovered that there are people living year around, even in Northern Canada and Alaska in canvas wall tents. These tents come with a 'stove jack,' which allow a wood stove to be set up inside them. Before about the 1930s, these types of tents were common, and there are several references to this type of tent in Ellen White's writings. They were regularly used in the early mining and lumber camps, where people needed a warm dry place to stay starting with their first night in a remote area.

In time, many of the miners and lumbermen would make a wooden floor platform with a 'knee wall' to set their tent up on. Then, by adding roofing, and siding, etc. step by step as they were able, these tents could be turned into a cabin.

Compared to modern tents made of synthetic materials, these tents are much more durable and warmer. They also come in many sizes. A tent would be considerably less expensive, and more easily transported than an RV. So, the family decided to purchase a canvas wall tent with a 'stove jack,' and a small wood burning 'tent stove' to go with it.

To practice living the no buy / no sell lifestyle, they regularly went camping. On these trips they spent time in nature, practiced cooking on a wood fire, and became familiar with how to make life without electricity or gas work. From the experience they gained while camping, they realized the need for other key equipment items, such as:



wall tent and mining camp tent cabin

rugged clothing, good bedding, containers for water, a large washbasin, a folding table, a small axe, a bow saw, and a shovel.

They soon realized that there wouldn't be room for themselves and all this gear in their smallish vehicle. When they actually had to flee they would want to take even more than what they took when they went camping. So they thought and prayed about what they should do. A few days later, they noticed a motorcycle pulling a small trailer, and realized that even with their small car, there were small inexpensive utility trailers that they could tow even with their vehicle. So they worked toward having a trailer hitch installed on their car, and bought one of these trailers.

As they recognized the nearness of the time to flee, they began in earnest to collect some of the other equipment items that they didn't already have: a hand-cranked grain grinder, a wash tub, a wheelbarrow, and a crosscut saw. Because storage space was limited in their apartment, they made an organized pile of gear in one corner of their living room. These things, along with their personal items, were kept ready to go, so they could quickly load up the car and trailer, and head out of town when the time came to leave.

By this time they had also already made several visits to the third family's property. While there, they would help with whatever needed to be done on the homestead, and share spiritually with the third family. On one of these visits, as they talked with the third family, it was decided that they should pick out a spot for their camp. So, together with the third family, they picked out a spot, trimmed the trees and bushes in the area, leveled out a pad for their tent, and cut and stacked some firewood.

When the time came to flee, they loaded up their car and trailer, and drove out of the city. Once they 'showed up' at the third family's property, they simply 'checked in' with them, then drove over to their spot. As they put up their tent, set up the wood stove, brought in the folding table, unfolded their cots and rolled out the sleeping mats, spread out their sleeping bags, brought in the boxes of food and utensils, and the duffles with their clothing, everyone in the family helped—even the children. They all knew just what to do, and just where everything needed to go.

But I am the Lord your God,
Ever since the land of Egypt;
I will again make you dwell in tents,
As in the days of the appointed feast.
Hosea 12:9

Although their tent wasn't large, they had a warm, dry place to live. They had their own adequate clothing and bedding. In many ways they were better off than those at the house. At the very least they had their own privacy as a family.

Since they had brought their own equipment, they were able to haul their own water, bathe themselves, wash their own clothes, cut their own firewood, and cook their own food. They were also able 'pitch right in' with the work that needed to be done in garden, orchard, and grain field. The wheelbarrow they brought was a great blessing to everyone, hauling produce from the garden, biomass to the compost pile, and firewood to and from the woodpiles.

As they saw the crowded conditions at the house, they shared much of the stores of food they had brought with them. They had learned to sew as a part of their preparations, and bought a hand-cranked sewing machine. So when they noticed that there was quite a bit of clothing being shared among the group, they were able to help

alter some of the clothing so it would fit the person who was wearing it better. They had also learned a bit about construction and brought some basic construction tools. So, when one of the other people in the group was able to get some lumber, they were able to help build a couple small cabins to relieve the overcrowding at the house, and make a wood floor for their own tent.

Because they were missionary minded, they helped to organize the group's evangelistic team that would go to visit and share the end-time gospel message with the neighbors, the nearby country community, and even the city they had left behind. They had also studied 'medical missionary work.' So whenever someone in the group, or one of the neighbors, or someone the evangelistic team contacted became injured or sick, they were able to help.

'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.'"

Country Living, page 30

During their earlier study of the prophecies they had recognized the need to be able to 'endure to the end,' (see Matthew 24:13), and began looking at the end-time scene a whole. In doing so they realized that in addition to fleeing from the cities to the country at the first national Sunday law, they also needed to be prepared to flee to the "most desolate and solitary places" in response to the Death Decree shortly after the Seven Last Plagues began to be poured out. (See *Great Controversy*, page 626, 627-628, and *Early Writings*, pages 36-37.) As a result, they had started learning about wilderness survival. From that time on, they would learn and practice bushcraft skills in the evenings and on their camping trips. As a family, they had even gone on a couple 'survival trips,' taking only minimal basic gear for practice. This knowledge and experience enabled them to teach the rest of the group about wild edible plants and other wilderness skills in preparation for when they would all have to leave the country property, and flee to the wilderness.

Due to their own research and previous visits to the third family's homestead, they knew life in the country would be a lot of hard work. Because of their diligent study and belief in the end-time prophecies, they were also diligent about their preparations. They collected necessary equipment. They practiced as much as they could by growing their container garden, going camping, and learning skills in the evenings. The time and effort they put into these activities, together with their Christian attitudes in general, helped to develop in them a willingness to work, and the group never heard any of them complain, even their children.

This second family had prepared as much as they were able. They were set up not only to be able to take care of themselves, but also to be a blessing to others. From their others-centered focus in life, and their seriousness about preparing for the things we have been "divinely warned" about, it was obvious that Jesus was living in their hearts. Their faith was made evident by their works. This second family was definitely an 'Asset!' Everyone in the group was glad they were there.