

Away We Go (2009)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-1 ; L-3 ; S/N-5. Running time: 1 hour 38 min.

Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Psalms 10:1

Director Sam Mendes, who savaged the success-obsessed life style in American Beauty and Revolutionary Road, takes us on a road trip in this sometimes poignant film about an expectant couple in their mid-thirties searching for a suitable place to raise their child. Burt Farlander (John Krasinski) and his longtime girlfriend Verona (Maya Rudolph) are expecting their first child—and also are expecting his parents (Jeff Daniels and Catherine O’Hara) to help them in the serious business of raising their child. However, when Mom and Dad inform them that they are moving to Belgium for a few years, the surprised parents-to-be decide there is nothing to hold them anymore to Denver. They decide to take to the road and seek the ideal place for raising their daughter, one important criterion being the access to another friend or family member

Burt and Verona visit friends in their quest.

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to serve as their role model .

The pair visit an assortment of relatives and friends in such places as Phoenix, Tucson, Madison, Montreal, and Miami, but for an assortment of reasons—some funny, and at least one poignantly sad—they soon depart for another city. Their journey leads them into all sorts of reflection, upon marriage (he wants to marry, she asks “What’s the point?”), ways of raising children, and where and what is home. Also, when they see the agony of their Montreal friends, a loving pair who desperately want to sire their own children but cannot, they raise questions very much akin to those of the writers of Psalms 10 , 37, or 73.

This likeable couple have much to learn, and their experiences with those whom they meet along the way have much to teach us. A somewhat chaotic film, but far better than most of the cineplex offerings, this one really has “heart.”

For Reflection/Discussion

1. What does the parents’ decision to leave before the birth of their granddaughter reveal about them? Not such great role models, eh?
2. Which family do you think is the wackiest? Which the most poignant?
3. What kind of an environment do you think best for raising a child?
4. Why do you think that Verona resists getting marriage? When she says, “What’s the point?” how might you respond?
5. When the two lament the plight of their Montreal friends and raise the age-old question of “Why?” what might you say in response? Given that such writers as those of the Psalms and the Book of Job also raise these questions, might you be

cautious in offering easy answers so dear to the ones passed along on the Internet?