Life is Richer with Less

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The society we live in encourages us to strive for more wealth and possessions. Inevitably, you may be affected by this pursuit for more in your life. But do you really need all that you own? Do you need to earn so much?

From recent experiences, I realised how true Matthew 6:24 is, that “you cannot serve God and mammon”. If you strive for more, you will have less time for God and your family, and you fall into the trap of serving mammon rather than God. But with less, you can have a richer life.

Happier with Less

I live in Japan, where the quality of life is good and everything is convenient. However, all this comes at a price. Living expenses are high and people are stressed from work. Fathers work late and kids are too busy with their schooling, so families spend less time communicating.

In August 2012, my family and I visited Cambodia, a country still relatively undeveloped because of the civil wars that ended in 1998. Many live in small wooden houses and boats, with limited or no electricity and water supply. Things are inconvenient but, surprisingly, the local people are happy; by midday, adults and kids alike are swaying in their hammocks. With fewer possessions, people do not need to work as hard to maintain their lives and are less distracted, so they spend more time with their families.

Comparing the glum-looking office workers in Japan to the carefree Cambodians made me step back and ponder. Having less seems to bring more happiness.

A Better Quality of Life

In October 2012, I, my husband resigned from his job. With no income and more time, it made us see things clearer, and our quality of life actually improved.

Before, when I went shopping, I tended to buy things that I thought were necessary or were on sale. But most of these items ended up as clutter or thrown in the bin. However, with less money and more time, careful thought is put into buying what you really need. Also, some things can be made at home, or if something is broken, it can be fixed. As you carefully consider what you need and put effort in making things yourself, you will treasure what you have and use them with care.

Eating out may be convenient, but a nutritious and tasty meal is not guaranteed. However, a home-cooked meal is prepared with love. The nutritional value of the meal and the tastes of those eating are considered, as well as the budget. No one can deny that the taste is better.

In terms of transport, cycling or walking are cheaper than driving a car. Although the journey may take longer, and you may have much to carry, it is by far more healthier and enjoyable. You are also more in touch with God’s creation and the changing seasons.

For our family holiday, we found camping to be a cheaper alternative and a good opportunity to spend quality time together. Cooking together, starting a campfire and stargazing are more relaxing than jostling with the crowds at a tourist spot. Being in touch with nature and having just the bare essentials made us realise that we don’t really need so many possessions.

When my husband was working, we only had time for family meals at the weekends. Nowadays, we eat together daily and share about how our days went. Children are treasures entrusted to us by God for only a short period of time. They soon grow up and leave your fold, so cherish them and enjoy their company while you can. Money cannot buy back any time you lose with them.

Conclusion

Man cannot survive in this world without money, but we should not be slaves to money. God has promised us: “Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ... But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt 6:32–34). My family has experienced this and learned that if we earn enough to survive, and trust in God’s promise, we can enjoy a richer life with less.

UK Schedule for Elder Cheng Kuang Tsai & Sister Li Hua Tseng
(5 September – 6 November 2013)

September 5: Edinburgh — Arrival in UK
September 5–22: Edinburgh & Glifford Park — Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services / Ordination / Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
September 23–30: Elgin — Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
October 1–13: London & Forest Hill — Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services / Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
October 14–17: Portsmouth — Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
October 18–23: Leicester — Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
October 24–November 6: Sunderland & Newcastle — Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services / Pastoral visit / Church Board Members’ Training Seminar
November 6: Newcastle — Return to Taiwan

Remarks: Church Board Members’ Training Seminar — for all candidates of new Church Board. All candidates of new Church Board in Cambridge & Cardiff Prayer House should attend the Training Seminar in London or Leicester.
Elgin

From 22 May to 5 June, Pr Johnny Liu came to pastor in Elgin. He led a marriage seminar, explaining what marriage is, and gave encouragement to the unmarried youths. He also led an RE teachers’ training seminar, in which he reminded the teachers to have good characters and to preserve their faith. Pr Liu pastored the members in Aberdeen and the brethren from mainland China, as well as taking part in other holy works.

On 27 May, thirteen sisters from Gifford Park Sisters’ Fellowship came to visit us. Pr Johnny Liu led the fellowship and spoke about Jesus’ teachings and how the apostles lived a life of fellowship. There was also hymn singing, followed by a lovingly prepared meal. Thank God that we could share in the spiritual joy with the Gifford Park sisters.

During May, we were visited by many members from various churches: Bro John Taing and family (Houston, USA), Bro Benjamin Ho and family (Gifford Park), Bro Nissi Chin and family (London), Bro Timmy Shek and family (London), and Bro Daniel and Katy Wu (Manchester). On 8 June, we were joined by Sis Lylly Fong-Leplinay (Paris, France) during the Sabbath service.

On 9 June, the Evangelical Planning Group organised a leafletting session for all the members. On 16 June, the RE department and the YCC held a joint fellowship with activities and games. Many local members attended, and everyone enjoyed the day, which was full of fun and laughter. Thank God for the good weather and for the coworkers. May God remember and bless you all.

Edinburgh

In April, the churches in Gifford Park and Edinburgh had the opportunity to hold a joint evangelical service. It commenced with the combined Youth Choir praising God with the hymns “Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide” and “He is Here!”. Friends, family and members were encouraged by Pr Steven Shek’s short message on “The Promised Holy Spirit”. Combined Adult Choir later sang a medley on the theme “Praise God, All Ye People”. Through God’s grace and His Spirit working within the members, nine friends joined us for the event, with many returning for subsequent visits. The members chatted with them over refreshments and discussed more about our beliefs and our church. We ask God to continue giving the members of Edinburgh and Gifford Park the courage and strength to bring many more friends to church, so that His words can touch the hearts of those that come to join us.

Edinburgh had the opportunity to show hospitality to the International Youth Fellowship (IFY) overseas attendees between 8 to 11 June, before they attended the IYF in Newcastle. We took them to see the famous sights of Edinburgh and the surrounding landmarks, and held a hymnal fellowship with both churches in Edinburgh. It was a blessing to welcome our brethren from different parts of the world, to enjoy each other’s company and have spiritual fellowship in the Lord. Many of the Edinburgh youths enthusiastically participated in this work and we hope we will have more opportunities to welcome brethren from around the world in the future.

June was a busy month for weddings in Edinburgh, as many members from near and far came to witness the holy matrimony of Bro Kamun Shek and Sis Wendy Leung, as well as that of Bro Caleb Lai and Sis Stacey Chan. May the Lord bless the newly wedded couples and direct their paths.

Gifford Park

Thank God, Gifford Park had the opportunity to play host to various church works. There was the one-day National Brothers’ Fellowship on 29 April, which was attended by around 100 brothers from all parts of the UK. The sessions, led by Pr Steven Shek, were on the topic of “Our Generation For The Next Generation”.

From 23 to 25 June, we held our annual spiritual convocation and evangelistic services. The sessions were led by Pr Johnny Liu and Pr FF Chong, who spoke on the topic of “Do Not Worry About Tomorrow”. We also performed water baptism for baby Jacob Shek from London (son of Bro Timmy and Sis Celia Shek).

A week before the International Youth Fellowship in Newcastle, around fifty youths from around the world came to Edinburgh for a visiting tour. Youths from both Gifford Park and Edinburgh helped out with the hosting and tour guide duties over the few days.

Forthcoming Events

(September—November 2013)

UK:

September 8–22: Northern / central / southern region | RE Counselling Course Seminar | UKGA RE Department

September 8–10: Edinburgh | Spiritual Convocation and Evangelical Services / Ordination | Pr S Shek and Pr J Shek

October 1–12: Cardiff | Pastoral ministry / training | Pr J Shek

October 4–6: London | Spiritual Convocation and Evangelical Services | Pr J Liu and Eld Tsai

October 13–14: Gifford Park | UKGA Board meeting | GA members

October 20–21: Edinburgh | Truth Study Committee meeting | TSG members

October 22–25: Edinburgh | Spiritual Advancement Seminar for Preachers | Eld Tsai and UKGA Preachers

October 26: Cardiff | Pastoral ministry | Bro Kenneth Zhou

October 28–30: Sunderland | Spiritual Convocation and Evangelical Services | Pr S Shek and Pr J Shek

November 25–27: Newcastle | UKGA Board meeting / Church Delegates’ Conference (Election) | UKGA Board / Preachers and Church Delegates

November 29–December 10: Cardiff | Pastoral ministry / training | Pr TK Chin

Europe:

September 2–10: Netherlands / Belgium | Pastoral ministry / training | On Y Chan and Ons M Chan

September 6–8: Vienna | Spiritual Convocation and Evangelical Services | Pr TK Chin

September 12–30: Russia | Outreach / training / pastoral | Bro KF Cheng

September 20–22: Hamburg | Training and Special Service | Pr P Chan

September 26–October 14: Russia | Outreach / training / pastoral | Dr J Tang

November 1–2: Vienna | Church Workers’ Training | Pr FF Chong

November 14–Dec 9: Russia | Outreach / training / pastoral | IA Worker

Africa

September 5–October 6: Ghana and Liberia | Pastoral ministry / training | Pr FF Chong and Bro T Kuo

September 12–October 13: Kenya and Tanzania | Pastoral ministry / training | Pr S Hwang, Pr TK Chin, Bro S Kuo

November 28–December 22: Kenya | Student Convocation / training | Pr M Chan and Bro R Leacock

December 4–30: Zambia | Student Convocation / training | Pr S Shek and volunteers

December 5–January 5: Ghana and Togo | Student Convocation / training | Pr J Liu
Newcastle

On 10 April, Pr Steven Shek held an Elderly Fellowship. On 14 April, we had a light-hearted interpreting fellowship to build upon our vocabulary, skills and confidence, and later that day, Pr Shek led a Q&A session on personal evangelism which tackled the barriers involved in this work. Sisters’ Fellowship gathered and continued their study of the Book of Esther on 23 April.

On James Tang led a Sisters’ Fellowship on 5 May. We opened our doors and welcomed our friends and family with a Gospel Tea event the following Sunday on 12 May. We truly thank the Lord for inspiring us to do the work of personal evangelism and bringing our friends and colleagues to taste the sweetness of His truth. On 20 May, Pr Michael Chan encouraged our elderly brothers and sisters with the topic “Brave Heart” in this year’s National Evergreen Fellowship. By God’s grace, three generations gathered, were edified and had joyful fellowship in a truly blessed event.

After many months of preparation and anticipation, by God’s grace, this year’s IYF was held in Newcastle from 12 to 16 June. We embraced our brothers and sisters who came all the way from Canada, USA, Russia, Singapore, East and West Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Australia, as well as youths from around the UK. Pr Steven Shek and Pr Timothy Yeung, from Canada, instilled the participants with the “Mission of TJC Youths in the End Time: Overcoming Challenges”, encouraging them to be determined to overcome the many challenges which the youths face today. In the five days, friendships were made, languages were learnt and precious memories were forged by the love and guidance of God. We bade farewell to our global guests on 17 June, and we ask the Lord to remember and bless them in all that they do.

On 23 June, we celebrated the holy matrimony of Bro Jason Ho and Sis Kathy Lin. We sincerely welcome Kathy, who has come from Toronto / Montreal, Canada, into the big family of the church in Newcastle. We pray the Lord will shower them with blessing upon blessing on their heavenly path together.

Sunderland

On 27 April, EPG organised a coffee morning to give members an opportunity to invite friends for a cup of coffee and a chat with the local members.

From 11 to 15 May, Pr Steven Shek came to pastor us, followed by Pr Michael Chan from 25 to 28 May. Thank God, we were spiritually cultivated through the words of God and their encouragements.

From 25 to 29 May, we had the opportunity to host the 2nd Ministry Volunteer Programme, with the theme “You Can Do More”, which we hosted alongside the 2nd Literary Ministry Seminar (LMS) (25 May to 1 June). During this time, Dn KC Tsai from Toronto in Canada, who was taking part in the LMS, offered some of his precious time to sermonise during Sabbath, to equip and cultivate us with the words of God.

Sadly, on 28 May, a memorial service was held for our beloved Bro Gin Tao Liu (son of Bro Yee Liu), who had been called to rest by the Lord.

On 15 June, Dn Thomas Chan (Griffith Park) came to visit, and encouraged us during our first Sabbath service. For the second service, Pr Ho from Taiwan, who was assisting with the IYF in Newcastle, offered his time to come over to

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Sunderland to share a sermon with us. The following day, On Chan led Sisters’ Fellowship, with the title “Wise and Beautiful Woman — Abigail”.

Finally, we held a praise worship event with the theme of “Let All Creation Sing” on 30 June. Many friends came to listen to the hymns and the message, as well as join in with the songs of praise.

May God continue to bless the church in Sunderland and guide us, so that everything we do is done according to His will.

Cambridge

We continue to thank the Lord for the number of members visiting us, including various members from Sabah, as well as members from other churches. Sis Frances Wei returned to Malaysia after a long stay in Cambridge.

Glory be to God! We were blessed to have the opportunity to meet and greet the iPhone participants who travelled to visit Cambridge. Though their scheduled time was limited, we were able to sing hymns, pray and share a meal with the members, and take them sightseeing around Cambridge and punting along the River Cam.

London

On 6 April, we held baptism, footwashing and observed the Holy Communion, welcoming five adults and six children into the fold. Thank God for guiding them to the truth.

On 13 April, we held our first praise worship hymnal evangelical, with the theme “I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life”, based on John 14:6. Pr FF Chang shared how we are saved through Jesus, and through Him we are able to come before God. London Choir and Song of Songs Choir sang praises to God that reflected upon God’s salvation. Thank God, twenty truth-seekers were able to join us in fellowship.

On 14 April, we held the Southern Region NEG training seminar, which was attended by Portsmouth, Leicester and all London members. Pr FF Chang taught lessons on the doctrine of baptism and shared common misconceptions and beliefs regarding this sacrament. He encouraged the members to study the Bible diligently, to be able to use God’s words when we face such encounters.

In May, we bade farewell to Bro Nissi Chin and family as they embarked on their trip to Taiwan to learn Chinese.

We had a very busy month in June, with welcoming overseas visitors on a post-IYF tour of London. Local members assisted in guiding visitors around various famous sights across London, and we were able to have fellowship with them and mutually share our faith journeys.

From 28 to 30 June, we held our Summer Spiritual Convocation and 30th Anniversary Commemoration, with the theme “The Church is the Body of Christ”. Pr Joseph Shek and Pr TK Chin shared on building up the body of Christ in the end-times, and invited truth-seekers to know more about the true vine in our evangelical meeting. During the convocation, we welcomed two additional members to the fold. We pray that all our new members continue to grow spiritually in the Lord.

Portsmouth

We thank our heavenly Lord that seven more souls were added to His fold during our spiritual and evangelical convocation on 8 to 10 April. Bro Albert Leung received baptism with his wife, Winnie, and their son, Matthew (their daughter Jade was baptised in London last October). In addition, Sunny Zhao, Jonathan Ng (son of Bro Edward Ng), baby Hollie Lee (daughter of Bro Duy En Lee and Sis Qing Chen), and Emily Liew (daughter of Bro Daniel and Sis Lisa Liew) were also baptised into the Lord.

On 31 May, after bravely enduring sixteen years of cancer, our beloved Bro Anthony Ho was peacefully called back by the Lord. He will be much remembered for his dedication to the church, his love and faithfulness to God, his great concern for the brethren and his love towards his family. May God continue to comfort Bro Anthony’s family and the Portsmouth members for the loss of a dearly beloved brother.

On 10 June, Bro Lim Ho and Sis Tara Liu were joined in matrimony. We warmly welcome Sis Tara to her new home in the church at Portsmouth. May the Lord guide their footsteps as a newly married couple.