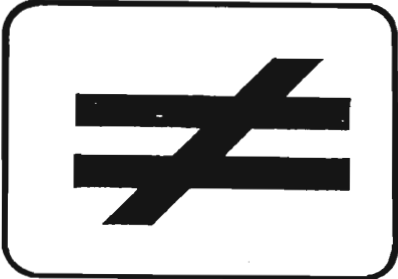


PC 11/1/1/3/11



SIMPLE LIFE STYLE



PACSA FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION: What do we find in the Bible?

John the Baptist called for those who have two coats to share with those who have none (Lk.3:11). Jesus warned of the difficulties the rich would have in entering the Kingdom (Mt.19:23); and made it clear that we have to choose between God and money (Mt.6:24). Paul entreated people to share that there might be equality (2 Cor. 8:13,14), and emphasised that we are one body (1Cor.12-27). James was scornful of those who did not follow kind words with actions (James 1, 22-25); and warned the wealthy of coming misery. (James 5:1).

From these and other passages, we know that we are to care about others, to narrow the chasm between rich and poor, to be good stewards of the earth's resources, and to be liberated from class pride and the desire for wealth. In other words, we are to live simply, or 'justly'.

But how do we go about it? The following are a few facts and ideas, pros and cons, on the practical side.

HOUSING (Buildings)

- * Adequate protection, space and facilities are important for all, and we need to ensure that everyone has a home.
- * We also need opportunities for creativity, and the expression of our individuality and God-given talents.

--- BUT ---

- + A house or building can be a status symbol with 'bigger and better' the criteria. Do we need so much when other members of the body have so little?
- + Building new structures while allowing the old to decay, or be torn down, is extremely poor stewardship of resources.

IDEAS

- i) Rejoice in the need for order, innovation and interdependence in a small home; and for conservation of an old one.*
- ii) Use a large house well by sharing with others.*
- iii) Choose a neighbourhood for convenience (to save fuel) and congeniality, not prestige, keeping in mind the example of Christians who choose to live among the poor.*
- iv) Avoid opulent consumerism.*

CLOTHING

- * We express ourselves through our clothes.
- * All people need to be comfortably and suitably dressed for work and social occasions.

--- BUT ---

- + A bulging wardrobe denies Gospel teaching.
- + Magnificent clothes demonstrate worldly status and power. (Jesus avoided them).

IDEAS

- i) Sew for yourself, if you can, and for others; or teach skills to those who will benefit.*
- ii) Buy only what you need, ignoring the dictates of fashion.*
- iii) Exchange — for a change!*
- iv) Simple does not mean dull and dowdy.*

FOOD

- * Balanced, healthy meals are essential for everyone.
- * Good food, attractively served, enhances companionship and celebration.

--- BUT ---

- + We often eat too much. Tables groan with an excess of rich and expensive dishes. How is it possible to eat such food, knowing that children close by are dying of malnutrition? (See Factsheets 2 and 5).

IDEAS

- i) Simple meals can be fun meals. There are recipe books available.*
- ii) Enjoy brown bread and rice, salad, homemade yogurt and so on, without becoming a faddist.*
- iii) Give the money saved to feed hungry children, remembering we are a family.*

WORK AND WAGES

* All need to have work to do; and to earn enough to live on, in reasonable comfort.

--- BUT ---

In South Africa, income varies considerably (See Factsheet 1); and the economic system benefits the privileged class (mostly white) in a totally unjust way.

IDEAS

If you earn more than you require, set the excess aside for the use of others (self tax). There are education and self-help schemes crying out for finance.

GIFTS

* A generous and costly gift can be a wonderful expression of love or appreciation.

--- BUT ---

<h1>RECORD SPREE</h1> <p>CHRISTMAS sales have reached unprecedented heights throughout the country this year, with an estimated R4,2 billion expected to be spent by the end of today, compared to the R3,57 billion which was raked in last Christmas.</p>	<p>Shoppers lay out massive R4,2 b</p>
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IDEAS

i) Offer a service such as babysitting or washing up! ii) Give a plant, a poem, a picture. . . . iii) Don't feel you must give Rand for Rand — a market-place exchange.

TRANSPORT

* Some people, such as doctors, need fast, reliable cars.

* Anyone can suffer inconvenience or even hardship through being delayed by transport problems.

--- BUT ---

+ Buying a new car when not absolutely essential causes great amounts of energy and resources to be expended, and can be termed: 'irresponsible consumption.'

+ Car ownership can lead to laziness; and also waste.

IDEAS

i) Share transport. ii) Be content with your old jalopy, as long as it is fuel-efficient and dependable. Replace it only when necessary. iii) Cycle - if you need exercise. iv) Remember that even a bicycle is an unobtainable luxury for many South Africans. They depend on public transport and their own feet! Try it sometime.

TRAVEL

* Travel provides new experiences and perspectives, and may bring about longed-for reunions.

* New places may mean new friends, opportunities for Christian witness and an exchange of ideas.

--- BUT ---

+ My brother in Christ cannot afford the busfare even to visit his old parents 30 kms away. If we are one body, how can some of us spend thousands travelling around the world?

IDEAS

i) Do not reach the stage when it is as easy to board a Boeing as a bus to town. ii) Enjoy your own backyard — town, province, country. iii) A Church in USA has morning worship in the church building, but evening services in house groups to save petrol. Put this concern on a larger scale and avoid too much travel to meetings and gatherings.

DOMESTIC HELP

* Paying your domestic a good wage may support a whole family.

* A person of a different race and culture in the home fosters understanding and love.

--- BUT ---

+ Having a paid 'servant' to wash up, tidy up and clean up may be termed a luxury.

+ Migrant labour in any form is wrong. (This applies to living-in domestic workers).

IDEAS

i) Unless you are ill or frail, reduce your domestic's hours so that she may enjoy family life. ii) Visit her home for that valuable contact. iii) Pay WELL for part-time work. (See Factsheet 3).

BOOKS TO READ

Bishop John Taylor: *Enough is Enough*

Doris Janzen Longacre: *Living More with Less and More With Less Cookbook*

Ronald Sider: *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*

Ronald Sider: *Poverty, Hunger, Justice* — a series of 12 Bible Studies (available from PACSA)

Simply Living — a 14 page pamphlet on nutrition, menus, etc. by Marj Graham (available from PACSA)

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