



Hurstville 1905
New Church



The New Church Newsletter

Hurstville Society March 2026

The Mass Consumption Era

By Rev. HyunJin Yang

“The younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living”

(Luke 15:13)

How much of your life did you spend consuming things last week? If you were to keep a log, how much would you have spent—on goods, food, and cultural experiences like shows or events?

It could quite surprise us knowing how much we spend on these as a consumer each day. Without a doubt, we are living in the biggest economy in human history, which is so gigantic that something like this could hardly be imagined a hundred years ago. The simple reality for us is that this consuming style of life has become an inseparable part of our life.

On the other hand, it is a fair question to ask, “what could the mass consumption era like today be quietly depriving us from?” Or “Has this sneaked a prodigal lifestyle into our lives?”

Where Is an Emphasis on Spiritual Nourishing and Growing?

Two things I have been reflecting on: First, we are living in the massive consumption era. No doubt about that. From this, we can establish that that also may mean that we are spending more time, more resources, and more of our life on consuming. Second, then, wouldn't that also suggest that it is inevitable that our life is shaped by such a lifestyle to some extent.

My self-evident response to the question of ‘what is today's consumerism quietly depriving us from?’ is this: it takes away our focus and priority from our emphasis on growing and nurturing. The simple math is this: the more time and energy we spend consuming things to entertain ourselves, the less time and focus we have left to invest in growing our talents or disciplining ourselves with something useful or of a change.

Prodigal Living

For some reason, these questions recently emerged as a contrast with a Scriptural theme for me. The word ‘prodigal lifestyle’ will by default be a good prompt for a well-known parable, the parable of the Prodigal Son.

If we recall the story, it is about a younger of two sons leaves the father's house and wastes away every bit of what he inherits from the father in a foreign country. Just briefly, its spiritual meaning helps us see that it is about

how we may squander heavenly riches of the Lord's truths that we have been provided with by the Lord (See Apocalypse Explained 279:6).

And even the literal story itself is a good lesson against one's prodigal living. Isn't it?

Receive, Nourish, and Grow

Scripture places such an abundant emphasis on nourishing and growing our spiritual life in contrast with thoughtless waste of our life. It calls us for our readiness as a fertile ground and for our growth as a fruitful tree, etc.

The theme of nourishing and growing also has come up strongly in our Journey Program, ***Pause: Make Space for God***. Some of the Scriptural passages we've seen there are,

“Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb, and the fruit tree...”
(Genesis 1:11)

Or

“I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgements, that you may live and multiply”
(Deuteronomy 30:16)

In one of His parables, the Lord also speaks of the one who received a seed of His truths on the good ground, and that when we do so, we can and will bear much fruit (Matthew 13:1-17).

Finding Some Space for Nourishing and Growing

We are living in the massive consumption era, which is unavoidable. But unnecessary consumerism can be avoidable. That means, we don't have to let our life chase more things to try on and consume every day.

If we can find some alternative, our life can be more fulfilling. If we can find ourselves in a quiet room with prayers, the Lord will answer with wisdom for how to see and use our life better.

Or we can spare twenty minutes to thirty minutes every week or so to discuss and reflect on how to be prudent with our words, with our thoughts, and with what we do, and see how these can nourish and grow us and how life-changing these may be.

What's Happened?

Our Second Drive to the Kogarah Storehouse (Jan 27th)

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our first donation drive of the year for the Kogarah Storehouse. The items will be distributed to those in greatest need within the local community. We are told that between 130 and 150 people regularly receive support through their network. Our donations were greatly appreciated. We will organize another drive toward the end of June.



Work Party (Feb 8th)

We went the extra mile at our quarterly work party. Aside from what we normally do, such as pulling the weed and gardening, our work included repairs to the shed—installing a missing pole and restoring a roof panel that had been blown off by the wind. Plus, the shed was thoroughly cleaned—

dust removed, spider webs cleared, the floor swept, and the windows rinsed! We were a small crew but a group of diligent working bees.



After working hard for over an hour and a half—and even getting caught in the rain—we enjoyed pizza together in the Richard Morse Room. One thing we learned once again is that one pizza for every two people is just not enough after hard work...! HyunJin will make sure to order more next time. We hope no one was discouraged by the amount of pizza they got. ;)



Monday Evenings' Small Group Meetings for *Pause: Make Space for God*

February may have been rather quiet after we returned from a big month in January with the Bishop's visit and the Family Retreat on the Sunshine Coast. But in some people's minds, it may not have been so quiet.

Five of us gathered at Baringa's social room while two or three others joining virtually on Monday evenings. As a small group, we worked through the Journey Program's workbook, sharing our thoughts on the readings and engaging thought-provoking group activities.

We will come back with some more detail in the next Newsletter, as we wrap up how the Journey Program and the Monday small group meetings have gone.

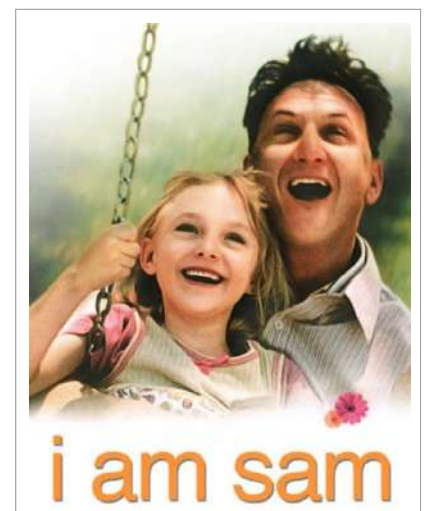
What's Coming up?

Society Meeting (March 8th)

Our quarterly Society Meeting is scheduled for March 8th after church service.

Movie Night (March 13th)

You are most welcome to join our movie night at 6:00 p.m. on March 13, with some refreshments to go with! The movie of choice is, *I Am Sam*. Here is a summary of it on the internet:



I Am Sam (2001) is an emotionally charged drama starring Sean Penn as Sam Dawson, a developmentally disabled father with the mental capacity of a seven-year-old raising his daughter, Lucy (Dakota Fanning), with help from friends. As Lucy turns seven and surpasses his cognitive abilities, child services intervene, leading to an intense custody battle where Sam fights to prove that love is more important than intellectual capability.

Why movie night? If we remember this time of last year, we watched a movie, *Prince of Egypt* (1998) as part of our Journey Program, *The Path of Integrity* about Joseph's stories. The movie for this year's Journey Program, is, *I Am Sam*. This movie can invite us to think an important life question, "Why Did God Create Me?"—the focus of our Week 2 topic. It will be interesting where Sam's story takes us on the question.

FYI, the movie's running time is two hours and ten minutes. Please let the pastor know in advance IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO JOIN. It will help him and other prepare refreshments accordingly.

Pastor's Visit to Perth (March 20th-22nd)

Pastor will be away for a three-day, two-night visit to Perth. This will be one of his two visits to Perth scheduled this year. He will be visiting families on Friday and Saturday, leading a couple of classes. On Sunday morning, he will lead a service with a Holy Supper. He will return at night.

Lay-Led Service at Hurstville (March 22nd)

Due to Pastor's absence at Hurstville, our Sunday service will be substituted with a lay-led service. More will be discussed at the Society Meeting on the 8th.

No Doctrinal Class in March

Due to small group meetings held on Monday evenings till the third week of the month, there won't be a monthly doctrinal class this month.



Palm Sunday Service (March 29th)

Thinking Easter Ahead...

This year's Easter falls on the first Sunday of April. One thing worth noting is that we will be planning our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Hope this earlier notice will be helpful for those planning to join our Easter service on the 5th. Also, if you are planning to join, please let HyunJin know.



Happy Birthday to Debbie Walsh (7th), Margaret Ward (7th), Graham Horner (12th), Edward Horner (18th)



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