



# michk@Aerald

循道衛理聯合教會國際禮拜堂

## Extravagant Generosity

Methodists are generous! It is part of our heritage. We stand in a tradition that has, from its inception, taught people to be careful with money. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, warned against earning money in destructive ways that corrupted the soul or contributed to injustice. He encouraged Methodists to live simply, avoiding the waste of money on unnecessary things. Early Methodists were invited to practice self-control and self-restraint which resulted in a greater capacity to help others.

Today in Hong Kong, vibrant, fruitful and growing congregations thrive because of extraordinary sharing, willing sacrifice and the joyous giving of their members. Generosity is a spiritual discipline which, when cultivated, enables us to value what we have, support the needs of others and benefit the whole community. Such generosity is rooted in grace, is an emptying of oneself for others and is an expression of love for God and neighbour. Extravagant generosity describes practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures. It describes lavish sharing, sacrifice and giving in service to God and to others. Such churches prosper the purposes of Christ and make a difference in the lives of people.

At the heart of such generosity is the spiritual discipline of tithing (giving 10% of our earned income). So much of our rhetoric about money in church is about the need for the church to receive. Generosity, however, is a spiritual discipline that encourages us to spend wisely, save consistently and give generously. It calls us to be generous and not greedy, giving and not self-indulgent, charitable and not self-absorbed. For all of us this should be thoughtful stewardship and proportional giving, remembering that tithing is the biblical norm. Such giving blesses and benefits the giver as much as it strengthens the mission and ministry of the church.

For over 120 years, Methodists in Hong Kong, the Methodist Church in Britain and the USA have given generously so that today we have churches, a hostel, a retreat centre and bungalow, as well as centres for social service. Every church we worship in, every communion rail where we have knelt, every hymnal from which we have sung, every worship band or organ that has touched our hearts and lifted our spirits,

every kitchen where fellowship meals have been prepared are all the fruit of someone's extravagant generosity.

We have the privilege of being Methodists in Hong Kong during the period 2014-2020 in which we have opportunity to invest in the work of God for present and future generations. The focus is not on the funds raised, but on ministry enabled, children nurtured, young people challenged, faith deepened and Christian vision for sharing good news and doing justice expanded.

Generosity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a worthy spiritual aspiration. Generosity is the opposite of selfishness, self-centeredness and self-absorption. To practice Extravagant Generosity requires self-control, patience, kindness, faith and a love of God and neighbour. These values build us up; equip us for life and ministry; and foster perspectives and attitudes that are sustaining, enriching and meaningful. Giving changes both the giver and the Church.

Extravagant generosity flows from the grace of God, which shapes our values and behaviours and supports the church in its God given task. Our agreed vision is for a significant and beacon church erected for the benefit of all Hong Kong Methodists both present and future. God has graciously given us this vision for ministry and mission in this community and beyond. Ours is the responsibility and privilege.

Friends, now is the time to show that extravagant generosity!

*Howard Mellor*

Revd Dr G. Howard Mellor

This article draws on material from:  
Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Robert Schnase.



*We have referred to the new building as a beacon of hope and grace in our community and for our whole Church. Like the image here, we see it clearly but as yet far away. With your prayers and generous support we are sure we can move much closer to realising this vision, this ministry. Praise be to God!*





# Interviewing Stuart Chen

One core task of the Redevelopment Project is construction. The Construction Committee which takes up both the advisory and supervisory roles therefore has an immense responsibility. Mr Stuart Chen, the Committee Chairman, was responsible for numerous construction projects of our local churches, schools and social services over the years. He has full confidence in meeting up the challenge of this Redevelopment Project, one with the largest scale in the history of the Methodist Church, Hong Kong.

Stuart is an architect. The first project in his career was the construction of the New World Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui East which has already been demolished. Later he joined the Housing Department of the Government and worked there until his retirement in 2013. He has started to be involved in the Redevelopment Project since 2001 and is pleased to see it finally materializing after many twists and turns. It is also exciting for him to witness the process of

designing the eye-catching building and rewarding for him to work with the reputable architect. However, what he takes pride most is the full dedication and contribution of the Committee members who are willing to put aside individual differences arising from professional preferences in order to achieve overall benefits for the Project. Strong friendship has thereby been cultivated among the members.

It is Stuart's earnest hope to mobilize professionals in the whole church and to enable them to involve in the Project through effective coordination. An important long-term goal is to train up brothers and sisters in the architectural and engineering professions to be successors to serve our church at different levels as well. Stuart prays that there will be a smooth passing on of the baton to the next generation after the completion of the Project.



Stuart Chen

# Funding THE VINE

Pastor John Snellgrove is one of the founding Pastors of the Vine Church in Wan Chai. They have recently completed their redevelopment in a cinema. We asked him how they did it.

## What really helped in your fund-raising?

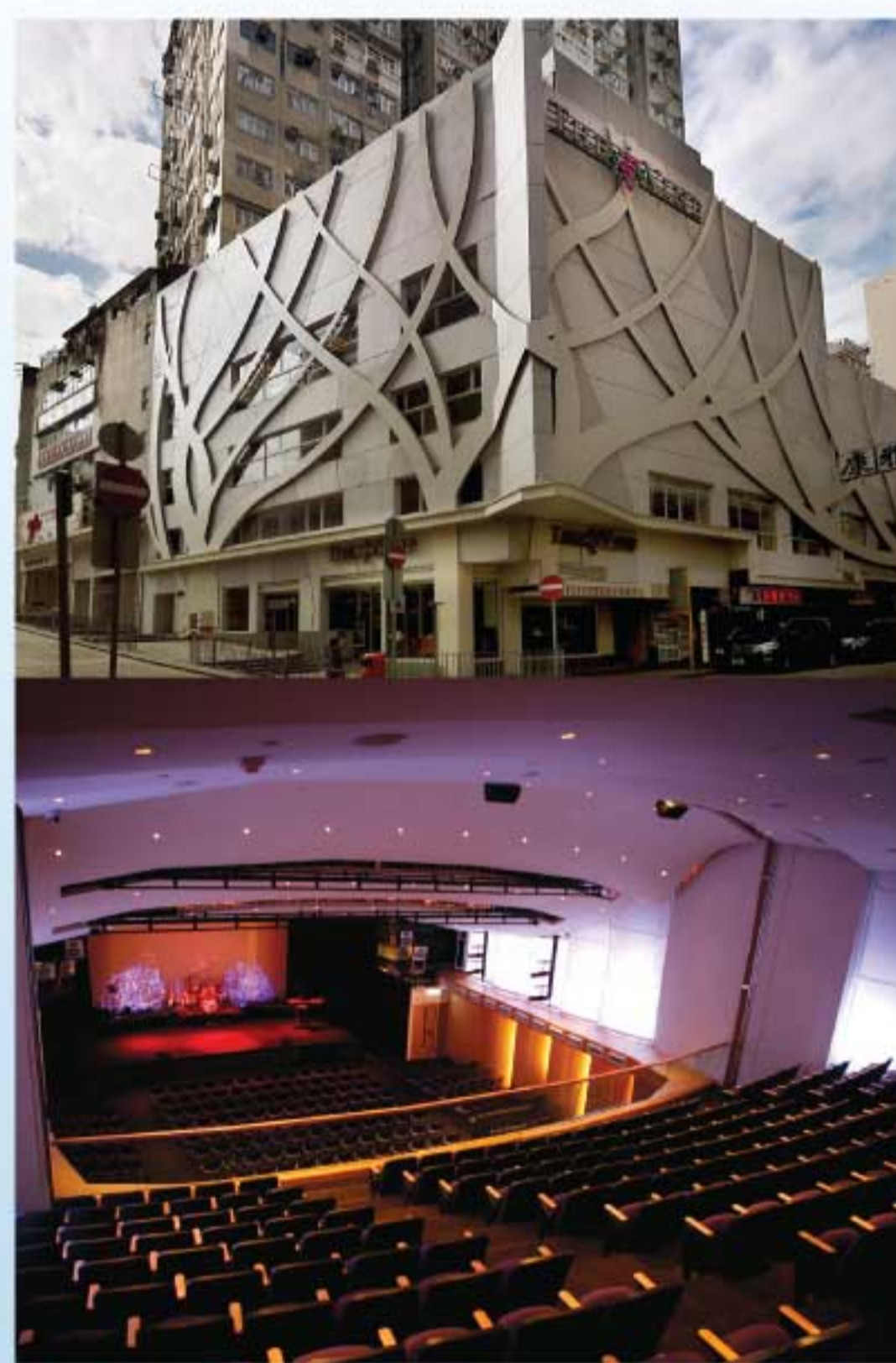
1. We helped our own people catch the vision first. A sort of 'internal marketing'. We prepared a group to share the vision with the aim of inspiring our congregation – which it did. We hared the needs and let people know how they could help and who they could get contact.
2. We had 'champions'—core members whose influence got the congregation excited by doing fundraising events with them.
3. We formed a fundraising committee and commissioned someone to drive it and execute the process. It would have been better to have someone working on this full time.



John Snellgrove  
Founding Pastor of the Vine

## What ideas really worked well on fund raising?

1. Major gifts mostly come from relationships. So we set up as many meetings as possible and constantly shared our vision with groups and individuals. This was probably our most successful channel.
2. We brought potential donors to our construction site and asked them to share vision and pray for the church and the project.
3. We approached private family foundations, those who have a relationship with the church, present and past – some now having left Hong Kong. We built relationships with these families. Such foundations were really generous.



## Were there any surprises?

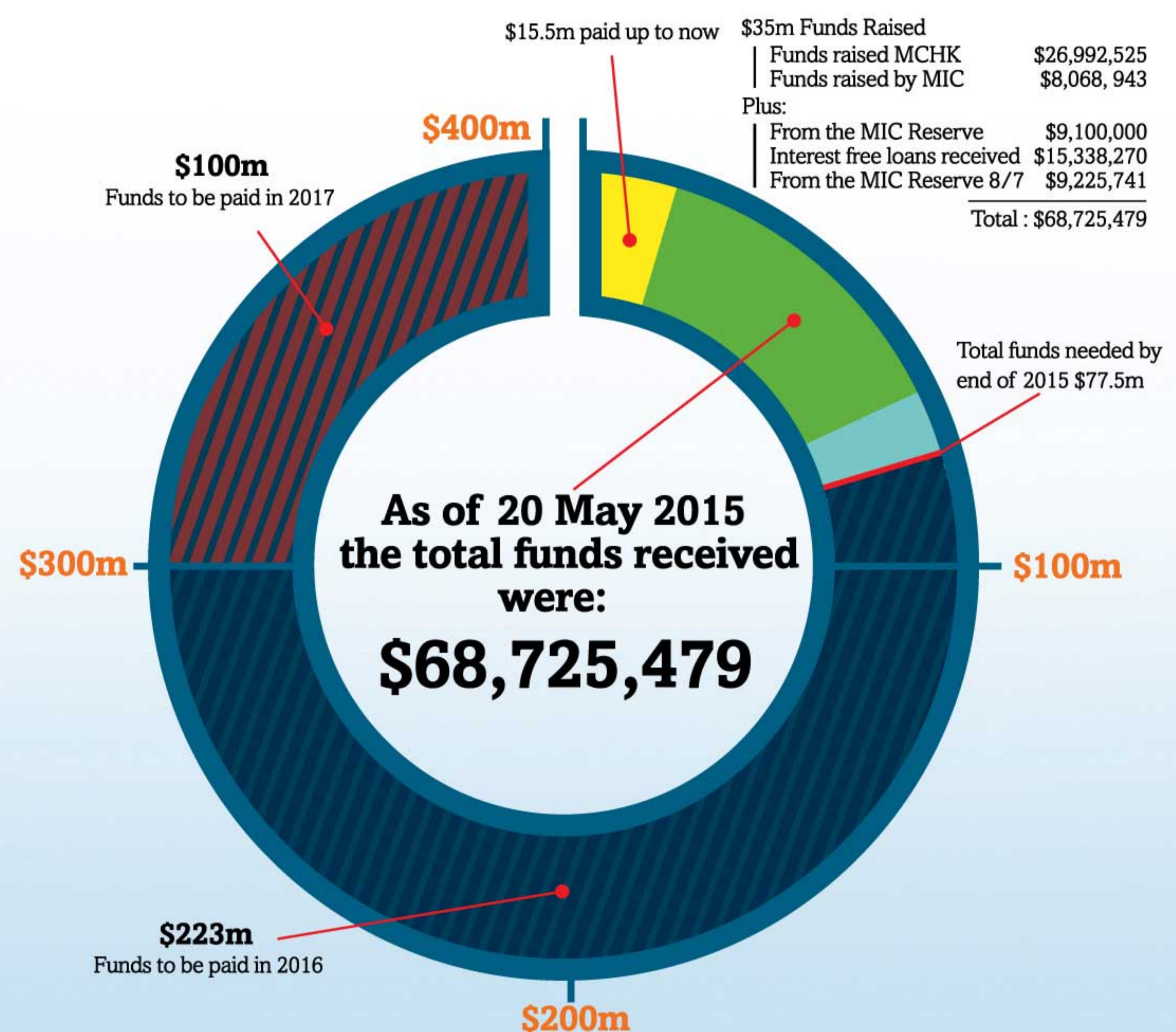
1. Yes! People who are not super rich (I mean people who have so little), gave so generously out of their love for the church and God.
2. Yes! Obstacles, and overcoming them, actually helped our church become more mature.
3. Yes! People did leave the church because of the vision – don't be discouraged.

## What advice do you give to Hong Kong Methodists in our fund raising?

1. Get to know your congregation, so that when you plan a fundraising events it will appeal to them. You have to consider what event is most effective and result-oriented.
2. Communication is KEY. People GIVE because they hear there is a NEED. Therefore, update your congregations regularly, so that they know the current status of the project. Highlight the achievements and milestones so that people are encouraged throughout the process. We used a quarterly booklet, videos and messages on the church Facebook page. We built an achievement indicator to show how much money has been raised and how much more is needed.

# The Funding

We have begun well in our fund raising — but there is still a long way to go. We have to make sure we meet our required targets over the next four years.



(\*In addition some interest free loans have been pledged but not yet received. We will update the total in each edition of the MICHK Herald.)



## About the bricks on the front page:

The bricks, with their differing colours and shapes, represent the many differing countries and backgrounds of the peoples in our Churches. Each one, each person, makes a vital contribution to the whole. The cement could be a variety of things - the love of God which holds us together; the vision we share for our mission and ministry or the contribution of our leaders who guide our policy. What is clear is that we cannot do this on our own. One brick does not make a wall! But working together we can build a structure to the Glory of God. All of us have a part to play. Let us pray and give to able this wall to be built, this beacon to shine, this structure to give evidence of the goodness and glory of God.

3. Empowering your supporters to be involved in fundraising. You need as many people as possible to share the work. Be open to people's ideas and encourage them to run with it by using their own resources. In that way, you will maximum your resources and build up many champions to promote this project. Think about the ice-bucket challenge. One guy has a crazy idea, then it goes world-wide!
4. Pray – a lot!



## Offerings can be made by:

**Crossed Cheque** payable to 'Methodist International Church, Hong Kong' and send to Room 801, 8/F East Town Building, 41 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong

**Direct Deposit** to 'Methodist International Church, Hong Kong', HSBC HK A/C #048-054605-001. Please forward the bank pay-in slip for our records.

John Wesley in his sermon on 'The Use of Money' (1744), urged Methodists to :

**Gain all you can** – with 'honest wisdom', 'honest industry' and without demeaning others.

**Save all you can** – live carefully and simply, 'not wasting God's gift'.

**Give all you can** – 'that you may give good account of your stewardship'.