

Who Is Rich?

By Anna Wormus

I'm not living in the country of my birth, which is "rich" and, at least on the surface, seems to have everything that most people in poorer countries can only dream of. In contrast, the "underprivileged" people of the country where I now live don't have many of the things that most people in wealthier countries consider essentials, but they know how to enjoy and get the most from life. They are sociable, outgoing, smart, avid music lovers, and always ready to engage in a meaningful discussion. The countryside here is beautiful, and the food is delicious and nutritious. It is more nutritious, in fact, than the food that most of their counterparts in wealthier countries eat, because food here is grown the way God intended from the beginning, without chemical fertilizers, hormone additives, or genetic modifications.

Yet, one of the first questions that invariably comes up when I meet new people is, "Why did you leave your home country? Everybody here wants to go to the rich West." I usually use that as an opportunity to explain what I believe are the real values of life. What are most people in the "rich" world running after? True happiness? Or more money and things, like a nicer house, a fancier car, a bigger TV, more gadgets?

In the "developing" country in which I live and am perfectly content, you don't see homeless people or hardly a beggar. You do not see bums and winos stumbling down the street. What you do see are people with tightknit families and culture, who may not have a

lot materially, but who share what they have. You do not see many beautifully landscaped lawns here either. What you do see are immaculately kept vegetable gardens in both the front and back yards, along with chickens keeping down the insect population as they peck their way to producing tomorrow morning's eggs.

In the country where I was born, the suicide rate is one of the highest in the world. So is the level of stress through worry, job insecurity, alcoholism, divorce, loneliness, and other personal and social ills. It also has the highest death rate from cancer.

which experts say can be linked to the national diet of mostly highly processed food.

Who is spreading this terrible propaganda that the only way people will ever be happy is by taking the road toward money and materialism? Who is turning their eyes away from the real values and the path that leads to true success and fulfillment in life? What was it that the Devil said to Jesus in Matthew chapter 4? "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Pretty costly, especially when you consider that God has already given us all the best things in life for free!

Jesus on Things that Count

The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?" So he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

—Jesus, Luke 12:16–31