

RETIREMENT or Work from Home

"Maybe the word 'retirement' makes you think of old age, boredom and laziness, but I'd rather have you try think of it as freedom to do what you want, freedom to be as active as you'd like, and even freedom to work the job that you like - to be in a place where money doesn't dictate your choices." - *Rex Dalen*

After all those years of seriously doing what you had to do to make a living and raise a family, now you can be a clown, work at Disneyland helping Mickey Mouse, build new homes for Habitat for Humanity, or just be lazy in scenic surroundings. - *Jaimie Hall Bruzenak*

As I sit in front of my PC thinking of what to write about, I am counting down the days when I will finally stop work and begin living. When the extended Circuit Breaker stops on June 1st, I will only have 6 working days left.

I am still going to work every morning at 5:30 am. I take a taxi to work every morning and for these past 2 weeks, I have been taking the ride from the same taxi driver. We have built a rapport and I found out that his mother was a Catholic and his father (Buddhist) converted in his later years. His daughter who is in the States is also a Christian. She converted when she was in China working. My taxi driver friend is a Buddhist. When I asked him if he has read the Bible, he said no, he didn't have one. That's when I found out his mother was a Catholic, so no Bible to pass to her children. I passed him my old NIV Bible and he accepted it. However when I checked with him a few days later, he had not started to read it yet.

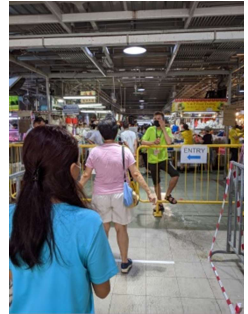
I tried to encourage him to just open the Bible randomly and start reading from where his eyes landed. Indeed it is God's Word and it has the power to give life. Hopefully, he will find the time to read the Bible. I still have a month or so to chat with him if he picks me up every day.

Many people advised that you must plan your retirement. Perhaps they did not foresee a time like this where the world is in a Lockdown. Where can you go and what can you do except to stay at home? My nearby wet market is one of the top 4 in Singapore, and to access it you have to go through a thermal scanner and join a long snake like queue to get in. The advantage of

this is that the market itself is quite empty because the people are in the queue and let in by batches. In an effort to reduce the numbers, now your NRIC number decides whether you can go to the market or not.



Cinemas, restaurants, pubs, hotels and even casinos are closed. Streets are mostly empty and traffic jams are history. Even if you could afford to buy a car now, it will be just for parking. Gone are the days when you could drive to a shopping mall or visit your elders. Giving a lift to a friend could be a fine situation.



A family at home may not be such an idyllic picture. The children would be doing online studies with ZOOM, the parents would be doing work from home with MS Teams, now the all Seeing Eye is even in your home. Imagine if you walk around *au naturel* at home, someone at the other end of the ZOOM or Teams may see you. Your own home is no longer private. I always worry that Joo See may be doing a video call when I step out of the bathroom. Heard that husbands and wives are quarrelling more often now and it should be expected if you bring the stresses of work home. Where is the work-life balance when the lines between work and life are blurred? If you work in the office, you are like Zorro, especially if your mask is black in color.



How to lead a CG with ZOOM? It is the only way to go at the moment and there are some security measures in place although IT departments do not trust the software. Barring all the security issues, there are also other things to note, if you dig your nose, look sleepy or bored, dress in your pyjamas, all these are captured on line.

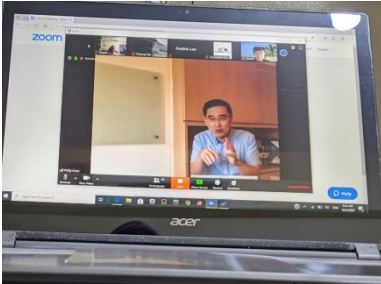
Members meeting physically even by chance, must make it short, surreptitious, spaced out and separate quickly to avoid breaking the law.





Members can only meet by tele-conference like the Dialect team did recently.

So what is there to do in planning for the next few months ahead? Probably need to plan to stay at home, sing from my window, write a book, learn a musical instrument or have Bible studies on line. Before the pandemic, I thought of going around with my camera but that is now delayed.



There are of course advantages in staying at home. Your expenses are kept low and for a retired person, that is a great help. You don't have to keep a big wardrobe; your shoes don't wear out so quickly; you don't have to visit the hair dresser (if indeed you could), so often; you don't get to eat at expensive restaurants or attend events; your travelling expenses are lower.



The internet says, "solitude increases self-awareness, boosts creativity, reduces stress, and promotes relaxation." As a young boy I would think how nice to finish schooling and exams and go to work. During working life, I would think of how great it would be to relax and enjoy retirement. Now it is looming near, do I want to consider going back to school or work? Do I want to pick up hobbies which I had let go years ago?

Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3

Martin Cheah

