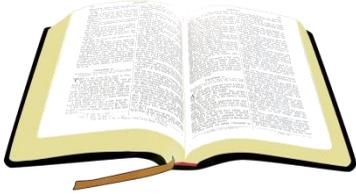


Jurong Christian Church

The Vine



For Internal Circulation Only



INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

by John Lee



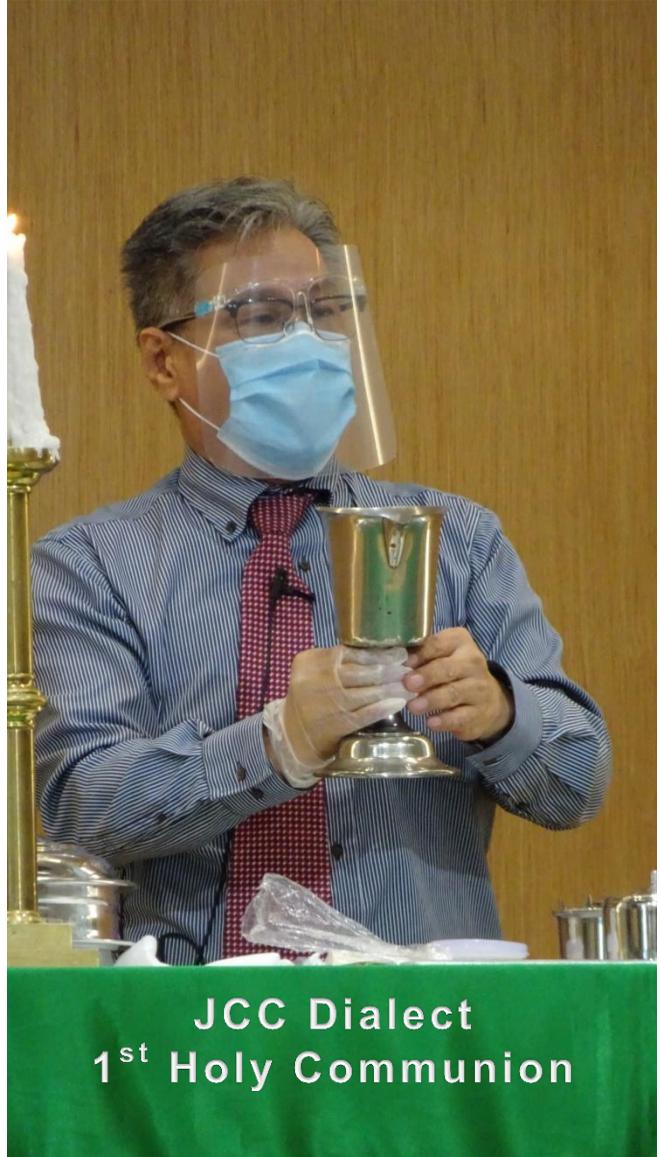
PERILS OF A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD

by June Lim



3Ps FOR YOUR BUSY DAY

by Bryan Tay



JCC Dialect
1st Holy Communion

The Vine This Month
Editor:
Alicia Wong

Writers this issue:
John Lee
June Lim
Bryan Tay

Photos:
Martin Cheah

Cover Photo:
Holy Communion
on 16 Aug



HOM Editorial

Is the world sick, having FEVER (Floods, Earthquakes, Virus, Economic Recession)? Amidst the pandemic, internal strife and backlash against one middle eastern regime, a growing movement of thousands converting to Christianity is well under way. Another report showed a huge opportunity for churches around America to reach more people. The study shows 67.8% of American adults or about 172 million adults are 'Bible curious,' meaning they want to learn more about Scripture. Additionally, the data showed that in June 2020 more Americans were exploring the Bible for the first time compared to January 2020.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. - 2Peter 3:9

Could this sudden turning to Christianity also be an indicator of Jesus' long awaited return? We have been slow to take up the Great Commission but God is not slow in keeping His promised return. We do not want to travel the world to preach the Gospel, so now it is possible to sit in your living room and ZOOM the Gospel to the whole world. Yet we sometimes prefer not to ZOOM for various reasons.

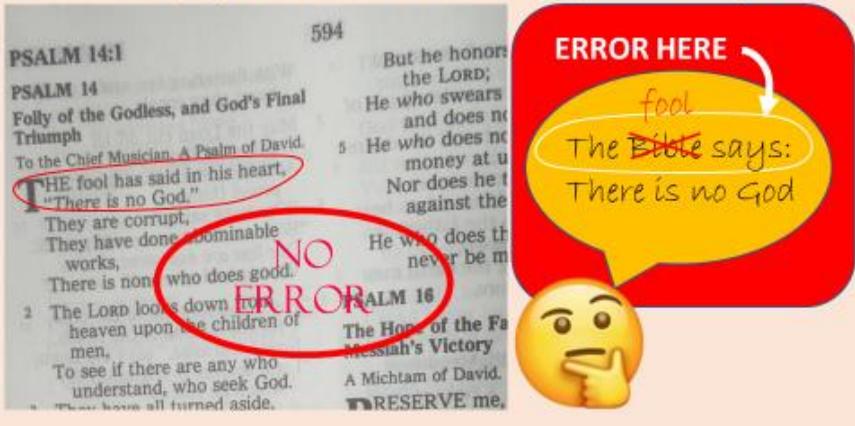
JCC has great opportunities to preach the Good News with Live Streaming but we continually do not have any evangelistic messages for our pre-believing friends to hear. Are we waiting for Christmas, like in the pre-COVID-19 days, before coming up with evangelistic sermons? All JCCians need to do is send the link to their friends but the messages are not relevant to pre-believers and sometimes, even possibly, not understandable by Christians.

Paul was a Pharisee, a well learned man but Peter was only a fisherman so he said, "*His (Paul's) letters contain some things that are hard to understand*" (2Peter 3:16b). So when we share the Gospel message we must be mindful of the terminology we use which pre-Christians may find hard to understand.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. 17 Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard.... 2Peter 3:10a, 17a

Martin Cheah

INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE



Martin Luther said, *"My neighbor and I—in short, all men—may err and deceive, but God's Word cannot err."*¹

Briefly, "inerrancy" means that the Bible can be trusted. The Psalmist proclaims, *"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal."* (Ps 119:160)

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," – 2 Tim 3:16

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things." – 2 Pet 1:20

¹ Lutheran Large Catechism IV.57

Unless you disagree that Scripture is God's Word, it would be a big logical leap to say that it is not inerrant and thus imply that God's Word can be errant.

Interpreting out of context

There are understandable reasons why people sometimes hesitate about the inerrancy of Scripture. Let us look at the following doubts:

- (A) "One part of the Bible says one thing; another part, another thing. For example, there are contradictions about the number of loaves and the number of men between the different Gospel accounts about Jesus' feeding of the multitude. Therefore, how can we say that the Bible is inerrant?"

- (B) "Sometimes, the Bible says ridiculous things. For example, Ps 137:9 suggests that 'Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.' (NIV) Therefore, how can we trust that Scripture is good for teaching?"

Regarding (A), the different accounts about the number of loaves and men do have a lot of similarities; but on closer study, there are differences in details. I have no need to go into a discussion of the details, as the following verses clearly show that the different accounts on the feeding of the multitude refer to separate events:

"Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?" – Mt 16:9-10

Regarding (B), let us have an appreciation of “two contexts”:

- The first context is that Ps 137 is an imprecatory psalm² in which verses 8 and 9 can be read as a single pronouncement of a curse on Israel’s enemy Babylon.³ The GNB translation may be clearer for comprehension – *“Babylon, you will be destroyed. Happy are those who pay you back for what you have done to us— who take your babies and smash them against a rock.”*
- The second context to appreciate is that blessings and curses are integral components within the justice of our sovereign God, noting relevant passages throughout the Bible including, inter alia, *Gen 12:3, “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”*

A curse is the consequence of sin, and man holds personal responsibility for the harsh aspect of justice since God is not the author of sin. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” (Gal 6:7)

God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. (Eze 33:11)

Interpreting Scripture out of context is a common understandable reason for hesitation about inerrancy. “Out of context” can embrace many aspects – such as transporting a divine truth out of its spiritual setting into the domain of science, disregarding the literary forms and genres of the biblical writings when applying meanings, neglecting the historical context of linguistics, etc.

² There are various types of psalms: hymns, lamentations, royal, imprecatory, etc.

³ Note the cruelty of Babylon to the Israelites indicated in [“The Parable of the Boiling Pot”](#) in [July Vine](#).

Ben Witherington III (An American NT Scholar) said, “A text without a context is just a pretext for what we want it to mean...”

If an interpreter engages in a pretext, it would be wicked indeed. However, there are people who intentionally or inadvertently take a text out of context and they just become confused themselves or they confuse others. The perplexity surrounding preachings on the prosperity gospel is a case in point.

A seemingly correct quotation of Scripture combined with an out-of-context interpretation can lead one to believe that the sovereignty of God is limited geographically to Israel; for, it is stated in the Bible: “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel.” (2 Ki 5:15 partial)

By stretching the misplaced reasoning, this God is only the God of Israel and therefore not of the Gentiles. Truth be told, the words “there is no God ... except in Israel” were spoken by a military commander who received God’s mercy of healing and were a declaration of his conviction that the God he worshipped (Israel’s God) is the only true God. Reading in proper context helps us avoid reading extraneous meanings into what the Bible says.

“Bible is inerrant” ≠ “Human interpretations are infallible”

Are works necessary for salvation? We Lutherans are clear that our salvation is by grace of God through our faith and not by our works. (Eph 2:8-9) However, there are still contrarians who proclaim the necessity of works, in addition to faith, based on their interpretation of James 2:14-26. The apparent contradiction between Ephesians and James is due to errant human interpretation, not because of errant Scripture. Ephesians is referring to what counts as righteousness before God for

salvation while James is referring to our testimony before people. There is no real contradiction. In fact, the Bible is consistent in dispelling the notion of works as the basis of salvation — See Rom 4:5 and Titus 3:5.

We cannot possibly understand everything

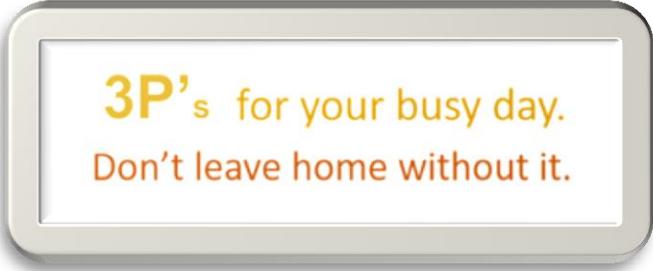
At times, I also have issues with parts of Scripture which I do not quite understand. It is good to have clarifications. However, we are bound to encounter difficult passages from time to time that no amount of effort seems possible to clarify 100% what they mean. A great example would be passages in the Book of Revelation. Misinterpretations arise easily when we are not humble to recognise that we cannot be omniscient (all-knowing) and then we force non-existent meanings out of passages with our limited faculties. Again, with human fallibility, we start to see apparent inaccuracies in the Bible due to our confused perceptions of different parts.

A student does not need to know everything related to Science in order to succeed as a scientist. A doctor does not need to be all-knowing about every medical fact in order to be a skilled clinician. A Christian does not need to understand every bit of Scripture in order to be faithful to his calling. For what we individually are (with differences between us), God reveals enough for each of us to thrive on faith rather than on knowledge.

Conclusion

Instead of over-exerting ourselves to apprehend some of the obscure things in the Bible, we can focus more on the plain things that enable us to grow in faith.

John Lee



3P's for your busy day.
Don't leave home without it.

“Time and tide wait for no man.”

Some of us must have heard this numerous times in our lives. If you haven't, it simply means “mai liao si kan” (“don't waste time” in Hokkien dialect). Seen from another angle, it means that an opportunity does not knock on your door twice. Once you miss it, that's it! And the impact could vary from “no consequence” to lifelong regrets.

Have you missed any opportunity that you wished you had seized?

I do not only mean the bigger issues in life such as getting that job promotion, making that business deal, buying that lovely property or finding the right life partner. I mean the things in daily living such as saying that kind word, caring for someone in need, and not criticising others even when you are right.

As I reflect, I wonder how many opportunities I might have missed. But there is no point crying over spilt milk. Or worse, continue crying and regretting without moving forward in life and hence miss even more opportunities in the present.

Why do we ignore such wisdom as if it doesn't matter, when we are actually suffering the consequences for not paying heed to it? If the world has given us the occasional word of wisdom, our God has already done more for us. Here's what the Bible says about the wisdom and ways of God.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.” – 1 Corinthians 1:25 (NIV)

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” – Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

Do we actually believe it?

And the good news is: God does not just tell us what to do. He has also given us the resources needed to do that.

With that promise, I would like to share the **3Ps** that we need for daily living. Be sure to take them with you as you leave your house to begin your busy day.

Acknowledge His PRESENCE in every situation

In Old Testament times, God spoke to His people mainly through the prophets. When Jesus was on earth, God spoke and showed humanity His love and compassion through Jesus. Now, God speaks to us in various ways as He deems fit through:

- the Bible
- the Holy Spirit
- good counsel from godly people
- nature
- providence and
- His audible voice

More importantly, God lives in each one of us. When we opened the door of our hearts to receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, His Spirit entered into our lives and quickened our human spirit (which was dead in sin up to that point) to make it alive again.

So, the fact is:

We carry His presence within us. He is with us everywhere we go. He sees everything we do and hears everything we say.

Why do we ignore Him as if he is a transparent nobody? Shouldn't we feel so privileged that ***we are connected to the God who made us*** that we want to "showcase" His presence? He is our source of life!

Although God is present within us, He will not impose His will upon us. It is just like having a VVIP guest in your house. If you do not acknowledge his presence and introduce him to others, and if you do not ask him to make himself at home, he will not have full liberty to take actions to resolve any issues in the house. Bear in mind that we have an enemy that is against us. And we need God's presence to overcome the spirit of darkness and God's power to defeat our enemy Satan.

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." – 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

Let's acknowledge God's presence everywhere we go, in everything we do.

Tap into God's POWER Circuit

Our God is Omnipotent. He holds the whole world in His hands. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, He created all things. And we are His prized possession, the apple of His eye. He delivers us, protects us and jealously guards over us.

"The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them." – Psalms 34:7 (NIV)

‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’ – Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

When we encounter problems in life, in work or home, where do we run to? God has the power to resolve every single issue, in His timing. Many years ago, a brother shared that **God’s telephone number is: 333** (Jeremiah 33:3). I thought that was humorous. But it is certainly useful to remember God’s promise.

“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.” – 2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

What number would you dial when you need God’s power to come into your daily situation? Let’s tap into God’ power circuit and see Him act. **Dial in ... constantly ... be the Circuit Connector,** not the circuit breaker.



Live each day with a PURPOSE

Deep in our hearts, we yearn to live purposefully, whether we are conscious of it or not. And the reason is simple. God made each one of us with a purpose (to have fellowship with Him) and for a purpose (to fit our role in the Body of Christ). Consider what God is saying to you right now:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

How’s that? A declaration from the God of the universe.

What would be the immediate question that comes to mind? Perhaps something like:

- Dear God, what is your plan for my life? Please tell me.
- How can I find out?

What actions would you take to find out? As we mentioned earlier, God can speak to us in various ways: through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, good counsel from godly people, nature, providence and even His audible voice as He deems fit.

Just as we need to take time and effort to know a close friend, it takes time and effort for us to spend time with God if we want to hear from Him. We may not know God's plan for us instantly or see the whole big picture all at once.



Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

Life is a journey. As long as we are moving in the right direction with God's eyes upon us, we just need to know and see the next step to take. As we discover God's plan for our lives, let us determine to live everyday purposefully.

What can you do to purposefully bless someone today?

Bryan Tay

Perils of a Hyper-connected World

Singapore is ranked among countries with advanced technology both in the Asia region and globally. According to a [Statista report](#) in 2020, it is estimated that approximately **88% of the Singapore population can access the Internet** and spends close to 7 hours every day connecting with friends, family and colleagues.

The various social media channels have greatly eased the barriers for reconnecting with old friends and making of new ones, as well as empowered 'netizens' to express their opinions and share ideas in online communities. With social media deeply entrenched in our lives, it is more essential than ever to inspect its profound impact on our emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing.



(a) Jumping into the bandwagon blindly

We want to be liked, we want to seem 'woke,' but in reality, we are afraid to stand for truth or engage in healthy conversation. We need to be wary of jumping on cultural hype blindly and we should not rush into passing a judgement or joining the loudest voices to fit in. It is critical to steer clear of the noise in the social media space and instead, turn to the word of God for guidance and wisdom.

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

(b) Feeling inadequate or ‘Facebook envy’

Many studies have shown that along with the high usage of social media, comes the psychological impact where users feel discontented, jealous or unattractive. The more we consume online content and the seemingly perfect lives of others, we may find ourselves burdened by society’s expectations of a ‘good life’. However, we must keep in mind that comparison loses its momentum when we remember that God’s opinion matters most. Our Father does not view us through our Instagram filters to assess whether our appearance is worthy; He looks at our heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

(c) Posting emotionally-charged words or spreading misinformation

In the cluttered digital space today, we are bound to come across content which can infuriate or upset us. This may in turn trigger a negative reaction or angry comment. If your intention in the comments section is just to criticize and tear down, then keep it to yourself. It doesn’t mean you can’t engage in debate or disagreements. What it means is that your purpose in these debates is to spread love, glorify God, and exalt the truth.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

June Lim

CG CORE Team

Perhaps you have heard this terminology floating around the corridors of JCC recently (especially after Rev Philip Huan preached) and start to have a cold sweat. Worried that you might be “arrowed” by your best friend (CG Leader) or that you are not called, what an embarrassment if you had expected to be selected.

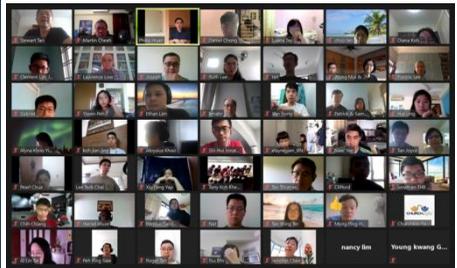
You may be wondering what is CORE, **Christ Oriented Religious Elite**, or **Chosen Organiser for Retreats & Events**, or **Co-Opted Regional Elder**. No, none of these. Remember that Jesus had 12 apostles but He also selected 3 of them (Peter, James and John) to be His inner circle. Now sweat is really pouring down your brow. Peter had to take care of His sheep and lambs and John had to take care of His mother. I am not ready for this, you say.

Relax, the core team is compared to Aaron and Hur, who in Exodus 17:12, held up Moses’ tired arms raised to Heaven in prayer when Joshua was fighting the Amalekites. So the core team’s main concern is to help the tired CG Leader to manage the CG and like Jesus’ inner circle, they only need to follow Him. A side note, most people notice that Moses’ arms had to be held up towards the Heavens for victory but what about us, when we pray or worship, most of our arms are pointing downwards?



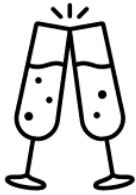
WHAT'S THE COMMITMENT?

1. Join your Leader on a mentoring Journey
2. Support and serve with your Group leader to make the impact of your Group's ministry stronger
3. Join your Group mentoring-based training
4. Serve for tenure



After the CT training session with Rev Huan on 15th Aug, the Core Team should have their fears allayed. There is a suggested tenure of only 1 year for CT. CG Leaders unfortunately get a life term. Knowing this, please step up to support your CG Leaders.

Martin Cheah



Is it OK to drink alcohol?

I touched on the question of consuming alcohol in my article [“What can we drink?”](#) published in the [Dec 2013](#) issue of The Vine.

Is drinking a good idea? Recently, this question popped up again from someone who was concerned about another person’s consumption of alcohol every night. It prompted me to survey the Bible again to refresh my mind on any related advice therein. I come across the following biblical mentions about wine:

- Wine can be evil (Prov 20:1; Isa 5:11, 22)

Prov 20:1 says that wine, not the drinker, is the mocker.

So, wine as a mocking drink has the potential of making a mockery of the drinker who then makes a fool of himself/herself when inebriated.

Isa 5:11, 22 describe those who “run after their drinks ... till they are inflamed with wine” and “those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks.” These are no casual social drinkers, but alcoholics who rise early in the morning and stay up late at night, losing their self-control and thereby inviting woe.

- Christians should not get drunk, but be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18)

We are to be filled with the Spirit (of God), not the spirit (a.k.a. alcohol).

Being drunk on spirit may give us a temporary exhilaration in the flesh with blurred judgment and descent into worldly foolhardiness. However, being filled with the Spirit gives us fullness of spiritual exhilaration, engaging our minds with the right tone of wisdom and enduring happiness.

- Self-control for church leaders (1 Tim 3:3, 8)

Apostle Paul does not advise abstinence from wine altogether, but counsels church leaders on safe drinking with moderation using the words “not given to drunkenness” and “not indulging in much wine.”

- Wine has its positive values (1 Tim 5:23; Ps 104:15; Prov 31:6)

A little wine is good for the stomach and minimise illnesses. It can cheer people up. A sensible use of it can refresh frail bodies and invigorate minds.

- Wine as a blessing (Gen 14:18; 1 Sam 16:20)

Wine was a blessing, with bread to feed the hungry troops of Abram’s triumphant return. (Gen 14:18)

In Isa 55:1-3, wine was also a representation of spiritual blessing in a banquet invitation for a covenant renewal.

You can find more references to wine in the Bible and realise that complete abstinence from alcohol is not a biblical injunction. Alcohol (in moderation) does have its benefits. It is the abuse of alcohol (drunkenness, addiction) that is proscribed. If a person drinks to the point of losing self-control of his actions, or becomes alcohol-dependent, then the signal is obvious that drinking is bad for him/her.

Is there anyone tempted to be over-fond of wine or too free with the bottle, who blames his beer buddies or the alcohol vapours in his surroundings?

Our brother, Martin Cheah, had worked in a brewery for 39 years until his retirement this year. He admitted that he could only drink 2 glasses of beer before feeling a little high, and that he has stopped drinking beer for more than 15 years. Blessed is our brother Martin that despite being often in the company of people who included beer-guzzlers, and the tempting daily sight of beer at his workplace, he has never been tempted to “be over-fond of wine” or “be too free with the bottle.” (1 Tim 3:3, 8 MSG)



The Bible says, “No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he’ll never let you be pushed past your limit; he’ll always be there to help you come through it.” – 1 Cor 10:13



The Bible also instructs, “Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.” – Prov 23: 20-21

In reality, as we often read in the news, intemperate drinkers have found themselves clothed in prison garbs. ☹️

So, is it OK to drink alcohol? My view is: It is OK only if you do not abuse it or get into its harm’s way.

John Lee

Worldwide, 3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol, this represent 5.3 % of all deaths.

Read more at

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol>

The English Section Council members



Installation by Bishop Terry Kee on 9th August 2020



DIALECT TEAM BVD

Baptism

Deacon Peter went to baptise Mdm Ng Yock Kee at her home on 8th Aug.



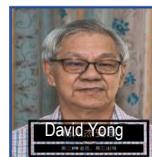
Visitation

Dialect visitation resumes, as the country slowly opens up, the DLT went around to visit the elderly who had not been able to attend church services as there were none conducted for them due to their lack of tech proficiency.



Death

Recently in June and July, the dialect membership was reduced by 3 persons who went home to the Lord. Deacon was there to handle most of the wake arrangements, even accompanying the family to sea burial. It is sad that we could not be there for the wake services but we will meet again one day.



Martin Cheah