

# THE ESL LINK

## Welcome to our Inaugural Issue of "The ESL Link" for Church-based ESL Ministries

If you would be willing to share lessons learned, praise items, prayer requests, etc., we'd eagerly compile such reports and share them with others in the ESL Cooperatives.

As a "Cooperative" we want to cooperate, sharing resources and lessons, as well as burdens and concerns. And especially as we anticipate Gathering VI in October; let's find ways of encouraging one another!

### GATHERING VI

Begin planning now to attend Gathering VI.

Whether your church is new to ESL ministry or veterans, you will find much to enrich your ministry!

WHEN?

October 24, 2009

More details to follow ...

"Mission means inviting all the people of the earth to hear the music of God's future and dance to it today."

--Chris Wright

## CULTURALLY SENSITIVE ESL MINISTRY

Food may not be a good topic for the day because a few Muslim students have been fasting - it is Ramadan.

A Chinese elderly gentleman tries to dictate what he should be learning during a beginner's ESL class - to the shock of his young Canadian teacher.

A German student is forthright in her desire to learn the particulars of English grammar, while her Hispanic classmates just want to talk. Can we, as ESL teachers, afford to leave cultural sensitivity to chance?

We know that the world around us doesn't. In the Canadian public school classroom, teachers regularly reinforce the importance of respect for differences through lessons about various cultural traditions. In businesses, employees are required to take courses or seminars on cultural sensitivity, or "anti-discrimination." The government has made multiculturalism official policy. But what does cultural sensitivity mean in the church and in ESL



The Welsh reads "I am not in the office at the moment. Send any work to be translated."

ministry? Does it mean "political correctness" or "tolerance"? Does it mean knowing everything there is to know about other cultures? What implications does cultural sensitivity have on teaching?

Ephesians 2:14 tells us that Christ "has broken down in

His flesh the dividing walls of hostility." How is the church community to live in the light of this, and how do we live it out with our students from different countries, with their diverse cultural and religious backgrounds?

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## PURSUE HOSPITALITY

I recently noticed the verse Romans 12:13 - "*pursue* hospitality." The Greek word 'hospitality' is in two parts: 'love-foreigner', and the Greek word 'pursue' conveys a rather strong sense of 'pressing forward', 'running after', 'seeking after', 'striving for', 'chasing', etc. This does not come out

clearly in most translations. We often think of 'hospitality' as receiving those who present themselves, not turning them away, but instead caring for them. However, in this verse, it seems a much more active and intentional pursuit is called for, and, in particular, a pursuit of "love for the foreigner."

What might that look like?

In the Old Testament, the Lord repeatedly drew the attention of his people to 3 typical categories: widows, orphans and foreigners. Our concern with regard to ESL ministries

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# CULTURALLY SENSITIVE ESL MINISTRY

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Many churches have recognized that cultural awareness and sensitivity is a part of the qualifications for an effective ESL program and its teacher and staff. What about you? Perhaps your church has training that can serve as a model or resource to others. Or you may be looking for such training. Cultural Sensitivity Awareness & Training Programs are available from SOCEM. Please contact us to arrange something for your church.

## 10 reasons to continually develop your cultural competency skills

1. Your home and church neighborhood is increasingly diverse.
2. You see a connection between being able to build relationships across cultures and building relationships across generations.
3. You desire to engage people of different backgrounds, but you do not know where to begin.
4. You're concerned you might unintentionally offend someone from another culture
5. You want to promote more than simply being "politically correct"
6. You want your kids to understand the issues of race and class that exist in the world and in your community.
7. You want to do more than create awareness about the growing diversity in our home mission field—you want to see people equipped to engage it.
8. You want to ensure your church is a welcoming place regardless of a visitor's cultural background.
9. You want to share the love of Jesus with people in a way that lets them know you respect them as well.
10. You want to reach out to others in a way that both respects your differences and allows you to be true to who you are

## PURSUE HOSPITALITY

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would be especially the latter. For example, "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the

LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:34).

Henri Nouwen observed that "each of us has a mission in life. Jesus prays to his Father for his followers, saying: 'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world' (John 17:18).

He continues, "We seldom realise fully that we are sent to fulfill God-given tasks. We act as if we have to choose how, where, and with whom to live. We act as if we were simply plopped down in creation and have to decide how to entertain ourselves until we die. But we were sent into the world by God, just as Jesus was. Once we start living our lives with that conviction, we will soon know what we were sent to do."

This short meditation got me thinking: What is your personal mission in life, and that of your church community? What is your part in the Mission of God?

Is ESL ministry not the heart of God which has touched our hearts? How might we encourage and allow more of His heart in our own programs and endeavours?

Tom McCormick, President  
Representing SOCEM

**We're on the WEB:**  
[www.eslministries.org](http://www.eslministries.org)

**The Southern Ontario  
Cooperative of ESL  
Ministries**

### Contact Us:

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## ESL RESOURCE CORNER

CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY  
OFFER

The Canadian Bible Society is offering their "The Scriptures for Newcomers" Bibles free of charge for Christian ESL programs throughout Canada.

Each request is to be written & made by either the teacher of the class or the administrator of the program, providing the name and address of the host church, name of the teacher and the number of students registered along with the contact name & number of the person at the church who administers the program.

Contact their representative in your District of The Canadian Bible Society (see <http://www.biblesociety.ca/districts/index.html> for the contact information of their District offices). They will explain to you the (minimal) conditions involved.



## ARE YOU IN NEED OF NEW ESL CURRICULUM?

Would you like a set of lessons that are comprehensive, easy to use and have interesting content? Student handouts and Teacher's guides included. Some members of the cooperative have developed a curriculum "The Virtues" that may suit your needs. Folk tales, North American stories and Biblical input are integrated with questions and activities for English skills. The draft version is available electronically for free.

Please contact us at [eslministries@gmail.com](mailto:eslministries@gmail.com) if you are interested.