

THE ESL LINK

Some Post-Advent Musings:

Darcy MacCallum

I, like many other Christians, spent the Christmas season seeking to maintain a focus on the incarnation of Jesus Christ while navigating the media push to consume. Along the way, reading the Biblical narratives, I saw the birth stories in a whole new light—a perspective I'd like to share. A few things caught my eye in Luke 2:

- While Canadians debate the government abandoning the mandatory long-form census, in Judea, an issue that infuriated the oppressed Jewish society was what we could call the "long-trip census." Luke may sound casual, but for the people of the land the census meant complete social upheaval—and in Acts. 5:37 Luke records that a similar census led to armed revolt.

(Read the rest of the devotional [here](#).)

Read [Darcy's Blog](#)

Teaching ESL and the Internet: Where to Start?

We all know the internet is a great resource for just about everything, including ESL. For those who would like help using the internet for their ESL lessons, here are a few pointers: Type in a topic and "esl" and submit it for a google search. This is especially good for holiday or special day lessons. For example, a search of "Remembrance Day ESL" will yield a variety of results from which we can get a short text of the origin of Remembrance Day, the poem "In Flanders Fields", and a fill-in-the-blanks exercise for collocations of phrases related to the day.

You could also search by the type of lesson you have in mind. For example, click [here for conversation lessons](#), or [here](#). Both sites provide a rich list of topics and discussion questions ready for use. Click [here for reading texts](#). This site provides a great many links to folklore and mythology electronic texts including Aesop's Fables.

[ESL-Lab.com](#) is a rich resource for listening exercises accompanied by downloadable audio; while [this site of the University of Iowa](#) has an animated articulatory diagram for each consonant and vowel, a description and video-audio of the sound spoken.

If you would like more information on the systems of the language such as grammar, [Using English](#) and [English Corner](#) are great places to start. Interactive exercises accompany the technical explanations.

[This site](#) offers a good selection of the meaning

of common idioms. If, on the other hand, you are seeking teaching ideas or ideas for lesson plans, you could browse [here](#) and [here](#).

The "idea cookbook" on [Dave's ESL Café](#) is also an excellent resource in this regard. Finally, here are a few "mega-links" for the adventurous: [A](#); [B](#); [C](#). All the above are free and do not forget our own [SOCEM site](#).

Happy browsing!



A HEALTHY MIND: SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS THROUGH STRESS

At the SOCEM Gathering in October 2010, Stephen Cheng talked about life stresses among immigrants. Here let's consider two questions a bit more: First, what roles should teachers take when our students need mental health support? Second, what resources are available to us when our students need expertise that we cannot offer?

New immigrants often have trouble accessing the mental health care available. They may define their problems in a way unrelated to our cultural concepts of mental health. They may not appreciate their double burden of major life changes

coupled with major life losses, and they may be unwilling to admit the stresses they are under. Even when the problem is out in the open, newcomers may not know the system or how to connect to the right people within the system.

Here are 4 ways you might help.

1. Promoter of health literacy.
2. Cultural broker.
3. Cultural interpreter.

4. Mental health advocate.

ESL teachers can make a difference by taking on these roles. However, they are unlikely to be filled by one individual. Discuss mental health literacy teaching approaches with other ESL teachers. Consider forming a caring community for prayer, visits, and information gathering. [Click here for full article](#)

NURTURING A LOCAL ESL MINISTRY GROUP

Sometimes it is nice to connect with ESL ministries and workers in your more immediate geographic area. Eight members of our Kitchener-Waterloo ESL Ministry group met together in early November as the 3 of us who attended the SOCEM Gathering (October 30 in Toronto) shared what we learned at the workshops we attended. There was good discussion and good connection. What an easy way to put together an agenda for a local meeting, and to go over again the ideas we brought home from the conference! We also each described our individual ministries this fall and many agreed to 'share' students by publicizing each other's meeting times. (Carol Blake, Kitchener)

Teaching Tips

A common problem many students have is remembering the difference between he and she. In some languages he and she are only one word so students have trouble remembering which one to use. There are few different ways you could treat this.

#1 – You say "Are you saying that Bill is a girl". This embarrasses of course.

#2 – You say "SHE is coming to Canada?" Student replies with "Oh sorry, HE is".

#3 – Let it go, since you understand already.

#4 – Let it go but say "Oh, it's nice HE is coming to Toronto." Emphasize the correct way.

#5 – Use this as a teachable moment to explain He, his, him vs. She, hers, her.

#6 – Ask students to teach he and she to you in their languages. Maybe you'll get massively confused and thus have more patience for their mistakes.

From James Edel who is tucked away in the far north of Japan in snow covered Akita Prefecture. Send other ideas to him at Jedel78@gmail.com.

ESL AT FIRST ALLIANCE CHURCH

At FAC we have adopted a C.P.R. model of outreach ("Cultivate, Plant, Reap"). In our ESL ministries, we focus on *cultivating* relationships and building rapport with those who come. Faith issues are not explicitly touched upon in class but friendships are formed and teachers are encouraged to share their faith where opportunities arise, whether in class or outside of class. On the other hand, in our Bible-ESL ministries, the seeds of the gospel are *planted* and specific tenets of the Christian faith are presented. Due to BOTH ESL and Bible-ESL work in parallel with various other outreach we have been blessed to see a number of people commit their lives to Christ (i.e. *reap*).

History

FAC started as a LINC site in the mid-1990s. However, shortly after (in 1999), we began a church-based ESL ministry. Initially, classes were held every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Later, Bible-ESL classes were added on Wednesday and Friday evenings. In the summer of 2007, with the support of a government summer student job grant, we were able to start a 6-week summer intensive ESL program which ran from Monday to Friday. During that period, on Wednesday evenings we also held ESL cafés, which was a big hit with the community.

Current ESL Ministries

Our current daytime ESL ministry runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-11:30a.m. Students pay \$10 for each of the Fall, Winter, and Spring terms and \$15 for our 7-week intensive summer program. We offer Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels and all classes are taught by faithful volunteers of our church. The ESL ministry is part of our overall ministry to new Canadians, which also includes North American culture class, job search seminars, seminars in conjunction with the Agincourt Community Services Association (i.e. government grants and services for new immigrants), and Alpha.

Over the years we have had the wonderful privilege of seeing God at work firsthand. In our Advanced class, while debating the

facts of Evolution vs. Intelligent Design, one student remarked, "I came into this class believing that there was no God. I leave now convinced there must be a God." At another time, while giving a class presentation, a student stood up and said, "I'm not a Christian yet but I want to share why I believe Christianity to be true." However, our ESL ministry has also seen its share of challenges and hopes that never materialized. For example, students may not continue on in their classes for various reasons. On the other hand, they may have attended classes for years and yet seem never to have advanced in their English or their faith. Nevertheless, it has truly been a blessing to serve the Lord Jesus through this fruitful ministry and our prayer is that God would continue to use it to reach the nations at our doorstep.

Fun Facts

- The average age of our Basic level ESL class is 70 years old. [See picture.](#)
- Seventy percent of our student population is from China but we also have students from Sri Lanka, Turkey, Armenia, Korea, Afghanistan, and Iran.
- We also have an MSL class on Wednesday mornings – Mandarin as a Second Language!

Fuel for Prayer

Resource Center for New Canadians – we are currently renovating a large room with the hopes of converting it into a resource center equipped with computers and materials to help new immigrants to settle. Pray for God's direction and provision.

Volunteer Base – Please pray that God would continue to strengthen and refresh our volunteers and bring others with the same passion and vision to reach the lost.

The Nations Would Worship – Pray that all those who come through our ministries would experience the love and truth of Christ and be transformed.

These are real **APTRONYMS**, that is, names that match the occupations:

1. Dr. I. Doctor, Eye Doctor, is an ophthalmologist.
2. Miss Cashdollar was the treasurer of a grade school.
3. Ray Ferrie is a retired ferryboat captain
4. Dr. Tom Fillar is a dentist and Mr. Sues is a lawyer.

5. Linda Toot was the principal flute and William Basson was the bassoonist in the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

6. Sir Russell Brain is a famous English neurologist.

7. George Hammer used to own a hardware store in Louisville, KY. His son, Pete Hammer, now owns it.

"In Ephesians 4:17-24 Paul makes an impassioned plea to the believers in Ephesus: if you want to experience church the way God intends it to be—a harbinger of God's restoration of all things under Christ (1:10); a masterpiece of people who pursue God's agendas for their lives (2:10); a diverse community that silences the critique of the powers (3:10) —then there is a significant change that we **MUST** embrace."

(Read the rest of the devotional [here](#).)