



THE ESL LINK

Typhoon Haiyan

SOCEM knows someone who is personally affected by Typhoon Haiyan. Here is her news, published with her permission: "I'm writing this email on behalf of my family to update you on the little that we know about what has happened to our relatives in Tacloban, the city that was destroyed by a Typhoon Haiyan two weeks ago in the Philippines.

We have at least 40 family members, cousins, aunts & uncles, who lived there. In fact, that is where almost all of my family from my mother's side lived. As of now, the majority of them are accounted for, although a few have yet to be located. Some of them were able to make it out with just the clothes on their backs. Others held on to doorways for hours just to keep from being swept away by the water. Those that survived have left in search of refuge in neighboring cities with extended family and friends. Communication is sporadic. At this point, we believe that financial support is crucial; we are sending funds to two main family groups via Western Union.

What we do know is that all our relatives have lost almost everything. Their homes are demolished and have been looted. It is unlikely that the families will return to Tacloban City. They will have to start their lives all over again in different cities and towns."

If you would like to help, please contact Margery Topalian at: host-school@gmail.com



WHAT DOES JESUS WANT FOR CHRISTMAS?



What does Jesus want for Christmas? Have you ever asked? How might you answer, especially if a child asked you? Let's look at His prayers to get a glimpse. John 17, I suppose, is part of His 'wish list'. Here are some observations: (1) He wants you to know the Father, and Himself (v. 3, 25, 26). Put otherwise, He wants us kept in the name of the Holy Father (v. 11). That sounds a lot like "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be your name." He wants you and me to know Him, whom to know is to worship. (2) Yet this is a special knowing, indeed: He prays that we might have His joy, and not a little, but fulfilled in us (v. 13), something like 'joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Peter 1:8) or 'filled with all joy and peace' (Romans 15:13). I'm beginning to hope Jesus gets what He wants for Christmas; how about you? But

there is more. (3) Jesus wants us set apart, made holy, separated from evil, and sent into the world on His mission (vv. 15-18). That sounds like "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," doesn't it? (4) Next, and very close to the heart of SOCEM—the "C" is for 'cooperative'—Jesus wants us 'to be one', to manifest the unity of the Holy love of the Father and the Son for one another (vv. 20-23). And this 'unity' is "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (vv. 21, 23). That's the gospel, is it not?, almost a restatement of our beloved John 3:16, including His great Love behind and with it all (v. 23, 26). (5) Finally (for now), Jesus wants us with Him (v. 24). Indeed, we remember the birth of Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, always, even to the end, with nothing separating you from

the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8). What do you suppose Jesus will get for Christmas? Does the Father hear and answer Jesus? Jesus said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me" (John 11:41-42). And your prayers? What do you want for Christmas? "Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:19-20). God bless you, "far more abundantly than all that we ask or imagine, according to the power at work within us" (Eph. 3:20). Merry Christmas.

-Tom McCormick

How can we bring more people to ESL programs?

In the last issue, I wrote about what attracts people to church-based ESL programs (part of the findings from my Psychosocial Rehabilitation course research project). In this article I would like to suggest ways to enhance or expand these programs so that more can benefit.

(1) We can bring more students to ESL programs through improved and increased advertising. Apart from word-of-mouth, we can give flyers or business cards about the program to students so that they

can share with their friends and acquaintances. Flyers can emphasize "free" ESL, be printed in different languages, and posted in strategic places such as settlement workers' offices, schools, libraries, English adult education centres, YMCAs, community centres and community mental health services. They can be designed with the help of the students.

(2) We can offer a program that includes all English levels: from absolute beginner to advanced. Beginners can first be taught in small groups and

later be integrated into the larger group when their level becomes higher.

(3) We can offer free child care and/or a free homework club at the same time as the ESL group. If unable to do so, the group can accommodate children by providing toys in the classroom so that the children are less likely to distract their mothers or fathers from learning.

(4) We can prepare a car pool list. Those offering and requesting rides, including students, volunteers and teachers, can be connected. This will

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help especially in winter when it is very cold or when the sidewalks are icy.

(5) We can run the ESL program at a location near a bus route. We may provide each individual who travels by bus with two bus tickets each time he or she attends; the first bus ticket will ensure the person gets home, and the second encourages the person to come back next time.

(6) Since men of certain cultures may be uncomfortable with a female teacher or volunteer, we can set up at least one all-male table with a male volunteer. Conversely, women of some cultures are not permitted to learn alongside men. We can also set up at least one all-female table.

Church-based ESL groups have already been welcoming places for newcomers to Canada to learn conversational English and to experience community. I hope some of these ideas are useful to your group so that even more newcomers can experience Christian love and hospitality in Canada.

-Mary-Jane Davison

Thornhill Caregivers

You might see them when you drop your child off at school, at the bus stop or at a local mall helping an elderly person. A Live-In Caregiver: an important but often overlooked part of our Canadian society. There are thousands of women who have come to Canada from various parts of the world to work as Live-In Caregivers. They are an almost invisible part of our society who work hard to provide live-in care for our children, elderly and disabled, while supporting their families back home.

After 24 months of full-time work (within a four-year period), Live-In Caregivers can apply for an "open permit" which allows them freedom to look for work anywhere and not live-in. After that they can apply to become Permanent Residents and eventually apply to become Canadian Citizens. Canada is the only country that has such a program. It is great for both the Caregivers and for Canada.

Just over four years ago we started a support group for Live-In Caregivers at Thornhill Baptist Church. Our group meets monthly and enjoys times of fun, building friendship and support. The Caregivers in our group are predominantly from the Philippines. It is a pleasure to work with this group. They serve where they are with joyful and willing hearts.

Many face difficulties when they come to Canada, such as: homesickness, loneliness, separation-anxiety and the challenges of living in someone else's home. Many Caregivers have found themselves in stressful and abusive situations. Language issues also impact Live-In Caregivers. Most speak English as a second language. They learned English in school. Many can read and speak English well but have difficulty with grammar, comprehension, pronunciation and public speaking.

This affects them in receiving

directions from their employers, as well as when they fill out applications to renew their passports, permits, apply for jobs or go on an interview. When they have fulfilled their requirements as a Live-In Caregiver and can apply for an open permit, many Caregivers are unsure what to do. Many are afraid to apply for positions beyond caregiving or take courses to upgrade their education because of language requirements. As a result, many can feel stuck in low-paying positions.

ESL training can help Caregivers increase their understanding of English, build confidence as they practise using their English and help them in all their future endeavours.

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ESL at PFCC:

A great new experience

I became involved with the ESL ministry at Parkway Forest Community Church in September 2012. I was new to the church and looking for a way to contribute when the coordinator of our program invited me to become one of the teachers at the Wednesday night conversation class. I agreed immediately and I'm so glad I did!

I didn't really know what to expect, but now that I have been involved for eight months, the ESL ministry has become a bright spot in my week. The solid preparations and strong level of commitment of the rest of the ESL team helped to ease the transition. For instance, when I began, one of the things I was nervous about is what would

happen if students asked me grammar questions I could not answer. Happily enough, I got a tricky grammar question during the very first class! Fortunately, our coordinator was close by to help. Among the three subgroups of the class, my table of up to eight is the most fluent - my students mainly wish to improve their pronunciation. Progress can be slow as simply hearing me say a word a few times is not enough. One of the challenges for me is seeing some of the students' discouragement about their slow progress in this area. To help, we have shown them how to use the sound feature in most online dictionaries and the pronunciation guide in the dictionary so that they can learn between classes if they wish.

Each week, our table's discussion follows a worksheet

which includes a reading followed by questions which often invite students to share about their home country. This is everyone's favourite part of the class. I love hearing about other cultures, and students are happy to educate us.

On the other hand, I am humbled and encouraged to hear what the students appreciate about Canada; for example, how the government officials were patient when explaining processes, or how Canadians didn't look down on them for speaking imperfect English. Recently, my table expressed how thankful they are that the wait time for having a government document processed is the same for everybody. "Where we come from," they said, "it can take 3 months for you and 2 days

for someone else, and you'll never know why." It never occurred to me to be grateful that the government is not allowed to show favouritism.

Because of this ESL class, I am learning to appreciate my own country as well as other countries in ways that I never had before. I have so much fun every week and I praise God for allowing me to take part in this program.

Coming soon...

Gathering X Panel 'Reports'

Dixon Ministry

PLUS MORE!

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

Gathering X Report

"My first Gathering was inspiring, and I look forward to attending in the future."

These are the words of one of the seventy-five enthusiastic participants treated to a wide range of practical and inspiring sessions at our annual SOCEM "Gathering" on November 2nd, kindly hosted by Don Valley Bible Chapel once again. Workshops included "Teaching methods that work", "Drawing and Keeping ESL Students" and "Teaching English as a Foreign Language for short-term mis-



sions". One observer commented, "I found the day to be most informative and plan to implement some of the info in my classes". This year, instead of a keynote address we had a panel discussion on "Creative Venues for ESL Ministry". Upon learning of the fresh and original ways panel members were using ESL, a satisfied participant wrote, "I was inspired by the many testimonials and different working strategies." As usual there were some displays from a variety of

organizations and engaging discussions at the lunch tables. Throughout the day there was a joyful atmosphere and we



trust the presence of God was sensed by all. Our prayer is that our participants have been equipped, encouraged and empowered to serve the Saviour of the world and show His love and speak His truth more effectively.

ESL Resource Corner

The Internet is a rich source of Christmas resources for ESL. Here is a sampling of what we found:

- Free Christian scripts: <http://bobsnook.org/seasonal.htm> (scroll down to find "Christmas")
- Christmas stories: <http://osr.org/christmas/20-famous-christmas-stories/>; <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkBrown/christmas.html>
- Christmas idioms: <http://www.grammar.net/xmasidioms>
- Christmas vocabulary: <http://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/festivals-christmas.htm>; <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/wordlist/christmas.shtml>

- Christmas jokes: http://www.ahajokes.com/christmas_jokes.html
- Christmas quotes: <http://www.quote garden.com/christmas.html>; http://www.thoughts-about-god.com/christmas/chr_quotes.htm

Don't forget our SOCEM website: [[Christmas lessons; Nativity film etc.](#)]

Also, we recently noticed a resource site which has links to "115 Leading Sources for Teaching and Learning ESL": <http://mastersinesl.com/leading-sources/>

A Year in South Korea

In October 2012, I had a chance to go to South Korea to teach English for a year. I taught Grades 3-6 full-time at a public elementary school in Incheon. I also taught Grade 2 students at an English camp at the school.

We used a lot of games and role-play activities in the lessons. Sometimes I used a microphone to interview the students. We also used a lot of visuals. However, most of the lessons did not require students to use the language on their own to relate their experiences. Much of the lesson involved listening and repeating. This was made up for by the English camp where I would ask them to share their experiences in English in a simple way. Most enjoyed it but some were shy.

I learned a lot regarding how to deal effectively with students. At first, I was friendly with them and tried to control bad behavior in the classroom. With the help of a

Korean friend, I learned to speak to them using informal Korean. Gradually, working with Korean children became a joy as God helped me to become an effective teacher and to love the children as they were, especially those from poor or 'troubled' families. By my last week, some students had shed tears to show how sad they were that I was going back to Canada. Our prayers had certainly been answered!

Outside school, my life was full of other challenges, as I lived in a neighbourhood infamous for prostitution. I had to play soft music to help me counter the sirens, megaphones and voices of drunken people on the streets as I tried to go to bed. I often walked by prostitutes or pimps standing outside the "storefront" brothels with bright neon signs. Once I heard a woman screaming in agony at about 2:00 a.m. I decided to pray regularly for the

people in my neighbourhood and to share the gospel of Christ more aggressively.

Thanks for your prayers (those of you who know me) and thanks be to God for sending me exactly where He thought best. I learned a lot about teaching. I learned to love by choice. I don't think my life will ever be the same again after spending a year in South Korea!

-Timo Posti

