

THE ESL LINK

Nobody's Coming to My ESL Class!

At least Miguel is coming. He enters the building warmly and comes up to everyone and gives them a warm handshake. I'm almost worried he's going to kiss the female teacher at our school and I'm always on alert in case he turns the handshake into a one-armed guy-style hug. Miguel is the kind of Latino student you hope you have one of in every class: Mr. Motivated, Mr. Friendly. If it were only Miguel that came to class, I wouldn't mind teaching just him. But it is true that we started with 25 and last week we had 3. What should I do? First let's think of the good reasons (or sort of good) why people might not be coming:

- Work schedule changed.
- Too many of one language group scared someone off.
- Students come to class tired and hungry and decided to stay at home, to rest and eat.
- Students feel too weak in English compared to the rest of the class so it's too embarrassing to keep coming.
- The teacher does not listen to me and is strictly adhering to his or her own agenda
- Students think English is too hard – I prefer to speak my language in my own community. I don't care if this disadvantages me a bit – at least I don't feel stupid.
- It's too cold to go outside!
- The lesson last week did not interest me.
- My friends stopped coming.

Continued on page 2



HAPPY NEW YEAR



Happy New Year to you, from all to all! May you be blessed this year, day by day, every day. ... may you be filled with much passionate seeking of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, and enough 'finding' to satisfy without dampening that passion.

It has been said, that "Time has no divisions to mark its passage, there is never a thunderstorm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols" (Thomas Mann). And yet probably billions of dollars were spent on fireworks the world over over the New Year. ...and booze? Yikes! What a world. Anne Graham Lotz (Billy Graham's daughter) asks, "Why has this nonevent turned into a huge, money-making holiday? Most other

holidays celebrate a reputable person, famous birthdays, document signings, or a noted event. But New Year's Eve only celebrates the passage of time -- something that most of us would rather not recognize" ([here](#)). It is odd, isn't it? Why such a big deal? Perhaps it has to do with the hope of new beginnings; and indeed, 'new beginnings' are a big deal...the real ones. Fortunately we know there are real new beginnings: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17). And not just once a year, but at least daily, "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23). And so our prayer is, "Teach us to number our days, that

we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalms 90:12).

This issue we highlight programs and ideas that may be new to you. May you be inspired to "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus", "forgetting what lies behind," making your own that for which Christ Jesus has made you his own (Phil 3:14, 12). Here, then, are some words of encouragement for you, from His Word:

"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. Continued on page 2

The Private Pressures Facing Some ESL Students

When Joseph and Mary fled Herod's wrath after the visit of the magi, they became refugees in the land of Egypt. They were fleeing for their lives from what would today be considered political threats. Joseph and Mary had already been forced to leave their hometown of Nazareth and, having had Jesus in Bethlehem, seemed to not be inclined to make the gruelling trip back home. But, the trip to Egypt came without options. Stay and die. Flee and live. Thankfully, in ancient Rome, the mobility

of peoples allowed for the movement of refugees like Joseph and Mary without too much hindrance. They were able to find shelter, secure food and resources, and effectively raise Jesus in what was, for them, a foreign land.

That luxury no longer exists in our world and especially in the developed western world. Here in Canada legislation has been enacted in attempts to stem the tide of undocumented migrants. Rhetoric is regularly used, accusing asylum seekers of being "queue

jumpers" (i.e. economic migrants who couldn't cut the grade). Genuine refugees are expected to go to designated United Nations refugee camps and wait—an interminable wait—to perhaps get one of the cherished spots opened in a developed nation. Less than 10% will ever make it out of these camps.

Those who do come through channels such as human smuggling or entry by way of visitor's visas have a huge challenge to gain status. Odds are stacked against them.

Continued from page 1

Nobody's..

Some of the above reasons for not coming are ones that we cannot do anything about. Others are reasons we might be able to mitigate. The ESL program that I'm describing has chosen to plan a simple soup-and-bun meal for January – maybe they're hungry. We asked the students who are coming what they think of the poor numbers. Their answers varied: Charge less... Charge more!... Well, they weren't really sure. They all agreed, however, that they come because they need to. So we need to teach.

-- James Edel (reprinted in part with permission)

(James Edel has taught in China and Japan and currently teaches Literacy to ESL students at Columbia college.)

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SOCEM Goes Global



Those of us involved in planning the annual SOCEM Gatherings are always pleased when individual sessions lead to further action. Our Gathering X featured a session entitled 'EFL for Short-term Missions' that had originated from a request to SOCEM for training a team in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The purpose for that session was simply to pool knowledge from those who had done or hosted short-term foreign missions with an English teaching component.

The session itself revealed some common needs as well as resources. Six weeks later four of the panel members, all career missionaries, got together to further discuss those needs and resources with an eye to future action. The 'Core Four' are: Albert Wai from SEND, Elmer Warkentin from English Lan-

guage Institute /China (ELIC), Marion Chang from SIM Canada, and Tom McCormick (SOCEM, Tyndale). We all have a passion to equip the Canadian Church for both local and foreign mission, and we wanted to be ready next time EFL training requests came to SOCEM.

We agreed that our main purpose was to be a resource for those seeking such training, and that the four of us would serve as trainers to start. We also talked about consolidating special EFL curriculum that has been used in short-term missions.

SOCEM has supported local ESL mission work for almost 10 years, and it seems natural to support our local churches in global EFL mission work as well. If you know or suspect that EFL could be a component

in your next short-term mission, and you need training, please contact us (eslministries@gmail.com). Also, our panel of editors welcomes any suitable EFL curriculum you have to contribute.

-Marion Chang

ESL Resource Corner

New Year resources: <http://www.esolcourses.com/topics/new-year-celebrations.html>

Great resource site for adult newcomer language training programs and resources in the settlement sector:

http://wiki.settlementatwork.org/wiki/Language_Training

Wonderful discussion starters - African proverbs:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25561194>

"One winter night composer Johann Sebastian Bach was scheduled to debut a new composition. He arrived at the church expecting it to be full. Instead, he learned that no one had come. Without missing a beat, Bach told his musicians that they would still perform as planned. They took their places, Bach raised his baton, and soon the empty church was filled with magnificent music."

- odb

Continued from page 1 Private..

I know one family, for instance, who fled their home nation because of threats from a family member to sacrifice the children in a witchcraft ritual. The Immigration Review Board was not inclined to believe that such practices still existed, but after much effort and many appeals, the children were eventually granted status, but the mother was not! The church has been working with her for over a year to get her status normalized. Meanwhile, she, like many others in her situation, works menial jobs, living in squalor (she was without shelter for over two months after the torrential rains last summer). Were it not for the love and compassion of Christians around her, it is hard to imagine that she would still be here and her family together.

Many people like our undocumented friend have cash jobs with no security and lax safety precautions—call in sick and there may not be a job for you tomorrow. Many have unscrupulous landlords who are renting

unregistered suites that reek of mildew and rot. Still more have lawyers who, themselves, are taking advantage of these vulnerable people, threatening and mistreating their clients, then throwing up their hands in feigned sorrow as the families are sent back to the conditions from which they fled.

Churches with ESL ministries do well to be aware of the challenges some in their classes may be facing. They should be encouraged to connect with trusted community partners who can assist in addressing what are frequently complex issues. Remember, while most newcomers are reluctant to share their situations, love opens so many doors. A trusting relationship is paramount.

Author's note: If your church wants to know and do more, try www.settlement.org as a first step to find resources and agencies near you.

-Darcy MacCallum

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Continued from page 1 Happy..

They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."

"Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus."

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you."

"Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

"Praise be to the God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

"May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace."

- Tom McCormick
for SOCEM

Dixon Ministry

Dixon Ministry is an agency of Toronto Baptist Ministries, an association of 85 congregations in the GTA. Our mandate is to assist, help give vision to, connect congregations in mid-Etobicoke, so that the Great Commission that Christ commanded is accomplished by his church.

Half of Dixon Ministry's contributing congregations are Baptist, half from neighbouring churches from other-denominations. Free Methodist, Reformed, Anglican, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, etc. have seen our outreach and want to join us. This has demonstrated to our other-religion neighbours the reality of oneness, the "catholicity" of the church.

A dozen congregations collaborate, sending around forty ministers every week. This spring fifteen volunteer teachers of women's ESL classes met four mornings each week in the nearby elementary school and at Kingsview Free Methodist's education wing. On June 26th forty newcomer women graduated from three levels of English instruction, from pre-literacy (learning to hold a pencil) up until about Grade Five English.

Through the school year we tutored men and women and their families (eight children in each of two families!) in half a dozen homes. The home venue is the place that we find we can get to know

each other and share most freely who we are and what is most important to us. We have requests from close to 100 families, with which we simply don't have sufficient, willing ministers to respond. "The workers are few."

Three retired teachers and eight high school tutors helped children several times each week at the local Parkfield Junior School and Kipling Collegiate homework clubs.

Something new: our summer programme was rather demanding - as we collaborated with one of our churches next door to Etobicoke, Brampton Chinese Baptist Church. Together we initiated a home tutoring service to newcomers in Brampton. The driving forces were two past summer interns, Elaine Kwok and Mike Yu, both in teacher training programmes (Queens and Tyndale) and their pastor, Reverend Ming Wong, who tutored mathematics to three Somali teenaged brothers during the 2012 summer and throughout the following school year. The church hired (Canada Summer Jobs grant) eight university and senior high school interns (including a very capable Muslim Sudanese woman and a Hindu Punjabi woman) to reach out to newcomer families. The otherwise Christian interns and volunteers (mainly from BCBC) reached out to approximately twenty families, mostly Muslims. The end of summer "Kids Got Talent" event showcased their summer's

English learning and provided newcomer and church families a multicultural pot luck supper and chance to talk. BCBC is pursuing ongoing outreach to 'their' very beloved families, and now considering the next step for next summer.

In July, in Dixon, for the fourth summer, several churches offered a mothers and children's ESL programme, an extension of our Women's ESL classes. Kingsview Free Methodist's church basement venue was flooded in the first week, so the dozen women and two dozen kids moved outdoors and to Martingrove Baptist Church. As in past summers we hired six interns (Canada Summer Jobs grant), and this summer were joined by an Oxford (England) volunteer conscript. We provided English tutoring and school readiness to brand-new arrivals referred to us by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. These in-home relationships enable our hired and volunteer youth to learn about and relate to people of other religions/cultures, and together to read Scripture, pray and work together. This is an investment in developing our future mission force.

This was the sixth summer that Dixon Ministry collaborated with the Karen Baptist Fellowship of Toronto, hiring a Karen-speaking university student who worked with several settlement

Continued on page 4 Dixon

English Pleez! If Only . . .

The Sovereign Judge takes His seat on His royal throne. Before Him are gathered the churches he has summoned - the English-speaking churches of the world. They've come with binders, Power Point presentations, and exhibits to show the projects they have been involved in in "making disciples of all nations".

After the lengthy "show and tell" session has gone on for some time, the Judge points at a large map of the world and gravely asks: "What about: DPRK, Tibet, Laos, Bhutan, Bahrain, Vietnam, Morocco, Myanmar,? I have heard only scant reference to these places." "But these places are closed to foreign Christian ministries; we couldn't send missionaries there." chant the churches in unison.

The Judge is obviously deeply moved and angry. He rises and with deep anger addresses this English-speaking gathering of saints: "Did you ever notice that the whole

world wanted what you had - English? Did you not connect this with the fact that the whole world needs Jesus and the salvation He purchased for all nations? Did it not occur to you that you could send English teachers to live and work in every country/people group of the world - making disciples? Who do you think designed this phenomenon, this wide open door to every nation? And what did you do about it?"

The crowd hang their heads in shame. There's some muttering about cost, safety, credibility, bang for your buck, statistics, missiological studies, . . . but there can also be heard the sound of weeping, even wailing - the remorse of a golden opportunity missed, a divine provision ignored. If only . . .

And you? Is that English in your hand? Would you like to make a difference in

restricted access areas of the world? Take some risks for Christ and be there? There are different ways of getting there and living/working there as a Christian English teacher - making disciples. Contact me or SOCEM: we will refer you to those who can be of assistance to you. If only . . .

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Panel Summary from Gathering X: Creative Venues for ESL Ministry

At Gathering X, a panel addressed all the attendees on "Creative Venues for ESL Ministry". Each panel member was given a short time to describe their ESL teaching experiences outside the traditional classroom. Below are the summaries of the contributions of different panel members, including some scenarios we did not have time to include.

Chrissie Cheney: I am part of a movement called MoveIn where regular Christians move into high needs neighbourhoods with people from unreached countries. We pray once a week with our team for the neighbourhood and seek to form relationships with our neighbours on evenings and weekends. As there are many immigrants in our building, my husband and I get many opportunities to befriend people who would like to practice their English. At one time I tutored two ladies from Iran and soon started studying stories about Jesus' life with them. Since that time, one of them has decided to follow Jesus.

Tom More: Coffee Shop: We have been meeting with international students in a Timothy's coffee shop for 6 months. Many of these new friends attend full-time language schools but come to our gatherings for more speaking practice and community building. There are many opportunities for sharing our faith as we discuss different topics, and we also disciple our teachers to share their faith and live out the truth of the gospel. Many of those 'students' are now our friends. They celebrate the Canadian holidays with us and share their lives with us over dinners and in our homes.

Mary Hogan: Coffee Shop: About 10 years ago, a Christian teacher with the York Board approached the Second Cup to see if they would be willing to have several ESL students enjoy some "free conversation time" over a cup of coffee. We connected with her by word of mouth and soon our ESL students were taking advantage of another opportunity to practise speaking English. Twice a month for 2 hours, we sit at 'long tables' and English speakers are strategically placed at different spots around the tables. Students ask questions about anything they don't understand about English or Canadian culture and talk about their life experiences. We called this time "Connections".

Linda Reed: ESL at the Public Libraries: A few years ago, I began leading an ESL conversation circle at the Main Branch of a large city library. Conversation questions

were provided on various topics. These were excellent, and included questions such as: "If you could ask God any question, what would it be?" There may or may not be Christians present to answer these questions. Many public libraries host ESL conversation circles; with God's love and a call to serve "all nations" it is a wonderful place to serve. If you would like the conversation questions provided for the libraries in the Cambridge/Waterloo region, please contact Wayne at coffee4us2@yahoo.com. The SOCEM website is also an excellent resource for good questions.

Jennifer Yung

Nursing Homes: We took some ESL students to a Nursing Home for a visit. We paired them up with the seniors and set up little 'conversation circles'. The seniors enjoyed talking and listening to younger people, while the students got a chance to practise conversations. We prepared a list of 'small talk' questions for the students. Some coaching in pragmatics beforehand would be desirable. We had good feedback from both sides afterwards.

Factory: At an employer's request, I began an ESL class at a screen printing factory. All of the workers there were ladies from China and their level of English was low. We held a class every Friday for 3 hours after their work. Their participation was voluntary and it was a kind of "employee benefit" for them. We had great times together in a crammed lunchroom. It was good to bring some Christian presence and practical help to their workplace.

Rahab: Rahab is an organization that visits, helps and works with women in the sex trade in the GTA. Some of these women want to learn English. It would mean a better future for them. Through the pastor, we were connected with this group and ESL tutoring was offered on a one-on-one or small group basis. We met in a church once a week for an hour-long or one-and-a-half-hour lesson. There was a mentoring system in place as a more experienced teacher would mentor a volunteer teacher to teach the student. The mentor, teacher, and pastoral staff would all be present in the lesson. We also went on 'field trips' to Tim Horton's and the supermarket.

Sandy Ho: School council: In September of this year I decided to attend my children's school's school council meeting. Since then I have gotten to know many families outside my sphere of influence and have had

the opportunity to relate with them, share life together, and care for the students' families together. Most schools welcome anyone willing to help out in the community; for example, there is an active member in the council who is a youth pastor and who is without children. The school is absolutely open to this pastor recruiting volunteers amongst his congregation in re-launching a reading program. We would also like to reach out to the many grandparents who are caregivers, who might have a need to develop their English language skills further.

Contributions from the floor included ESL with hockey players, serving an employment bureau, as well as entertaining international students in one's home. (See also "Dixon Ministry")

Continued from page 3 Dixon

agencies, helped write curriculums for settlement instruction and English language learning, coordinated and oversaw half a dozen University of Toronto volunteer students and an equal number of local church volunteers who taught adult, middle school and high school Karen newcomers. We have observed the Karen participants settling and schooling much more successfully due to these summer programmes.

The fall has started with some challenges. Our long time partner, *Somali Women and Children's Support Network*, decided (with input from anti-Christian consultants) that it will no longer partner with us. They assess (correctly!) that our Christian values and witness are contrary to Islam and current popular morality (interesting bedfellows!). We will not force ourselves on this group, but we are gently pursuing a resumption of partnership including giving space for each group's practice of their faith. We are continuing with our many other partners through our ESL classes, homework clubs, and home tutoring - with good relations with our mostly Muslim collaborators. It is sad to observe Islamic organizations continuing to be exclusive and unable to cooperate even among themselves. Their community, especially the youth are harmed by this isolation.

Jeff McCarrell

Director, Dixon Ministry
Toronto Baptist Intercultural Services