

## GATHERING XII IS COMING!

**On October 24, 2015, SOCEM will hold its 12th Gathering at Westminster Chapel at High Park in the west end of Toronto.**

As usual, there will be an inspiring keynote address, and concurrent workshop sessions to choose from. This year's workshops include topics such as Using Bible Materials, Teaching Beginners, What the Experts Agree on about Language Learning, Grammar & Pronunciation pointers, an overview of the Canadian Language Benchmarks, testimonies and tips on ESL in Muslim and Chinese contexts, and others. There will also be the Getting Started track for those who are new to ESL ministry. It will be a good day of learning, networking and fellowship. Plan to attend; stay tuned for more details and look for registration information in your inbox soon!

# THE ESL LINK



## Loving the Stranger

There are many places in the Bible that talk about “strangers” (or aliens or sojourners or foreigners), both in the Old and New Testaments. For example, the Old Testament repeatedly emphasizes, in the institution of the Mosaic law, that “there shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you” (Ex 12:49; see also Num 9:14, 15:15-16, 19:10, Lev 24:22). Insofar as we recognize that “stranger” is the biblical word for “foreigner”, such passages should generate special interest among us because we serve “foreigners” in our ESL ministries. How, though, are we to understand passages such as this one?

Might we conclude that God cares for the foreigners as much as he cares for His chosen people? From the early stage of the formation of God's people, the law provides a channel for foreigners to receive blessings and protection from the Lord. We do well, however, to remember that the law is but a copy or a shadow of the “true realities” in Christ. Hebrews 10:1a, for instance, says, “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves.” (NIV) Though we are “not under law, but under grace” (Rom 6:14), Jesus came not to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them (Matt 5:17), and by His Spirit to write the law on our hearts (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10; 10:15-16).

When a lawyer asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live” (Luke 10:26-28). When the lawyer sought to argue, Jesus told him the parable about a “foreigner” in need and told him (and us) to care for those in need as did the Good Samaritan. Paul and James also highlighted the importance of loving our neighbour, calling such “the royal law” and “the law of Christ” (Gal 5:14, 6:2; James 2:8). *[cont'd next page]*

### IN THIS ISSUE

On Loving Our ESL Students  
and Showing Hospitality — 2

Caring for Mandarin-  
speaking Youth — 3

A Response — 4

Working with a Beginner — 5

What Faith Can Do! — 5



## On Loving Our ESL Students and Showing Hospitality

### LUKE 10:27-29 (NIV)

27 He answered, "Love the Lord your God... and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"... "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

**ESL Ministry Commentary:** *An expert in the law asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. As we may remember, Jesus goes on to explain who we should love: First, we should love God with everything we have and are, and then, we should love "our neighbour as ourselves". I am convinced that includes people who are not like us, people who don't speak English like us, including our ESL students. However, we can't love people if we don't have love. Love comes from God. First, we are born again, filled with His love. Then, we can love strangers, Samaritans, our ESL students! Remember the Biblical basis to our ESL ministry!*

### HEBREWS 13:2 (NIV)

2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

**ESL Ministry Commentary:** *Strangers need warm hospitality in order to feel comfortable in a new environment. We have an amazing opportunity to show hospitality to strangers: our ESL students don't always feel comfortable in Canada. We can do more than teach them a few new English words. We can smile, offer them a holy hug, give them some food, go on a trip with them, be their friend and tell them about our best friend: Jesus Christ! ESL ministry can be simple but very effective!*

**"...our mission has to be Christ-centred or it is not even biblical at all"**

*Chris Wright  
"Mission of God's People" p49*

[cont'd from p1] Our "neighbours" are the widows, the orphans, the foreigners, those who are vulnerable and anyone near us and in need (James 1:27; Luke 10:29-37). Hebrews 13:1-2 says, "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers..." We are to love the "foreigners", not least because we are "foreigners" ourselves: this brings us back to the Old Testament passages. Leviticus 19:34: "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." Some of us are immigrants to Canada ourselves, and have faced much the same difficulties as our ESL students because of the lack of English language proficiency and culture insensitivity. So we naturally empathize with our students. Spiritually speaking though, we were all foreigners once, far away from God (Eph 2:12). If we think we are now in a better position than our students, it is just because we have received God's grace. Our service is a means of passing His grace to the people around us. Further, though, we are all "aliens and strangers" on this earth (1 Peter 2:11) as our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20). As Christians, it is "normal" to feel like we are not home yet. As such, we are in a good position to care for those immigrants who don't feel they belong.

At the start of a new ESL year (for most of us), let us remember the place of "foreigners" in God's eyes, the commands to love them and care for them, and our own position as "sojourners" on this earth.

Here is a classic in the field of Second Language Acquisition: [Introducing Second Language Acquisition](#) (by Muriel Saville-Troike). The link points to a PDF version of the book.

# Working with a Beginner

*Editor: Last issue we published an article with the same title. This is another take by a different teacher, though there are overlaps. There will be a workshop on "Teaching Beginners" in Gathering XII on October 24, 2015.*

In the church where our ESL program is run, I have an opportunity to teach a close to 'absolute' beginner one-on-one. Rita (not her real name) is a middle-aged Iranian lady, and has a lovely, calm, quiet personality. She didn't know any phrase beyond a mechanical "How are you? I'm fine, thank you", or any more words than random ones like apple, babies, or cake. The challenge before me has been how to keep her interest, make sure learning is taking place, and how not to overwhelm her and thus scare her away.

I decided to use some non-traditional methods. The following are some of the techniques I use, adopting, and adapting from, methods in missionary language learning. Much of the goal is to make learning fun, decrease anxiety, and make language comprehensible. Speaking and listening are emphasized, at least initially; and reception and comprehensible input are to be achieved before production.

One method is Total Physical Response, or TPR. It is used to teach verbs. First I do the actions with Rita: stand up, walk, stop, sit down, etc., calling out the verbs at the same time. She naturally mimics my action. Then I stop acting myself and just call out the command. She is able to do it herself. This leads to comprehension of different verbs and associates them physically with what she does. It is usually a high point in our lessons as it is fun, and easy to follow. TPR is good for teaching body parts (e.g. 'touch your left shoulder, nose, chin, etc.');

and an expansion of it can be using lego blocks to teach prepositions (e.g. 'put the red block on top of/under/beside/etc. the long white block').

Another key technique is using 'point and say' to teach nouns. Supposedly, Rita is to point to objects and listen to me saying what it is first, before she attempts to speak. However, I find that she is often 'impatient' and with each pointing, she proceeds to say the word herself. So the routine has been something like I point and say, then she points and says. Occasionally I would point to an object and say the wrong word, and ask her if it is correct or not

(yes' or 'no'). This often brings a smile. Then we might combine the verbs and nouns taught by these two methods to form sentences: for example, pick up the cup, hold the plate, put down the napkin, point to the window.

We also make use of a book called *Lexicarry*, which consists of series of wordless 'cartoons' where different functional phrases are to be used. For example, it might show a doctor and a patient with shoulder pain. There are empty 'bubbles' to each picture where the characters are supposed to say something. So, for this example, I would point to the patient in the first picture and say "Hello, doctor." Then I would point to the doctor in the picture and say, "How can I help you?" After that I point to the next picture where the patient would say "My shoulder hurts." After I introduce the series, I might say the phrase and ask Rita to point to 'who says this'. Then in the next stage she sometimes learns to say the phrases herself. This method introduces real-life situations and what we usually say in those situations. The pictures generate interest and a desire to know what to say. It also teaches sentences and phrases rather than individual words.

Other methods include using pronoun picture cards and verb picture cards to make 'sentences' (e.g. the card for 'he' + the card for 'sing' = 'He is singing'); role-plays (like acting out a hospitality scene); going out of the classroom to learn directions within the building, or signs (e.g. Exit, Ladies, Office, Staff Room); and for learning to read, writing words on cards to let the student learn the words by sight, just like they are pictures, and then combine to form sentences.

(Such methods also work with a small group of students. For example, we can ask them to take turns to put a lego block onto another block among their share of blocks. They then each build different things. It can be very orderly and fun. With a few students, it can feel like 'a party' if the activities are well conducted.)

Teaching a beginner like this requires a lot of patience and creativity. Yet it is also very rewarding. *[cont'd next page]*

## What Faith Can Do!

This summer of 2015 leading up to the Fall I have seen God working through international students in some amazing ways!

I have seen them serve as volunteers in my children's Salvation Army Kids Bible Camp, teaching music, leading drama lessons, making and serving food, leading exciting games, and sharing about God's love in Jesus through Bible Stories and testimonies! I have joined young German Christian students on fire for God coming over to Canada with Liebenzell Mission for two weeks to serve in churches, pray for each other's and stranger's needs, evangelize Canadians on the streets of Willowdale, learn English and study the Bible, and to spend time in awe of God and His creative power at Niagara Falls! I praised God as I heard a young German student give a passionate sermon in English—a language not his own—with words so powerful that people were brought to tears! I spent time with a young Pakistani student growing in his faith by coming to Canada alone, then graduating from Bible College and immediately beginning to serve God at a downtown ministry in Toronto, where I met him. He is now serving an internship with International Student Ministries Canada with his young wife who joined him in Montreal as they now cross the country in faith that God will supply their needs...sharing, learning, and growing as they serve God! Wow! It's been for me a time of sitting back in awe, like reading the pages of Scripture and its stories of faith coming to life by God's Spirit today in the same wonderful ways, all giving glory and honour to God and demonstrating that Christ is real and living through us today! These examples—in real time—of what faith can do have so encouraged me to realize that God is truly mighty, that He is on the move, and that truly "the gates of Hell" cannot stop His Kingdom from advancing!

—Tim Stevens

[cont'd from p5] When Rita is able to respond to a TPR command on her own, or when she is able to name objects on her own - better still, when she initiates learning by pointing to objects and asking for their names, there is immense joy. We also try to 'communicate' by gestures and using very limited vocabulary. Most of the time I am able to understand her. As well, such teaching requires thinking about such issues as translation: how much should I allow that? And how can I further reduce her anxiety by adding fun and increasing confidence? How do I encourage her to put what she learnt into use in her daily life? Hopefully we can improve our teaching by responding to such questions.  
—Jennifer Yung

1. Use actions to teach verbs. Do the action with the students and call out the verbs. Then call out the verbs and let the students do the actions themselves.
2. Use "point and say" to teach nouns. Point to objects and say their names. Let students listen first, then point and ask them to say the names.
3. Use wordless cartoons in a book to teach functional phrases for daily situations, e.g. Apology, compliment, going to the doctor, etc.
4. Role plays - simulate real life situations such as hospitality scenes.
5. Go around the building and identify different parts.
6. Go out to stores or cafes to learn nouns of specific domains, or how to order coffee
7. Use picture pronoun cards and verb cards to form 'sentences'.
8. Use lego blocks to learn prepositions by asking students to respond to commands to build things.

Please go to  
<http://goo.gl/forms/2yITUyJMRT>  
to fill in an ESL LINK Readers' Survey.  
It will only take 5-10 minutes.  
Your feedback will be most valuable to us.

Contact [eslministries@gmail.com](mailto:eslministries@gmail.com) for any additional comments.



Conducting conversation lessons? Check out [Teaching Conversational Skills—Tips and Strategies.](#)

#### QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

1. Do you agree that teaching conversation skills is much more challenging than teaching grammar?
2. "Students have an opinion, but don't feel they can say exactly what they mean." Have you encountered this as a reason for not speaking? How do we remedy this?
3. Is assigning students an opinion or position they don't share in a debate good for helping them express their opinions ultimately? If not, why not?
4. Does the above strategy work in your experience? Would it be forced or unnatural?

Looking for a textbook for your conversation lessons? Here is one which suits the format of many of our classes: [Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics \(An Engaging ESL Textbook for Advanced Students\)](#) There is a pdf version available for purchase ([here](#)); and there are sample chapters of the book that you can download ([here](#)). Explore around the site and you can find some other resources too.