

THE ESL LINK

IN THIS ISSUE

Easter ESL Resources – 2

A “Crossless” Christianity? – 2

English Conversation Texts – 3

Preparing Conversation
Questions: Some Reflections – 3

English is Changing – 4

The Resurrected Christ is the
Only Way to God – 4

Spoken Grammar – 5



The Impact of an Uncommon Practice

The church that I represent washes each other's feet every Maundy (Holy) Thursday. While I had heard of other churches who have maintained this practice over the centuries, this was entirely new for me. My initial thought was that washing other church members' feet was a disgusting, outdated activity.

What I have come to realize since my inaugural foot washing gathering is that the ritual of foot washing was never meant to be common or comfortable. What Jesus demonstrated and taught through this practice was quite uncommon and deep. This symbol and practice of foot washing never cease to radically shock me out of my self-centred, comfortable world, and help me to realign myself with one of Jesus' most important teachings.

We live in a culture that loves to be served. We enjoy eating in restaurants where the food is cooked for us and served. Whenever we travel, we stay in hotels where making a bed or cleaning the room up after ourselves is completely unnecessary. We are even told to leave our towels on the bathroom floor before we vacate our room. It is someone else's job to pick them up and take them to be washed. We love to be served.

Contrarily, what Jesus demonstrated throughout His life and illustrated through this act of washing His followers' feet was counter-cultural, both then and now. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said: "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." By demonstrating a spirit of servanthood in His own life, Christ calls all of us, His followers, to a similar place of servitude.

It was this same mindset (Philippians 2:5) that compelled Jesus to move on from the towel and basin in the upper room to a voluntary execution upon a Roman cross as a sin offering for all of humankind. What followed three days later through His resurrection from the dead is best described by James when he wrote, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (4:10).

As we embrace another Easter season together, may God enable us to remember that the symbol of the towel and basin precedes and leads to the reality of the cross and the empty tomb. And as we labour together in ESL ministries, may we be reminded that first and foremost, we want to serve others humbly, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

—Keith Montgomery

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—Philippians 2:1-11

Do you sometimes find it hard to get your students to speak? Here are some tips to address that: [6 Tips for Getting Your ESL Students Speaking](#)

Easter ESL Resources

BEGINNERS' LEVEL

<http://www.bestofthereader.ca/Ebooks/Holidays-print.pdf> (pp. 14, 15)

http://bogglesworldesl.com/easter_worksheets.htm (an assortment of fun activities like crossword, rhyme, word search)

<http://www.eslflow.com/>

[Easter vocabulary red.pdf](#) (matching (Christian) Easter vocabulary to pictures)

CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

<http://iteslj.org/questions/easter.html>

<http://teflpedia.com/>

Easter conversation questions

READINGS

http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/04/good_friday.html (with lots of accompanying exercises)

http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/04/easter_sunday.html

<http://ciaofromdebbie.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/WhatsEasterReadingComp.pdf>

SPECIFICALLY CHRISTIAN CONTENT

[Good Friday, Easter Part 1, Easter Part 2 Lessons \(The Virtues series\)](#)

ESL Easter Lessons from SOCEM website

http://www.abcteach.com/free/rc_easter_uppermiddle_b.pdf (a reading about the church calendar around Easter)

Free Christian scripts, good for putting on Easter drama:

<http://bobsnook.org/>

Video clips from The JESUS Film with discussion questions:

<http://www.mentorlink.org/index.php/resources/days-with-jesus/>

Stories that illustrate the meaning of Easter [350 Push-ups](#)

North American cultural stories to do with Easter (good as warm-ups or leads into Easter story)

[Easter stories... Chicken Soup for the Soul](#)

OTHERS

Good Friday handouts

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/GoodFriday1.pdf>

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/GoodFriday2.pdf>

[GoodFriday1.pdf](#)

[GoodFriday2.pdf](#)

Easter card

<http://www.faithfulfriends.org/eastercard3.doc>



A “Crossless” Christianity?

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” —Matthew 16:21, 22 (NIV)

Before Jesus died, he predicted what would happen. We know that Jesus died on the cross. It is a historical fact. It was recorded by eyewitnesses. Christians have received major benefits through Jesus’ death: the forgiveness of sins and peace with God. However, after Jesus predicted his sufferings and his death, Peter began to rebuke the Son of God. Wow! Peter

didn’t see the benefits of Jesus’ death or that it was the perfect will of God for Christ to suffer and die this way. The cross didn’t fit into his vision of the Son of God, the Messiah.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

—1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)

Some people are not experiencing the power of the cross. They are not living free of sin. To such people the preaching of the death of Jesus on the cross is foolishness. However, to those who are being saved from sin, the message of the cross is the power of God unto salvation. Are you experiencing the power of Jesus’

death on the cross or is it foolishness to you? Are you a church member who doesn’t hear much about the shedding of Jesus’ blood and his sufferings? Many don’t. We must wonder why. The gospel of Christ and Him crucified and risen is the power of God unto salvation. Let’s pray that our Christianity is not “crossless.” All of us need the gracious power of God to save sinners—those whom we minister to in ESL, and ourselves as well.

Our lives will glorify God as His righteousness manifest at the cross (Romans 3:21-28) is honoured and made known through our love for Him and our ESL friends (Isaiah 53:11; John 3:14-16, 12:32).

English Conversation Texts (free download)

For beginning and lower levels, we might need model dialogues in different life situations to help them with basic conversations. These are conversation texts of this nature. Maybe you can find more online.

http://photos.state.gov/libraries/amgov/30145/publications-english/B_Dialogues_Everyday_Conversations_English_LO.PDF:

Basic dialogues with language notes, from the American government site.

<http://www.allonlinefree.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/English-eBook.pdf>:

Basic dialogues that assume some understanding of English already (apart from chapter 1). Topics include: Meeting People; Talking about Likes and Dislikes; Expressing Abilities; Expressing complaints and apologies, etc. With instructions for pair work.

Conversations for All Occasions: http://toefl.uobabylon.edu.iq/papers/itp_2015_3130824.pdf:

Section of a book, 77-page, simple to advanced conversations with explanations of phrases used, a great variety of contexts and situations.

<http://www.realenglishconversations.com/why-download-english-conversation-pdf/>:

Conversations for Intermediate and advanced learners: the basic pages have a recorded conversation to listen to, a related PDF with transcripts and exercises, more related speaking exercises etc. Free access to selected conversations; need to pay to become a member to have full access.

<http://www.easypacelearning.com/all-lessons/basic-english-conversation>: Basic to advanced dialogues in everyday situations, some with exercises.

eslministries.org | eslministries@gmail.com



Preparing Conversation Questions: Some Reflections

I have appreciated a recent opportunity to prepare discussion questions for a morning English Conversation Circle in Kitchener. Our group structure is informal, with students dropping in and seating themselves at a table with a native English speaker and up to 3 other students. Only occasionally does a student request a topic, so I aim to select themes that are engaging and relevant to living in Canada.

Although the volunteers are usually considered the teachers, our discussions enable our students to also fulfill the role of expert as they answer related questions about their cultures and home countries. For example, the topic of “Travel and Tourism” invited spirited interaction among volunteers and students as we talked about our hometown attractions, our recommended home country tourist destinations, and how we obtained our driver’s licenses (or not). We gained insights about each other’s upbringings as we reflected on our childhood family holidays, and we also shared about the places we had enjoyed visiting in Canada. I not only learned more about what it would be like to visit Japan, South Korea, and India, but I also made unexpected connections with the students that made me realize how much people of different nationalities sitting around a table have in common.

The topic of “Expressing Emotions” was born out of hearing a student share about her inability to discuss a frustration with her neighbour. The discussion questions introduced the names of basic emotions, allowed students to identify situations in which they have felt these emotions, and required students to identify emotions provoked by certain scenarios. Knowing the right words and developing comfort in using them are important for our students as they look to build relationships and solve problems with neighbours and friends.

When a couple of churches in our neighbourhood were considering outreach to assist residents in the area of personal finance, I prepared questions about “Money” to help determine if the students would benefit from such education or support. During our discussion, students were invited to share about their experiences in Canada and in their home countries in the areas of banking, shopping, saving money, and tipping. We laughed together about the idiom “That cost me an arm and a leg”. Based on volunteer feedback from the ‘money’ discussions, we are exploring the possibility of inviting a qualified speaker from a local church to visit our group and present briefly and simply about good money management habits.

If your church is launching an English Conversation Circle or is looking for new topics, please visit the SOCEM website [here](#) to access the discussion topics and questions I have prepared.

—Mary-Jane Davison

English is Changing

I have been noticing a change in the use of English, even by native speakers. Have you? Sometimes the changing forms come up in ESL sessions. What to do? What do you do? One school of thought teaches the 'correct' forms, then also informs the students of the 'changing' forms—sometimes kind of 'on the side'—alerting them that English is changing, and that even 'native speakers' sometimes cannot come to a consensus.

Here are some examples. You probably have some of your own. Send them to us, if you would (eslministries@gmail.com). Perhaps we might construct a workshop for a Gathering if there is sufficient interest.

The use of the adjective to fulfill the function of an adverb, the omission of the 'ly'.

“Speak slow” instead of the correct “Speak slowly”

“Drive safe” instead of the correct “Drive safely”

“Eat wise” instead of the correct “Eat wisely”

The use of “they” to refer to he/she, probably motivated by gender debates.

The loss of the past participle:

“I have saw” instead of the correct “I have seen”

“He would have gave” instead of the correct “He would have given”

The loss of various pronoun distinctions:

“Give it to Bill and I” instead of the correct “Give it to Bill and me”

“Who did you see?” instead of the correct “Whom did you see?”

Correct or Incorrect (recent quote): “Nobody Reads the Bible More Than Me [or I]” (Trump)

And confusion of the cases:

“Bill and me were going to the show” instead of the correct “Bill and I were going to the show”

“He saw Mary and I” instead of the correct “He saw Mary and me”

Another school of thought teaches 'oral grammar' or how grammar is when it is in use, or teaches from the documented compilation of people's actual usages. The underlying 'philosophy' is: if it is mostly currently in use, it is 'correct'.

I've also been noticing changes (or confusion) in the use of vocabulary (e.g. relevant & relative), as well as changes in pronunciation. All of this is rather well-known. Here are some sites with insightful observations:

[When does 'wrong' become 'right'?](#)

[19 Common Errors in the English Language that You Must Avoid](#)

[Sah-ry, eh? We're in the midst of the Canadian Vowel Shift](#)

[Canadian accent is shifting, changing how we pronounce words](#)

What do you think? Might you want to share your thoughts with us?

—Tom McCormick

Editor's Note: This article resembles a 'blog post' in its brevity, short paragraphs, easy-to-read examples, and its potentially interactive nature where "comments" of the readers are sought. We are, in fact, exploring the possibility of a blog. If you are interested in contributing to a blog, or have expertise managing one, please email us at eslministries@gmail.com. Also, what do you think of the idea? Is it worth the effort? Do email us your thoughts too.

The Resurrected Christ is the Only Way to God

“...he was raised on the third day...he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time...”
—1 Corinthians 15:4, 6 (NIV)

Jesus gave up his spirit on the cross (Matthew 27:50 of the King James Version says, “Jesus...yielded up the ghost”). That means he died. After that, he was buried. People were probably shocked. The miracle worker had died. The great teacher was gone. What would they do?

Before he died, he told his disciples that he would be “raised to life” (Matthew 16:21, NIV). Who actually believed that this would happen? Whether they believed in the resurrection or not, it happened. After three days, he came back to life and

started to appear to people. In reality, the stone blocking his gravesite was rolled away by an angel of God from heaven! The miracles had not been stopped by death. Death couldn't hold the Son of God. He came out of the tomb! Jesus is alive!

What does that mean to you today? No other religious leader or prophet died on a cross and shed innocent blood to save guilty sinners from their sins. Certainly no one else has been raised from the dead and has appeared to more than five hundred people at the same time. Acts 1:3 (NIV) says: “After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.”

What did the disciples do after seeing the resurrected Jesus? Did they go back to their old lives? No; rather they preached Christ to sinners. They told people about the death of Jesus on the cross and about his resurrection. The Holy Spirit bore witness with signs and wonders. God's power flowed through their messages about the resurrected Christ and many people believed in Jesus and were totally transformed. Will our witness to Jesus Christ also be effective through the power of the Holy Spirit? Newcomers to Canada can be transformed by the resurrected Christ. People will receive Him as their Saviour and Lord as we proclaim God's love and Christ's resurrection as the only hope!

Spoken Grammar

“Full sentences, please.”

Have you ever been in a language class where the teacher reminded students to speak in full sentences? Have you ever thought about how odd that request actually is? I recently went to a workshop for English as a Second Language teachers where the presenter, Jane Willis, reminded us that spontaneous speech is very unlike written texts. Even within spoken speech there are differences that we appreciate when we take a good look at what people actually say vs what we think they say when they speak.

Try this: ask a friend to answer a question and record his/her answer. Try a question that will provide some detail such as “Tell me about a time when you were afraid” or “what is your earliest memory?” When you are done recording them, transcribe what they said. You will notice how often people um and ah (called filler phrases), how often they pause and how often they stop in mid-sentence and go a different direction. Spoken speech is far from full sentences for the most part.

You will also notice something else that will be of interest to your students. We linguists call them discourse markers—that is, words that alert the listener to what is coming next. Some examples are “well...”, “as I was saying” or “isn’t it?”

If you take your example of transcribed spoken speech to the ESL classroom, you can display for the students what it looks like and can draw attention to those aspects of spoken speech that they may wish to incorporate into their speech, or at the

very least, understand when they are used. Speakers of different languages fill pauses differently. Even the British say “er” or “erm” where we might say “um” or “uh”. As well, Canadian English speakers use certain discourse markers that other don’t. For example, our “eh?” or in Calgary “hey?” at the end of the sentence to confirm the listener is listening isn’t used elsewhere. Your students will be interested to know that this seemingly meaningless words serve important purposes.

As I mentioned earlier, even within spoken speech there are differences. Dr. Willis pointed out that some spoken speech is more rehearsed than others, such as answers at a job interview. Some is intended to be for getting something done (instrumental), while other speech is more informative. Think of a boss yelling orders in quick succession vs a teacher giving careful explanations to a class. Some speech varies based on whether the people involved know what each other is talking about or whether the information is new to one person. In that case, think of the difference between giving someone directions to a place they have never been vs reminding a family member about directions to somewhere they have been too, but are not quite sure they remember the way. If you are not convinced that these are different scenarios, try them out with a friend and again record and transcribe.

There is a purpose to encouraging more speech from students by suggesting that they speak in full sentences, but it is important to

acknowledge that people don’t really speak that way for the most part. Even more importantly, bringing this up as a task in the ESL classroom provides a jumping off point for our students to make sense of what they hear around them.

—Dr. Roswita Dressler
www.roswitadressler.com

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American English: A Website for Teachers and Learners of English as a Foreign Language Abroad is a website by the American government with lots of free resources. (The content is, naturally, American and we have to sift through. Much is still usable and relevant.)



COMMON GRAMMAR PROBLEMS?

From your experience, what are the most common grammar issues that you encounter in your students? Things that keep coming up, whether they're in the beginning, intermediate or advanced levels? For example, in a recent ESL experience, some students have trouble with basic verb formation (e.g. he works, does not work; worked, did not work etc.). Please send your input to eslministries@gmail.com. It will be used towards the planning of a curriculum on grammar topics.

