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THE ESL LINK

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New Blessings and Challenges

In the northern hemisphere, fall is the beginning of the school year, with new classes and students, and new blessings and challenges. Christians follow Jesus, who talked about the new covenant (Luke 22:20) and a new command, to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34).

For teachers and volunteers, new faces and students bring new relationships and blessings. The start of a new class offers the promise of learning, and joys in relating to and serving students. I value the opportunity to reuse a lesson to impact a new group of students, and to tweak activities that didn't quite work the way I expected, yet I have another chance with a new class! 2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us that if we are in Christ, we are new creations, "The old has gone, the new is here!" As teachers, we get such opportunities with new courses and curricula each fall.

Where I teach I receive lists of the pre-registered students, and this enables me to pray for those who will be in my classes each semester. I ask God to bless them, to reveal Himself to them through our course and my teaching, in and out of the classroom.

Honestly, though, new semesters frequently bring challenges—difficult grammar and vocabulary to help classes learn, understand, and use, issues in classroom management, and problem students. After the last, particularly difficult academic year, I reflected on Jesus feeding the 5,000. This is one of Christ's miracles recounted in all four gospels. The way loaves and fishes appeared in early Christian art also suggests this miracle had a special place in the early church.

Despite the challenges (the Lord had withdrawn to be alone, yet people followed to that remote place), in Matthew 14:13-21 Jesus had compassion and taught the people there, and healed the sick. When evening came, the disciples wanted to send everyone away to address their physical need for food (vs. 15). Yet Jesus said no, they could provide (vs. 16). Like the disciples ("We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," vs. 17), I usually see the impossibility of realities and forget the ways God has miraculously provided for me and others time and again. *(con't on p2)*

Ministering to (Syrian) Refugees – Resources

This link has excellent resources including an article on the differences between Arabic and English: Syrian Refugee resources (courtesy of Calgary ESL Cooperative; from their Newsletter)

Beyond Trauma: Language Learning Strategies for New Canadians Living with Trauma—a 249-page resource consisting of teacher's guide, lesson plans and student materials for themes and topics surrounding mental health and well-being.

In the face of the influx of Syrian refugees, perhaps you would like to find out more about how trauma affects second language learning? This is a well-written article about how the brain is affected by trauma, the implications for language learning, and what teachers can do to help: Trauma and Second Language Learning

(con'td from p1) Yet when the disciples brought their meager resources to the Lord he provided direction and gave thanks for the provision and multiplied it so there was enough to feed 5,000 men plus women and children, with 12 basketfuls of leftovers (vs. 18-21)! Perhaps there are connections here for us as we move from the newness of fall classes into the challenges of our teaching.

As teachers, we're concerned about our students and their English learning. As Jesus' followers, we can and should bring our programs, gifts, resources, and certainly our students to the Lord and ask Him to bless and multiply them. As in Matthew 14:19, Jesus returns those resources to us and asks us to use them to serve people. May we do so effectively in our fall activities.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for new blessings this fall. Please strengthen me for your work, and prepare me for the challenges that will come. May I remember You are a miracle worker. Please remind me to give my talents and resources to You, so that You may multiply them and use them for Your glory. In Your name I pray, Amen.
—Michael Lessard-Clouston

Michael Lessard-Clouston teaches applied linguistics and TESOL at Biola University in La Mirada, California. A blog interview with him appeared online in June at An Interview with Michael Lessard-Clouston

Spread the Word!

There will be a panel session and a workshop on "Ministering to (Syrian) Refugees" at 1:00-2:40 p.m. on Saturday October 22nd, 2016, in the Sanctuary of Trinity Church Streetsville, as part of our Gathering XIII annual training conference. This will be open to the public; there will be no charge—only freewill contributions will be accepted. Please spread the word and invite any from your church or your community who might be interested.

Gathering XIII is coming!

Once again we are going to gather at the annual SOCEM conference - Gathering XIII - to be equipped and trained for ESL ministry. This year it is going to be on October 22nd, Saturday at Trinity Church Streetsville, from 8:30 a.m.-2:40 p.m. There will be an inspiring keynote address, a list of workshops to choose from, a plenary panel session on Ministering to (Syrian) Refugees, and plenty of networking opportunities. Workshops will be around the categories of Helping with Aspects of the English Language, Bible-based Materials, Teaching Tips, ESL Programs and the Neighbouring Communities, and Understanding and Caring for the Students. Online registration opens on September 12th (see eslministries.org). Come and be inspired and encouraged, and learn from one another!

Here are the workshops we will be offering this year:

Workshop 1: Using Games to Enhance Learning for Students of All Levels

Description: Do your students ever seem bored or disconnected? Or do they ever comment that English is just too hard? If so, this workshop will show how games are great tools for stimulating interest, helping students feel connected through participation and creating meaningful contexts where various aspects of language are more easily remembered.

Workshop 2: How to Teach ESL Using English Bible Texts

Description: The language needs of your ESL learners may be addressed through lessons based on Bible texts. However, it is important that you not only choose *appropriate* texts, language and skill focuses but also plan *effective* language learning tasks. The presenter will walk us through a seven-step plan for developing integrated English Bible based lessons.

Workshop 3: ESL at Trinity Streetsville

Description: We are pleased to provide an overview of what we do here at Trinity Streetsville. We will talk about what we have developed over 13 years of offering Conversational ESL classes to people in our neighbouring community. We'll share about our history, student profile, format, and the teaching resources we use. We'll share some things we have learned and provide some sample lessons. We'll also focus on how our ESL classes serve to provide friendship

among the students who are new to the country as well as to seniors isolated because of a lack of English.

Workshop 4: Grace for Shame – Working with Muslim and Chinese students

Description: Do you feel that sometimes your students who come from non-Western cultures respond to you in ways you don't understand? Or have you wondered why they remain aloof and unresponsive to a proclamatory offer of the Gospel that emphasizes sin and guilt? One reason may be that their cultures and identities are collectivistic and shame-based. This workshop looks at some definitions and characteristics of shame, explains its functioning in Somali and Chinese cultures, and discusses how we can speak to personal and relational needs of the students from these cultures. Come share your experience and explore how the Gospel of Jesus heals shame.

Workshop 5: Emotional Challenges of Language Learning

Description: There are many factors that contribute to making a good language learner. Some of the leading candidates include motivation, attitude, aptitude, intelligence, interpersonal skills, emotional maturity, spirituality, brain dominance (right or left), learning style, a plan, empathy, ability to read body language, personality type, patience, a sense of humour, age, immersion, etc. Which do you think is *the* most important? Would you be surprised to find out that it's the emotions, what some call '*the affective domain*'? Why do you suppose that's the case? How might we better take the emotional challenges of language learning into account in our programs?

Workshop 6: "I'm Not Sure I Like Your Tone" - Advanced Intonation

Description: This presentation is for those teaching students who need English in the workplace. Whether it is dealing with the public, turn-taking during meetings, or delivering a presentation to an audience, intonation can be a key feature in doing the job well and ensuring positive perceptions. We will be talking about how English intonation relates to all these communication functions and how to help our students use it to full effect through awareness, observation and practice.

Workshop 7: ESL Sunday School Classes

Description: With many ESL friends coming to church, we discovered that though they enjoyed being present, there was much they did not understand. They did not understand what we did or why; they did not understand the content of the hymns or prayers or the sermon; and a large contributing factor was that they did not understand the English per se, including specialized vocabulary, idioms and some of the 'old English' in the hymns. So, we offered an ESL Sunday School Class following the Church Service and found that most came; and some came to Church just to attend that class. Others also have such ESL Sunday School Classes. If you would like to share your experiences and lessons and/or learn from others, this workshop is for you.[1]

Workshop 8: Teaching Beginners

Description: Are any of your students at a beginners' level? Do you have experience teaching this group or do you want to find out more? This workshop focuses on low beginners' level and will introduce different principles and techniques of teaching beginners. A live demonstration will be followed by a brainstorm session on "troubleshooting".

Workshop 9: ESL for Church Planting

Description: Together we will explore how existing or blossoming ESL programs can be used to start a House Church in your neighbourhood. Many Christian ESL groups wonder how they can have a fuller Christian witness among their students. We will discuss how to identify potential participants, House Church structures, and possible materials, all without disrupting the identity of your current program. One-on-one help is also available after the conference for those who are seriously interested in starting such a House Church.

Workshop 10: Understanding and Teaching the Use of Articles in English

Description: Do you know your articles? Article usage is known to be difficult for students to master. We will look at the meaning, pronunciation, and usage of the articles *a* and *the*, followed by consideration of various ways to explain these two simple words and practice them with language learners.

Workshop 11: Build Your Own ESL Lesson Based from a Bible Passage

Description: By applying second language reading comprehension theory, Roslyn will present a simple format that can be used to turn a Sunday School Bible story for kids into a lesson for adult ESL learners. Workshop features include: 1) identifying the key point of a Bible passage; 2) "schema theory" (the importance of activating students' prior knowledge and understanding the context/historical setting); 3) *(con't on p5)*

1 If you have experience regarding ESL Sunday School Classes that you would like to share, please contact Tom McCormick at eslministries@gmail.com.

Quiet Students

"We like lively classes, we want to see the students participate, speak up, take the floor, contribute actively to class discussion. Communicative language teaching puts a premium on talk and thus often rewards students who 'do' conversation and self-expression rather than those who reflect and understand in silence." (Kramsch, 2009; quoted in Scott Thornbury, "S is for Silence") This quote captures a bias in our Western cultures towards "talk"; and a bias in language teaching that we are primarily teaching students how to talk. Have you encountered the 'quiet student'? Do you naturally feel you would love to see them speak up?

There might be a myriad of reasons why students are quiet or remain silent. First, as I hinted, there are cultural reasons. Many students from non-Western cultures have a different communicative style, and may not use words extravagantly even in their first language. Some think that silence signifies compliance, and/or 'humility', both of which are to be expected in the classroom. In Asian cultures, for example, the professor is to be honoured, and some think that this is achieved by giving 'the right answer'. They therefore are reluctant to say just anything that comes into their mind without careful consideration. As well, 'academic', or school-like, settings often produce inhibitions in them, even fear. They may also be affected by issues of shame: they don't want to risk making mistakes and appearing foolish and so might take extra-long to pre-process the information before speaking up. As well, they may be afraid of comparisons with their peers. Some might have little educational experience in their home country and are not used to the interactions in a classroom. Then, there are personality factors and issues to do with one's identity. They may be shy and introverted; they may be anxious or working towards social maturity; they may even be suffering from an identity 'crisis' and feeling that their sense of self is threatened in their painful process of dealing with culture shock. The emotional and psychological issues involved may be exceedingly complex. Others may have hidden mental health issues.

Is there, though, a role for silence in the language classroom? Some teachers I know have shared that sometimes they find they have to facilitate special 'listening' sessions where the students are allowed to listen and digest what they are learning first. If they don't listen accurately, they don't produce accurately. Some approaches to teaching facilitate silence, for example, Total Physical Response, a widely accepted technique which asks students to respond to commands to do the actions, without speaking. Other teachers like to at times ask students to whisper to themselves or vocalize privately before speaking things out.

Silence gives space. The strategic and creative use of silence by the teacher may foster learning, ease pressure and let the students be free of distractions. For example, after a 'busy' communicative exercise where all are encouraged to speak, students can be allowed to sit in silence for some time, to reflect on the experience and to process the information. There may also be the use of silence during writing, appreciation of poetry and music, or activities where students are asked to reflect on their experience there and then. Words are surrounded by silences, and get their meanings from them.

There is a case for what some, in fact, call the "silent period" that pertains to beginning students and is internal to the language learning process. It originates from and is related to Stephen Krashen's "input hypothesis" which claims that an important condition for 'acquisition' of language is that students are continually fed with "comprehensible input". If they listen and understand what they've been taught, production of speech will naturally emerge after an initial period of 'silence' that may last from a few months

to a year or two. Just like babies who understand a lot more than they can articulate, the students are also learning a lot although they cannot produce the language yet.

This theory has generated heated debates. Some find the use of silence unacceptable because of the natural role for the teacher to encourage students to speak. Others are afraid of the negative aspects of silence like its use to hide incomprehension or laziness.

To be fair, however, we must ask what we can take from such a hypothesis. I think that the assumption that listening and comprehension precede production is accurate, and is true at every stage of learning. We do well to encourage intensive listening, and engagement with meaningful and interesting, if not compelling, material. Rather than saying 'you are not allowed to talk', we should encourage students to listen to the 'new and strange sounds' as closely as possible, with understanding, and that may be hard work. When they hear enough in a variety of situations to the point that they can recall the word during a life situation where the word is called for, then speaking it is of course the right thing to do. Before they reach that point, we should also allow them to experiment and make mistakes. I also think that allowing students to be as relaxed as possible is a high and valuable aim. This may mean not forcing them to speak. We should also lead with empathy so that their 'intensive listening' is enriched with empathy as well. The trust established between you and the student and among the students may eventually dissolve the 'problem' of excessive silence. The use of humour and the 'encouragement' of 'mistakes' also help with engaging the quiet students.

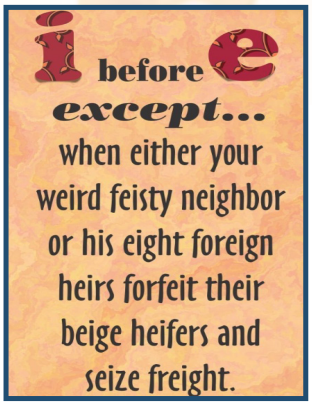
For many of us, 'the quiet student' is a live, and perhaps urgent, issue. You must have thoughts about it, before and after reading this article. Why not share your thoughts with us by emailing us at eslministries@gmail.com?
—Jennifer Tong

Author's note: See these links for more information regarding the "silent period":

- The Silent Period of Second Language Acquisition
- Pre-production and the Silent Period
- Understanding the "Silent Period" with English Language Learners
- The "Silent Period" in Language Acquisition: Truth or Myth?

For more on engaging quiet students, see:

- How to deal with quiet students?
- 10 Teaching Strategies for Making a Quiet Class Talk
- Author of 'Quiet' Talks About How to Engage Introverts in the Classroom



Gathering XIII is coming!

(con'td from p3) tips for reviewing vocabulary, preparing comprehension/application questions and integrating related Bible verses; and 4) suggestions for visual aids and lesson planning resources. Workshop participants will also be given the opportunity to create a Bible-based lesson in small groups.

Workshop 12: Class Dismissed: The Emotional Roller Coaster of Teaching

Description: "I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it." (Pablo Picasso). In your teaching life, have you ever been laden with struggles, encountered emotional challenges due to failures, or experienced moments when you feel like you want to give up? Come to this workshop to discover the reasons behind such experiences, hear the experience and encouragements from others (you are not alone!), and together explore ways to help face and navigate the challenges.

Workshop 13: Responding to the Refugee Crisis

Description: Following the panel discussion on ministry to refugees, you are invited to gather with others to interact more about guidelines, lessons learned, best practices, difficulties encountered, joys and blessings experienced, etc. Bring your experience and questions, and come to continue the conversation.

Workshop 14: Conversation Classes and Classroom Dynamics

Description: Many of our programs are Conversation Classes using various conversation guides, some of them from our site. Marion Chang, who has helped design one popular package of conversation guides, will share with us tips and suggestions for the effective use of such guides. Mary Hogan also has a lot of experience, though, with a different sort of ESL conversation classes. In all cases many of us find some of the classroom dynamics difficult and challenging. We will address lessons learned and share seasoned guidance to make our sessions more effective and more enjoyable for all involved.

Getting Started in Teaching ESL Module

Description: This module is specifically for people who have no teaching or ESL experience, but would like to get started in ESL ministry. The program provides some background in understanding different learning styles and second language acquisition, and also includes practical instruction on how to teach ESL students English pronunciation and grammar as well as how to set up an ESL ministry in your church. All participants will receive a 50-page Getting Started handbook made up of notes and handouts from the program.

NOTE: This module runs parallel to the workshop sessions throughout the entire day. If you choose this module you will not attend the other workshops.

Book Review

Teaching English Language Learners the Good News:
A Guide for Church-based ESL Ministries

by *Kendale Moore*, 2005, Alpharetta, GA. ISBN 0840088736
North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention

Written for people who are new to the field, *Teaching English Language Learners the Good News* by Kendale Moore gives an overview of language learning principles and practices: the why, how, and what of beginning a church-based program for ESL ministry.

The first chapter outlines *why* ESL ministry is a valuable investment of people, time, and energy. The goals of a program include meeting needs, building relationships, and sharing the gospel. The second and third chapters focus on *how* to organize an ESL ministry. Sections on recruiting volunteers, finding ESL students, managing the program, and developing church support for the ESL ministry are presented practically and thoroughly in a Q & A format. Chapter 3 is entirely about student assessment, for use in both placement of students in the appropriate level class and selection of textbook and other resources.

The *what* is covered in chapters 4–8 which give an overview of language learning and teaching skills, and lesson planning. The information presented is very basic but sound, including many good tips for teachers and helpers. Among my favourites are: "The greatest teacher error is talking too much" and "Speak naturally... The students need to hear the language as they will hear it used outside of class" and this helpful list of suggestions:

"Activities you can do with pictures include:

- Each participant in the group takes turns naming one thing they see.
- Each participant in the group takes turns naming one thing that happened in the picture.
- Each participant in the group takes turns predicting one thing that will happen.
- Use the picture as a springboard to discuss the type of situation shown in the picture. Students describe people in a wedding picture. Then they can describe and talk about their own wedding, or that of a friend or sibling. Students can compare wedding customs in their country and North America.
- You can compare pictures. Many resources include pictures that are very similar, but have six to eight differences that you must find and identify. You can also compare pictures with similar subject matter. For example, three pictures of recreational activities, four pictures of families, etc." (p. 121)

Chapter 9 looks at cultural misunderstandings, which are inevitable, and gives suggestions for recognizing and dealing with them, including how to apologize. The next two chapters return to the ministry focus, presenting good basic ideas for including Bible material in ESL activities and sound principles regarding preparation and presentation of spiritual matters, based on a foundation of prayer. The last chapter is an interesting annotated bibliography of ESL resources.

Moore's guide is a helpful resource for anyone planning or already involved in an ESL ministry. The author does not assume any prior knowledge of the field, but even experienced administrators, teachers, and helpers will find that it presents a good review and offers some new ideas. Many usable and easily adaptable samples of forms, program plans, and other administrative helps are provided.

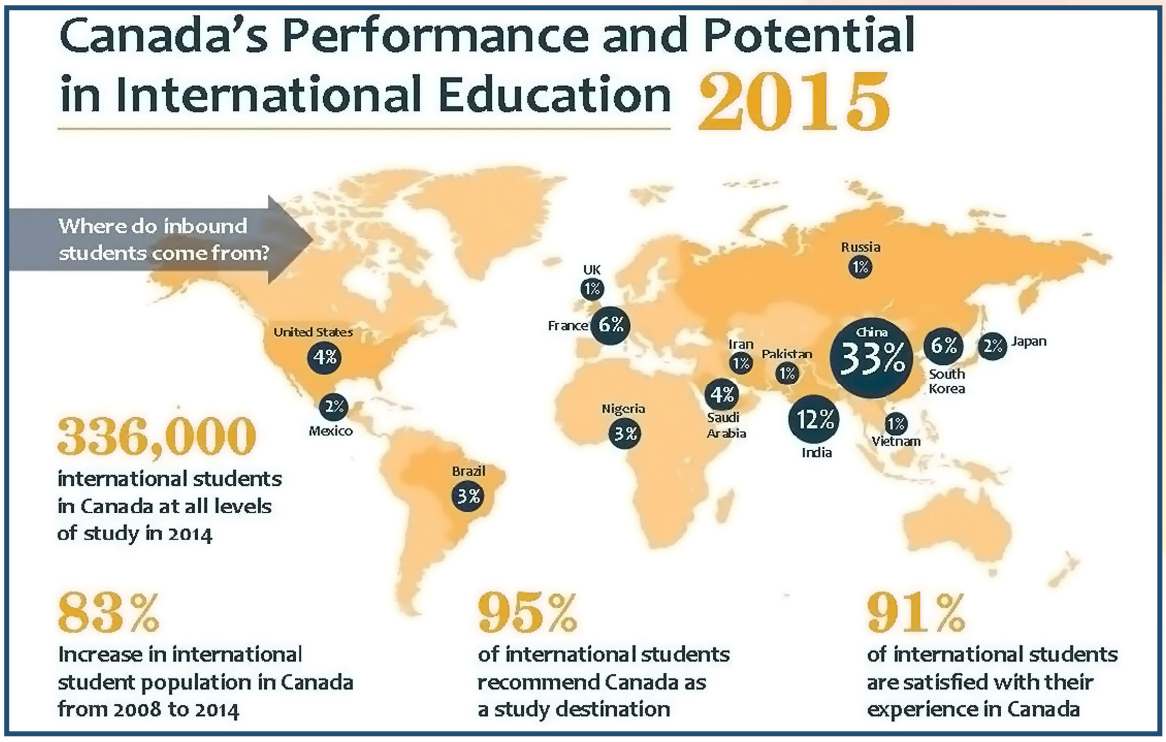
The biggest weakness of the guide is the implication that this resource is sufficient (along with "completion of a basic ESL workshop") to equip anyone to teach in a successful ESL ministry program. The heading on the back cover advertises "LEARN TO TEACH ENGLISH as a Mission Outreach". I think the emphasis of that statement should be on the latter half and not on the former! A discussion of TESL training programs and enrichment opportunities would be valuable to include and to encourage ministry leaders to pursue.

In addition, the material used in the discussion of Bible teaching is not something I would use or recommend. Some of the language activities seem quite artificial and the material appears to include little communicative practice. Perhaps another of the resources listed in the last chapter would be a better choice for sounder language teaching and would have made a better example in the text.

On the whole, though, this book is a useful, comprehensive resource guide, which is freely available online. It's worth your while to check it out!

—*Carol Blake*

International Students



Remember the international students all around us, in high schools, universities and colleges, and language schools. Some of us have special ministries with them. How can we reach out to them more effectively?

Stouffville Multi-Church ESL Model, Part 2

Editor's Note: We published Part 1 of this article in the last issue. The vision, the training, and the beginnings of the Stouffville multi-church ESL ministry were discussed, as well as how the program was promoted. This issue we continue with the strengths and challenges of collaboration.

In gathering observations for this article on the distinctives of a multi-church ESL model, a questionnaire was distributed to the ESL coordinators and teachers, the SCMA [Stouffville Christian Ministerial Association] chair and the pastor at the host church. Their responses are the primary source of the following points and they are mixed with a few of my own observations.

Strengths of Collaboration

What do you consider to be the strengths of the multi-church ESL model?

1. The volunteer pool for teachers, drivers, and hosts/hostesses will be bigger. You will discover that there is a wealth of experience and giftings to draw on. You will be "stronger together."
2. A local congregation may not be able to offer all of its members an opportunity to serve that fits with their gifts. The platform of multi-church/agency collaboration will be able to offer a greater variety of ministry opportunities.
3. The multi-church ESL ministry will be a visible witness to the students, the community, and the churches themselves of the unity among the Christian churches.
4. Through the multi-church ESL ministry, the area's ministerial association can have one very practical and impactful platform for collaboration and expressing welcome and hospitality to the community. Community leaders are able to see a visible response to the question, "What good is the Church?"
5. The pastors and church staff of the host church can anticipate being welcomed to at least one really fine coffee break each week, usually with cross-cultural flavors to explore. Volunteers and participating pastors can expect to be warmly greeted and even hugged in the supermarket or around town. They can expect to make a new circle of friends - and potential disciples.
6. The eyes of the volunteers will be opened to other cul-

tures. They will get to experience the food, learn the customs, and feel the warmth of relationship from their students. The benefits of an ESL ministry flow two ways.

7. Participating churches will become more open to newcomers. They will become less ethnocentric, less insular, less focused on themselves.
8. Whether your church is directly benefited numerically and financially or not, the Kingdom of God is being built, the harvest is being reaped, and God will make sure that everyone gets their reward.

Challenges of Collaboration

1. A multi-church ministry may end up being owned by nobody. There is the potential that the ESL ministry will become the ministry of individual volunteers rather than something connected to the churches of the community.
2. It is natural for the host church to benefit the most. How do you spread the blessing around? Are people Kingdom-minded enough that they rejoice when others are blessed? When the program is hosted in one church, there is the potential that the other churches will not "own" it.
3. A collaborative program needs a champion who will commit to helping the collaboration function effectively.
4. Communication and support need to flow between the program leaders and the participating churches.

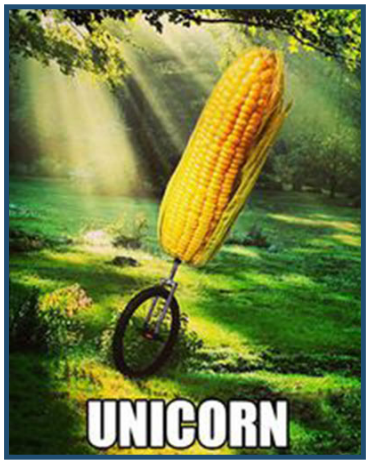
Opportunities and Ideas to Explore

1. Some ESL students may wish to pursue a more intense path of English learning. Maybe churches in a community could offer training on different days of the week. This would inspire broader ownership and would uncover more volunteers. Coordination of efforts would both test and inspire unity. Different churches may have different strengths and these may fit into a mosaic that will enrich student learning.
2. Cooperating churches should all feel free to extend invitations to the ESL students for special events being hosted by their church.
3. The ESL ministry could organize field trips to another cooperating church for a tea or a special event.
4. The ESL ministry could be featured at community events as a multi-church ministry. This could happen at the community fair, through the local multi-cultural association, or at the Santa Claus Parade.
5. Information packs could be given out that include information about all the participating churches.
6. A report on the ESL ministry could be given in each of the participating churches at least once a year.

People who teach others to speak a language find the meaning of words and their cultural and contextual connotations interesting. The meanings we attach to words affect our behavior. For example, as a missionary with an international, non-denominational agency (SIM), it is natural when I think of the word "church" to think beyond the parameters of the local congregation and see the resources of all the people of God in a community to be potential resources for a Kingdom activity. I think it is regrettable when the understanding of "church" limits our vision to the capacity of only our own local congregation. We are missing parts of the Body when we work independently. For the sake of a unified and synergized witness, a multi-church ESL model is worth trying for the greater glory of God.

—*Tim Jacobson*

Just for Fun



Some of our favorite stories are about children and prayer. Such as the little girl who prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets." That's not bad. Or the little girl who was overheard to pray, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some E-mail."