



CETC Newsletter, Volume 7, Issue 2

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Message From the Chair

By Mary Shepard Wong, Azusa Pacific University, e-mail: mwong@apu.edu



Greetings in Christ to all the members of the CETC. It was wonderful to see so many of you at the 2004 TESOL Convention in Long Beach. This year got off to an excellent start with the 1-day Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) conference that Kitty Purgason organized (see full report later in this issue--ed.). The 1-day CELT conference was such a success that we hope to offer this again next year. If we do, then at TESOL 2005 in San Antonio (March 30-April 2, 2005) consider coming a day early for this time of networking, learning, and fellowshiping.

The scheduled topic for our CETC colloquium in San Antonio next year is "Respecting Religious Differences in ESL Classrooms." Panelists will present how they have encouraged ESL students to discuss religious differences in an atmosphere of respect and openness. A list of potential presenters and topics for the four 20-minute presentations is being formed. If you are interested in being part of this panel, please e-mail me at mwong@apu.edu.

Thanks to the many volunteers who hosted the CETC booth and answered questions and encouraged people to join the caucus. Please consider hosting the booth for a 2-hour slot next year in Texas as it is a great way to meet people and serve the caucus. Karen Asenavage, the 2004-2005 CETC chair-elect, will be organizing volunteers for the booth next year.

I would like to encourage all of you to get more involved in our caucus this year. CETC has more than 800 members and only a small portion is active. How can you get more involved?

- Submit a poster proposal to TESOL (deadline is August 1).
- Attend the 2005 TESOL Convention in San Antonio and come a day early and present at and/or attend the CELT conference.
- Participate on the CETC electronic discussion list and interact with our community in cyberspace. Visit <http://www2.tesol.org/> to sign up for CETC-L, our discussion list, or visit <http://lists.tesol.org/read/?forum=cetc-l> if already a subscriber.
- Visit the CETC Web site and read up on issues related to Christians and ELT at <http://www.cetesol.org/>.
- Write an article for the CETC e-newsletter (see below for more information--ed.).
- Serve the caucus or another part of TESOL by volunteering for a leadership position.

I wanted to leave you with some reflections on the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:1-16 and suggest that this portion of Scripture be our theme this year. The Beatitudes seem appropriate in light of the events in the Middle East and recent criticisms directed toward Christian English teachers. They remind us to humble ourselves before God (blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek) to seek after Him (blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteous, who are pure in heart) to seek peace (blessed are the peacemakers) and rejoice in persecution (blessed are you when people revile you . . . falsely on my account). We are blessed and should rejoice and continue to be salt and light so that others may see our good works and give glory to God.

Shalom.

Mary Shepard Wong

CETC Meeting Reports: Open Meeting

By Adelaide Parsons, Southeast Missouri State University, ahparsons@semovm.semo.edu

The CETC open meeting attracted more than 100 participants. As members arrived, they were invited to share a cookie or chips while they circulated the room providing ideas for the CETC e-newsletter, topics for discussion on the caucus's electronic discussion list, colloquium topics, ways to serve the caucus, and topics for the TESOL Energy Break and Networking Room sessions.

Mary Ann Boyd, Board liaison, presented information on the reconfiguration of the TESOL Board. The proposed Caucus Team consists of three representatives of three different caucuses, the Board liaison, and the staff liaison. One person will serve as chair, one as chair-elect, and one as a member of the team. Positions are rotated each year. Membership on the Caucus Team is to come from among past caucus chairs to avoid overburdening any caucus chair. At the Caucus Leaders Meeting on Tuesday, it was suggested that all caucuses rotate the membership of the caucus team.

Mary Ann Boyd then presented Adelaide Parsons with a certificate of appreciation for her service this past year as the CETC chair.

Presenters at the Caucus Colloquium were introduced and thanked as was Kitty Purgason for her work with the Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) preconference.

The CETC caucus leadership for 2004-2005 was introduced. Mary Wong serves as chair, Karen Asenavage as chair-elect, Andy Bowdler as electronic discussion list manager, Frank Tuzi as webmaster, and Jim Mischler as newsletter editor.

The raffle attracted a number of interesting prizes and winners. The meeting adjourned in time for people to participate in other events planned for the evening.

CETC Meeting Reports: The CELT Conference

By Kitty Purgason, Biola University, e-mail: kitty.purgason@biola.edu

The Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) conference, held on March 30, 2004, in Long Beach was a great success. From the first session starting at 8:30 a.m. to the final fellowship at a Cambodian dinner, people relished the chance to learn and connect. Total attendance was about 180, and while some came for TESOL too, others, especially local teachers and volunteers, attended only CELT.

The 3-hour morning session offered a choice of four topics. In one room, four presenters from both Protestant and Catholic schools dealt with the challenges of teaching ESL in seminaries. In another, the theme was teaching in international contexts. A third strand dealt with materials. In a fourth room, there were three sessions, including a panel of teachers who spoke on "Divine Appointments: Integrating Faith in the U.S. Public School Setting."

The plenary speaker was Tom Scovel, professor at San Francisco State University. Filling the sanctuary of the downtown church where the conference was held, the audience listened as he spoke from his heart on "What is a Christian English Teacher?" His comments on "what we say, what we do, and what we are" were "inspiring, encouraging, thoughtful, and substantive," in the words of several attendees. The plenary ended with the singing (in fabulous harmony) of "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

During the 12:30 to 2:00 lunch hour, many attendees visited the exhibit hall where organizations displayed opportunities and Christian ESL materials were available for purchase. The exhibit hall also had some poster sessions with practical ideas for classroom activities that integrate faith and ESL.

The afternoon began with a choice of two featured speakers. Don Snow, author of "English Teaching as Christian Mission," spoke on Christian English teachers and reconciliation. Irene Koshik, a faculty member of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, gave a talk entitled "Cross-Cultural (Mis)communication: A Biblical Perspective." The insights from both of these speakers were appreciated.

For the rest of the afternoon, there was another set of four strands. Church-based ESL was a popular topic, and the four speakers had much to offer from their experience. The strand on "Culture and Christianity" was packed with content as five speakers dealt with both using and avoiding culture. Other choices included a three-speaker panel on English camps; a workshop on creating customized curricula for overseas English programs; a presentation on non-Christian students in a Christian IEP; and a panel on standards that Christian agencies use (or don't use) to ensure quality ESL/EFL teaching. Finally, there was a lively panel presentation and discussion on recently published articles, written by Alastair Pennycook and Julian Edge (see "The Last Word" in this issue for a more detailed discussion of this session--ed.).

Speakers have been requested to send their handouts or papers to our webmaster for posting on the caucus Web site, so look for those resources at <http://www.cetesol.org/> in the coming months.

CETC Meeting Reports: Food, Faith, and Fellowship: An Evening at New Life Cambodian Church

By Adelaide Parsons, Southeast Missouri State University, e-mail: ahparsons@semovm.semo.edu

Christian educators in English language teaching experienced a new opportunity for food, faith, and fellowship at this year's TESOL conference. On Tuesday night, before the conference began, we gathered together at the New Life Cambodian Church of the Nazarene in Long Beach for dinner, sharing of stories, and fellowship.



Just before the event began, two young men ran up the street past Wes Eby, who was collecting the money for the dinner as we entered. They were chased by several other young men. Suddenly a helicopter appeared overhead with a search light on. It turned out that a store across the street from us had been robbed. All of us were safe. God seemed to provide a safety net for us all.

At the dinner, the personal stories were particularly moving. Pastor Anong Nhim slipped out of Cambodia to safety. He made his way to the United States, where he started work as an electronics assembler. Eventually, Nhim received a graduate degree in counseling and became an ordained minister. His story of faith, finding Christ, and developing the church he pastors gave us all pause at the beginning of the Easter season to think about what is important in life. Pastor Nhim's church is a vital center of the life of the local community. Activities occur throughout the week in response to the needs of the community members.

Only Syprasert also shared her story with us. Only is a young woman who radiates warmth, joy, and love in every word and action. Yet she has survived the loss of her mother and sister in a neighborhood shooting. That event necessitated her to raise her little sister and her infant brother by herself. Then, when she went to college, she had an automobile accident that killed the sister she had raised and left Only with severe burns requiring years of plastic surgery.

She eventually returned to school, continued her work in the church, and has recently married. Her life is a living example of God's love and mercy and of how faith lifts us above all the events in life. Faith allows us to focus on following in the steps of Jesus.

The food was outstanding, featuring Cambodian and Chinese favorites, and the fellowship was superb. A tour of the church was also offered after our gathering. We give thanks to God and to Nancy Zumwalt who made the arrangements for the evening. In addition, we thank Nancy's husband Bill and several of the attendees who served as our chauffeurs to and from the church.

The Last Word: Responding to Criticism

By Mary Shepard Wong, Azusa Pacific University, e-mail: mwong@apu.edu

One of the final sessions at the CELT conference was the well-attended panel, "Forming a Christian Response to Pennycook and Edge." As the moderator, I asked Don Snow, Brad Baurain, and Richard Robison to discuss three issues. These include what we can dismiss, what we can learn, and how we should respond to the charges discussed in Pennycook and Coutand-Marin's "Teaching English as a Missionary Language" (2003) and Edge's "Imperial Troopers and Servants of the Lord" (2003). After the panelists responded to these issues, members of the audience were invited to comment or ask questions, and a lively discussion took place.

Writing a "summary" of this session is difficult, as each participant, no doubt, went away with a different take on what transpired. It's like asking the five proverbial blind men about the elephant they saw, where each one described a different part of the elephant. With this in mind, I will offer my take on the tale (or tail) of this "elephant."

What We Can Dismiss

- Some of the claims in the articles cited above were based on a superficial perusal of Web sites instead of credible research, such as interviews with Christians or members of their sending agencies. Although the claims themselves may be dismissed, we may want to examine why the claims were made and how this image of the "Christian Other" was constructed.
- Christians were painted with a broad brush, and the rich diversity of opinion that exists within the classification of Christian was not expressed. Perhaps if more Christians were in conversations around these issues and at the table, so to speak, with those who held these misconceptions, a more complex picture of Christians would be depicted.
- Christ told us we would be persecuted. As one participant put it, "We just need to suck it up and take it." Perhaps these challenges are unavoidable and a sign that we are taking a stand and being salt and light.

What We Can Learn

- Watch what you say. As Rich Robison found out, a casual comment may be taken out of context and misconstrued. We should speak openly and honestly but make the context clear to minimize misunderstanding.
- The advertising of some Christian sending agencies should be changed. Some ads may portray an image of adventurism

rather than professionalism. Although this may not be what the agencies actually believe, it may come across this way to others viewing their Web sites and brochures.

- Transparency and truthfulness need to be encouraged. Christian English teachers and their sending agencies need to be above reproach and reveal their identity and intentions to avoid the perception of "bait and switch" strategies (the bait being English and the switch being evangelism).

How We Should Respond

- Research should be conducted examining the authors' claims. These include the claim that Christian sending agencies recruit underqualified, inexperienced teachers and provide inadequate training and/or professional development.
- Respectful, measured responses should be written in various publications. Kitty Purgason (2004) has shown how this can be done in her article in the last CETC e-newsletter. She is also drafting a response to Edge's Forum piece for *TESOL Quarterly*. I am working on a book that will critically examine how Christian ESL professionals integrate their spiritual identities with their teaching pedagogy.
- Respectful, measured discussions should be conducted. Possible settings include schools, sending agencies, and conferences. Consider how you can continue the dialogue.

I look forward to hearing what other participants got from the session and/or your reactions to the ideas expressed here.

References

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CETC Announcements

Assistant E-List Manager Needed

Andy Bowdler, the CETC e-list manager, is seeking an assistant manager for 2004-2005. Responsibilities include (a) working with the manager to monitor all posts to the e-list to ensure that messages abide by the discussion list's rules of etiquette and (b) initiating discussion on the e-list as necessary. The position begins immediately upon acceptance by the CETC leadership. At the 2005 TESOL Convention, the assistant manager will assume the manager position for 2005-2006. Contact Andy Bowdler at bowdlerfamily@xalt.co.uk for more information and/or to apply for the position.

Call for Articles: 2004-2005 CETC E-Newsletter

Jim Mischler, the CETC e-newsletter editor, requests articles, essays, and book reviews for upcoming issues of the newsletter, published in October, March, and June. Topics covering ESL pedagogy, teaching materials, classroom techniques, and professional practice are welcome. Related areas, such as the role of Christian faith and/or thought in teaching, education, or professional ethics are encouraged, as well as articles on teaching in a particular country or culture.

Generally, three to five articles are published in each newsletter issue; articles not selected for the upcoming issue will be automatically considered for future issues. The submission deadline for the October issue is September 1, 2004.

Contact Jim Mischler (mischle@okstate.edu) to submit an article*, or to ask questions about this announcement and/or the CETC e-newsletter. Please feel free to share this announcement with your professional colleagues.

*Note: The citation style for all newsletter articles follows the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines (5th edition, 2001). Contact the editor for more information.

CETC Leadership 2004-2005

Officers:

Chair--Mary Wong (mwong@apu.edu)

Chair-Elect--Karen Asenavage (karen.asenavage@hct.ac.ae)

Immediate Past Chair--Adelaide Parsons (ahparsons@semovm.semo.edu)

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CETC Mission Statement

The Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC) is composed of persons who have a common interest in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages and who share a common belief in Jesus Christ.

The CETC has been established for the following purposes:

1. To identify with others in TESOL of like faith in Jesus Christ.
2. To provide a framework for networking among Christians within TESOL.
3. To create an awareness of the global opportunities for Christian educators in TESOL.
4. To share and disseminate information regarding effective teaching ideas, materials, and resources.
5. To foster fellowship and encouragement for Christians within TESOL.

About This Member Community

Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC)

The Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC) is composed of persons who have a common interest in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages and who share a common belief in Jesus Christ.

CETC Leaders, 2004-2005

Chair: Mary Wong, cetc@tesol.org
Chair-elect: Karen Asenavage
Newsletter editor: James Mischler

Discussion e-list: Visit <http://www2.tesol.org/> to sign up for CETC-L, the discussion list for members of this community, or visit <http://lists.tesol.org/read/?forum=cetc-l> if already a subscriber.

Web site: <http://www.cetesol.org/>

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