



CETC Newsletter

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A periodic newsletter for TESOL members.

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Leadership Updates

Message From the Chair

Mary Wong, e-mail: mwong@apu.edu

Going to the TESOL Convention in Texas March 30, 2005? CETC is planning two sessions that you won't want to miss. Comments and input for these sessions are welcome at mwong@apu.edu.

Respecting Religious Differences in ESL Classrooms

Panelists will present ways in which they have encouraged English as a second language (ESL) students to discuss religious differences in an atmosphere of respect and openness. Establishing classroom norms, teaching the language of respectful discourse, providing appropriate yet challenging activities, preparing and debriefing the students, and knowing how to respond to disrespectful comments will be discussed. Panelists: Kathryn Bartholomew, Phebe X. Gray, Cheri Pierson, Alan Seaman, Anastassia Tzoytzoyrakos, Mary Shepard Wong.

Questions to Consider

How do you introduce to your students what religion is like in the country where you teach?

How can you be a friend to someone of a different religion?

How do you help students of different religions get along in class?

How do you help students express their own religious beliefs, or lack thereof?

Teacher Identity and the TESOL Profession

ESL/English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers are socially and politically sensitive individuals who may identify themselves and/or be identified by others on the basis of employment, native language,

political beliefs, race, religion, and/or sexual orientation. In this colloquium, leaders of the six TESOL caucuses explore the impact of teachers' identities on their views of the TESOL profession.

Questions to Consider

What difference does a teacher's faith background make in the language classroom or should this not make a difference at all?

Can a teacher's religious convictions be detrimental to her or his pedagogy?

What difference does being a Christian teacher make?

Mary Shepard Wong is the director of TESOL Field-based Programs in the Global Studies and Sociology Department at Azusa Pacific University, USA.

Introducing the CETC Chair-Elect

Karen Asenavage, e-mail: karen.asenavage@hct.ac.ae.

I am honored to be the chair-elect of the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (CETC). My path to ESL, perhaps like many of you, has taken many turns, but all of the turns have helped to make me the teacher that I am today.

Ten years ago, I began at the United Arab Emirates (UAE) University English for Specific Purposes Unit as an instructor and then as a coordinator. I then moved to the Higher Colleges of Technology where I have supervised, developed, and taught in programs in the Health Sciences Department, in the bachelor's of education program in Teaching English to Young Learners, and in a problem-based integrated curriculum in General Business and Information Technology.

Experience and training in all these areas came through a long circuitous route. I completed my BA in biology and chemistry at Messiah College; during my college years I was introduced to missions and had my first overseas experience in Palestine. That experience planted the seed for my current employment. I wanted to return to Palestine immediately, but a wise person told me that I needed to have a degree that traveled and a solid prayer team behind me, and that whatever I thought I would do overseas needed to be tried at home first. Ten years, and an act of God later, after consulting with home school families and running commercial painting companies, I completed an MA and a teaching certificate through Ball State University, worked at Indiana University-Purdue University and a high school, and then two years later landed in the UAE.

I was connected with CETC long before it became a caucus and am encouraged that it has remained a vibrant, growing group, supporting its members and expanding its reach internationally. As a leader anywhere, but particularly in the Middle East, excellence and professionalism in the field of English language training is respected and allows us to demonstrate our "white heart"--one that honestly and sensitively can declare what we believe within the context that we are placed. May we all have the grace to take up that commission for the only cause that matters! I look forward to serving you beginning in April 2005.

Karen Asenavage has been involved with TESOL since 1990 through Indiana TESOL. She currently works in the United Arab Emirates where she has been a local representative, president, past president, and conference chair and now is acting executive secretary for TESOL Arabia.

About the CETC

Leadership, 2004-2005

Officers

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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.

Articles and Information

[What Is a Christian English Language Teacher?](#)

By Tom Scovel, e-mail: tjscovel@astound.net.

Introduction

What is a Christian English language teacher? A provocative question, to be sure, and hence my reason for choosing it for my title. Still, a more accurate though less catchy title would be "Reflections and Ruminations of a Christian Language Teacher," which is a more apt encapsulation of what I would like to share. And please note that I will definitely not be talking about a much more theologically dangerous question: "Who is a Christian English language teacher?"--one of a myriad of questions I am happy to leave to the Lord to answer.

Despite the seeming innocuousness of my theme, however, in this secular, postmodern, post-Christian world of instant intercommunication, it is easy to be misunderstood. So, to begin with, I speak for myself, not for the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus, nor for English teachers in general, nor for my home congregation, nor for the United Presbyterian Church, USA, nor for Americans, Protestants, or, of course, all Christians, although I am happy to acknowledge my membership and allegiance to all these ever-widening affiliations. I readily acknowledge that my perspective is that of a Christian English teacher in America.

Christians in a Post-Christian World

Many contemporary theologians have written and commented widely on the fact that especially in the United States, we live in a very secular post-Christian society. Whether we go all the way back to just after the Emperor Constantine, or look back only a century, we can notice that at least one thing is different today: being a committed follower of Christ is now no longer accepted as the social ideal, indeed, not even the social norm. One indication of this is how often the term *Christian* or *Lord* is

appropriated by organizations for political or even military causes. Examples are the so-called Christian Coalition in the United States, the Christian Militia in Lebanon, or, most recently, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda that in February 2004 shot, burned, and hacked to death 200 refugees. Talk about taking the Lord's name in vain!

As a linguist, I have also been intrigued with how Christian vocabulary in English has also been appropriated by social and commercial institutions--so much so that often these words bear secular rather than sacred coinage. People can have vocations in real estate, or a calling to become an attorney, and in today's popular culture, a professional is abbreviated and humanized to and used to refer to people who are highly paid basketball players or poorly paid prostitutes! In our secular world, *evangelical* is a synonym for *zealous* and corporations such as Chevron and General Motors have mission statements. Even a cursory survey of TV shows or movies confirms what every American youth has already learned--that the phrase "Oh my God" is an interjection, not an intercession. My point is not to rant against these social changes but simply to emphasize that in today's world even the language of Christianity has been secularized.

Perhaps it is easy to see then why the Christian church either is seen as irrelevant or is misunderstood by the average American or the typical postmodern man and woman. And it may also be apparent why there is even antipathy against Christianity, especially when in recent months, we have heard stories about "successful" TV evangelists who fly in their own \$10 million jets and made a profit of \$95 million in 2003 marketing their franchise of Christianity, or when we confront story after story about sexual abuse of children and women parishioners by Roman Catholic priests. It should not surprise us that our post-Christian contemporaries can display ignorance, mistrust, and misunderstanding, and it should not surprise us that some in our own TESOL organization choose to criticize us publicly in print.

It is within this context that I would like to try to define what we are or, more precisely, what I am. What is a Christian language teacher? "What then must I do?" to quote the rich young man of the Bible. I think a Christian English language teacher can be characterized in three ways. How we live our faith in Christ Jesus as teachers can be defined by what we say, what we do, and what we are.

1. What We Say: Telling Words

We are, after all, in a talking profession and so we should not only walk the walk but talk the talk. It is important for us to use Telling Words, to tell it as it is. We can try to educate our secular post-Christian colleagues, neighbors, and students about Christianity and culture. We are professional educators with a special understanding of cross-cultural contexts. Many of us have lived and taught in different nations for many years, and all of us teach students whose cultures differ from our own. We can start by teaching Christianity and Culture 101.

To begin with, Christianity is not an American religion. This is patently obvious historically, but it is just as true culturally. The agrarian narrative of the lost sheep or the image of the good shepherd is much further removed from the schematic framing of the average 21st-century American suburbanite than it is from a Uighur peasant in Xinjiang, China. We can go one step further and claim Christianity is not even an American religion theologically, if we consider the fact that the animism of Native American cultures was the initial religion of this continent. Given all this, we can proclaim the Good News that Christ comes to all, especially through the languages and the cultures of the ESL students whom we teach. This is something worth proclaiming and acclaiming as Christian TESOL educators. To quote James Brownson (1994), "The sacred story does not serve to promote or sanction a monocultural religious perspective, but rather a multicultural one. God's presence is irreducibly multicultural" (p. 485).

And as Christian teachers of global English, I believe we have a unique perspective from which to talk about the now contentious issue of the so-called privileged status of native speakers and the potential for linguistic imperialism, because Christianity, from the very beginning, has always been a multilingual faith. Darrell Guder, a theologian who spoke to my home congregation in November 2003, writes how the early church believed in the trilinguistic theory, because the caption on the cross was in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, but this trilingual faith was already proselytized by multilingual believers, thanks to the miracle of Pentecost (Guder, 2000). This trilinguistic theory was officially abandoned way back in the eighth century by the Synod of Frankfort, which proclaimed, "God is worshipped in all languages." Contrast the Christian tradition with the other Abrahamic faiths, where God's word is primarily in Hebrew for the Jews or Classical Arabic for Muslims. So at best, English is very much a non-Christian language and at worst, it is just one of thousands of ways of telling the Word.

Loving Words

We should tell it as it is, but Paul encouraged us to speak the truth in love, so when we are called to speak, we should also use Loving Words. As highly educated academics, we should rely on our God-given intellect and on our training, but as the theologian Ben Johnson reminds us, "The nexus between the human and the divine is not logic, it is love."

More recently, Smith and Carvill (2000) have written insightfully on what we can say as Christian language teachers, and one passage from this recent book offers a winsome perspective on the term *loving words*. In a Eugene Peterson kind of rephrasing of the Scriptures, Smith and Carvill paraphrase the famous quote from I Corinthians 13 as follows:

If I speak a foreign tongue with near native pronunciation
With impeccable grammar and a rich idiomatic vocabulary,
But have not love . . .

If I have sophisticated discourse strategies and intercultural competency
But have not love . . .

Precisely! If we teach the perfect lesson plan, but have not love nor lecture without loving words . . .
(Smith & Carvill, 2000, p. 55)

2. What We Do

What do you do? I'm a teacher; I teach. And when I think of what I do as a Christian language teacher, I am reminded of the story told of a cobbler who was a parishioner of John Calvin's church in Zurich. One day, a wealthy non-Christian customer noticed a cross in the cobbler's shop and remarked, "Well, I see you're a Christian. I suppose you make Christian shoes." "No," the cobbler replied, "but I make them well." What then must we do? Obviously, we should teach well, grade papers well, research well, and so on. Bach inscribed on each of his compositions, "Soli Deo Gloria," which in translation reads "Only to God, the Glory." How wonderful if we did likewise on all of our lesson plans!

Pedagogical Compassion

What then must I do? For one thing, I believe all of our doings should reflect pedagogical compassion. Once again, it is one thing to make vague claims like this and it is quite another to muse about how this can be actually practiced, especially without being prescriptive.

Over the years, in my TESOL graduate courses, especially those dealing with pedagogical grammar and second language acquisition, I have tried to stress the importance of empathy. Not the kind of empathy in the infamous alcohol experiment by Guiora et al. (1972) (of which, I blush to admit, I am a coauthor) but the kind of empathy that borders on the Christian concept of compassion. Earl Stevick (1998) writes well about this--this time in a talk given some four years ago at a conference on missionary language learning entitled "Letting the words, too, become flesh." This link to a biblical concept is a wonderful way, I think, of characterizing what it means to teach with pedagogical compassion. As Stevick states, "It seems to me that doing all this for the sake of the Gospel . . . becomes almost a sacramental act, and that every classroom is a holy place where such acts can be performed" (Stevick, 1998).

Spiritual Scholarship

I have been fortunate over the years to have opportunities to conduct scholarly research and to teach rather esoteric subjects such as psycholinguistics. These endeavors may seem quite distinct from what I or others do as Christian English teachers, but again I find both comfort and congruence between what I do in these areas and my life as a follower of Christ. We might call it *spiritual scholarship*. Rather than seeing modern science and scholarly research as irrelevant or antithetical to my Christian beliefs, I have often found just the opposite. As Don Snow (2001) points out, learning is a form of witness, a disciplining to discipleship and a lesson in humility.

And there is so much to learn! Starting with the work of Eric Lenneberg (1967), for the past almost 40 years, I have been astonished at how again and again, secular--even unbelieving--scholars in paleontology, comparative anatomy, neurology, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology have mustered scientific evidence demonstrating the uniqueness of human language. Surely, this evidence is congruent with the Biblical claims that we are created in God's image. And in my reading and work as a linguist, it seems to me that universal grammar, in its most abstract form, may be akin to a unified theory in physics, which, as we all know, is about as close to God as a scientist can hover! Wilson's (1998) concept of consilience--and even Pinker's (2002) strongly innatist views--also have, I believe, spiritual implications. How exciting to see secular research enlarge and enrich our Christian faith. Ultimately, of course, the Christian scholar stands not on data and detail but in awe and inspiration. As Marsden (1997) puts it, "Christian scholarship should be marked by a healthy sense of the limits of human knowledge" (p. 95).

3. What We Are

I've tried to make a case for Christian teachers in action--in what they say and in what they do--but in the final analysis, even I would have to admit that we are ultimately defined by who we are. Just as Jesus defined himself in John's gospel with the great "I am," so we Christians are best described

by the great "We are"--we are accepted, forgiven, and loved, in spite of what we say and do, and regardless of who we are. As followers of Christ, this is all well and good, but what on earth does it mean to be a Christian English language teacher? What exactly are we?

Coherent Teachers

In a recent book, Mark Clarke (2003) spends time analyzing three very successful but very different language arts teachers, and one of the few common factors he can draw from his longitudinal study of these three women is that they demonstrate what he labels "coherence" (p. 129). Although Clarke is making a claim about secular teaching, I think Christian teachers should strive to be *coherent teachers*, in this sense of the term. Notice this is an idealistic, not a realistic goal, and as such it could be compared with Jesus' injunction "Be ye perfect, even as my Heavenly Father is perfect." Of course, Christian coherence can foster neither self-righteousness nor self-reliance, but must be grounded in humility and open to the infusion of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

Reflective Teachers

We should strive to be not only coherent teachers, but also *reflective teachers*. Reflective teaching is a popular principle nowadays in TESOL, but I think English teachers who are Christians should reflect even more deeply about their calling. Naturally, this ties back to being coherent; note that the quote just read from Clarke encourages us to "constantly examine our own behavior." I think there are several ways we can attempt to do this.

One is by reading not just the scriptures and the literature of our profession, but specifically the growing body of literature inspired by Christian language educators such as Snow, Stevick, and Carvill and Smith. Another way is through prayer and reflective listening. We are so captivated by speech and language in our teaching subculture that we often forget the wondrous ways God can communicate with us. Ben Johnson (in press) points this out when he writes,

I have the notion that God sometimes ceases to speak so that neither the divine word nor the human response will disrupt the depth of loving communion that takes place in the silence. Though it may sound strange and contradictory, silence is the language that God speaks. (p. 65)

Faithful Teachers

Finally, it would be ironic indeed if we people of faith did not acknowledge the importance of being Faithful Teachers. It is almost trite to point out that we live in a cruel and sinful world where the worst deeds are not the random acts of terror that dominate our media but the daily acts of depravity and injustice that permeate virtually every nation on the globe. But this is the same world into which the Word was made flesh, the same world in which Christ lived, and died, and rose again, and the same world that God still loves. So as Christians, we have faith that is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, but we also have faith in the reality of the Resurrection and in God's substantive gift of grace.

Our faith gives us confidence as English teachers. It infuses joy into our daily work. Our faith allows for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and gives us the spiritual gifts of building up, encouraging, and consoling. And always, in whatever we say, or do, or are, we know we are not alone, nor are we our own. As John Calvin observes:

We are not our own; therefore let us, so far as possible,
Forget ourselves and all things that are ours.
On the contrary, we are God's; to him, therefore, let us live and die.
We are God's; therefore let his wisdom and will preside in all our actions.
We are God's; towards him, . . . as our only legitimate end,
Let every part of our lives be directed.

I pray that in all that you say, and do, and are as Christian English language teachers that the grace, peace, and joy of Christ may shine in your lives and in your teaching this day and forevermore.
Amen!

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Tom Scovel teaches courses in the MATESOL program at San Francisco State University, California, USA. He has published widely in applied linguistics and is a popular conference speaker. He and his wife have served as short-term missionaries in Thailand.

[Planning on a Christians in English Language Teaching Conference](#)

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

If you would like to have a Christians in English Teaching (CELT) conference in San Antonio, you can make it happen. Here's how.

Procedures

1. Check with the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus (<http://www.cetesol.org/>). The current chair is Mary Shepard Wong (e-mail: mwong@apu.edu). Even though the caucus does not sponsor the CELT conference(s), it can act as a clearinghouse to make sure that efforts are not duplicated, speakers are not overburdened, and topics are chosen wisely.

2. Consider the best time. There are two possibilities.

(a) The day before the annual TESOL convention. A majority of survey respondents attending CELT 2004 and TESOL said that Tuesday was preferable to Saturday. They enjoyed attending CELT while still fresh and appreciated going into the annual TESOL convention with a Christian perspective.

(b) The last day of the annual TESOL convention. Some people have Grad Student Forum, Pre-Convention Institute, committee, or other leadership responsibilities on Tuesday. Furthermore, some people told me they couldn't attend CELT because of teaching responsibilities and would have preferred a Saturday.

Responsibilities

Ideally, people would be recruited for the following positions:

1. Chair: must be a good administrator who can make sure everyone does his or her job
2. Local chair: must live near the location so as to be responsible for renting space, getting audiovisual equipment, and setting up on the day of the conference.
3. Program planner: must have a broad understanding of TESOL and Christians in TESOL, and know a variety of people in the field, so as to plan a quality program with breadth and depth.
4. Publicity: coordinates website notices, newsletter, e-mail notices, and word-of-mouth notices.
5. Registrar: handles registration forms, lists, receipts, information, and name tags. Must be

- good with details and money and be able to recruit help (from volunteers or student labor).
6. Exhibit coordinator: recruits agencies and publishers to publicize their opportunities (some of this year's attendees also wanted a job board).
 7. Sponsor coordinator: recruits agencies to sponsor the conference by providing such items as bags, pencils, notepads, or coffee.
 8. Follow-up: tallies results of conference evaluations; writes thank-you notes to speakers and other helpers.

Costs

- Basic expenses: Renting the facility, printing programs, covering costs of supplies such as name tags and signs.
- Other potential expenses: Paid help if there are not enough volunteers; refreshments; honoraria, registration, and/or travel costs for speaker(s).
- Registration fees: Last year's \$15 for early-bird preregistration, \$20 for preregistration, and \$25 for onsite registration seemed reasonable. Some onsite people asked for a discount, however. Half-day rates could be implemented for people who teach in the morning or afternoon. The goal is to keep fees as low as possible and still cover costs.

It won't happen if you don't volunteer!

Kitty Purgason, a member of the CETC Steering Committee, is an associate professor in the Department of TESOL and Applied Linguistics at Biola University, USA.

[Survey of Christian English Teachers in Limited Access Countries](#)

If you are a Christian who is currently teaching or has formerly taught English in a limited-access country, consider participating in a confidential survey conducted in an online format.

The survey is intended to develop a profile of those Christians who teach English in limited-access countries. It is hoped that this quantitative data, which are currently unavailable, will be useful in the discussion about the impact of Christian language teachers in these countries. Some recent articles highlight the positive aspects of Christian English teachers (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Johnston, 2003; Smith & Carvill, 2000; Snow, 2001) and some focus on negative aspects (Edge, 2004; Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003; Vandrick, 2002). But there are little quantitative data to add to the discussion.

The data from the survey will form the basis for a chapter in the book proposed by Mary Shepard Wong, chair of CETC, and edited with Suresh Canagarajah. The working title of the book is *How Faith Impacts Teaching: Dialogues between Christian Language Teachers and Critical Practitioners* and the proposed section title is "Respecting Host Countries: Cultural Dilemmas." The data and profile will also be disseminated in articles in the CETC Newsletter, CETC-L, and the CETC Web site.

The online survey will be available online sometime after November 15, 2004. The deadline for completing the survey is February 1, 2005.

Thanks in advance to those who help gather data for this research project.

[Volunteer Position Available: Editor, CETC Newsletter](#)

The CETC newsletter editor position will be available as of April 4, 2005. The current editor, Jim Mischler, will train the new editor.

Requirements:

- Membership in TESOL and in the CETC
- basic computer word processing skills
- access to e-mail

Contact Jim Mischler at jim.mischler@okstate.edu for more information and/or to apply.

The Last Word: "Waiting for a Miracle"

By Athelstan Suresh Canagarajah, e-mail: Athelstan.Canagarajah@baruch.cuny.edu.

9.00 PM. Manhattan. His teaching for the day is finally over. He wants to now unwind in his office, playing a Bruce Cockburn CD as usual. He turns on the music:

Look at them working in the hot sun
The pilloried saints and the fallen ones
Working and waiting for the night to come
And waiting for a miracle

He can't let himself be lulled into any imaginative reverie. Before he takes his bus home in an hour or two, he still has to attend to some business correspondence. As he focuses on the material on the desk to take stock of the work that remained, he is shocked to realize that the Annual Field Report (AFR) form still lay there untouched. Time was running out. He has to come up with some statistics to substantiate the performance of the college InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) chapter before he sends the form to the regional director. The more he thinks about the questions on the form--such as, Did the group conduct new student outreach? What is the total number of students who became Christians? How many students are involved in regular corporate prayer?--the more he is filled with a profound sense of defeat. Did all the activities and meetings really matter? Was the group achieving anything meaningful? Even the brand-new Whole Life Discipleship studies he had started with a bang were ending with a whimper. He wasn't sure the students were sufficiently engaged in discussing topics such as lifestyle, social action, and education to explore the radical Christian perspective. It seemed to him that the different faces showing up at each meeting were motivated more by the need to make up a respectable number for the event. It was all becoming a routine--the well-known Christian club routine.

You rub your palm
On the grimy pane
In the hope that you can see
You stand up proud
You pretend you're strong
In the hope that you can be
Like the ones who've cried
Like the ones who've died

Trying to set the angel in us free
While they're waiting for a miracle

A sudden knock on the door shakes him out of his contemplation. He has forgotten that Josephine had asked for an appointment outside his usual office hours earlier in the day. She wanted to talk about some important matters related to her performance in the course. Though he had relented and revealed the private hour he secretly enjoyed at the end of the day, he hoped that he could quickly dispose of her after listening to the usual litany of excuses for bad performance. Perhaps she may do some image-boosting by saying that she was still working hard toward an A in the course and ask a clever question or two from the only text she had read carefully in the semester to bolster this image.

Josephine starts predictably with some excuses for why she couldn't submit any of the assignments for the semester although it was well past the midterm. She found formal academic writing difficult; her language proficiency was not strong enough to make sense of Pope, Wordsworth, and Eliot; and she couldn't balance college with her demanding new job as a teller in a bank. He has to tactfully deploy his well-practiced gestures of sympathy and understanding, before he unleashes his clichés of challenge to urge students to do their work promptly. But Josephine goes on to say that she has had to visit a psychiatrist recently; that the drugs sometimes interfered with her ability to concentrate on the reading and writing; that her mental struggles came to a crisis when a White boss threatened to have her fired when she complained about the unfair demands in work; that there was a cycle of harassment she was experiencing as an aging Jamaican woman of color who was working for the first time and finding many aspects of technology new and difficult; that she was constantly being treated as ignorant and inefficient; that she was unable to challenge her superiors as she would jeopardize the funding they are providing for her education; that she was too old and desperate to find a new job; that she needs a B in this course to maintain her employer's funding; and that all this was taking a toll on her family life as her new husband and adult children were accusing her of putting up a pretense of sickness rather than focusing on her work.

Struggle for a dollar, scuffle for a dime
 Step out from the past and try to hold the line
 So how come history takes such a long, long time
 When you're waiting for a miracle?

He lowers the volume on the computer speaker, as Cockburn's vigorous guitar interlude seems rude and insensitive for the moment. He could only share with her how his own mother was manic-depressive and never really recovered from her drugs as she kept taking more powerful medication with little effect. He says something about not becoming too dependent on drugs. He feels helpless that he has only platitudes for such serious problems in life. He can provide her with only momentary relief by giving her an opportunity to talk about her problems--something she couldn't discuss with many of her instructors (she said). He is tempted to invite her for an IVCF club meeting, but promises himself that he will do that on a suitable future occasion. Before they part 90 minutes later, they make some further appointments to help her master the standard features of American expository writing that she had trouble with (thesis statements, topic sentences, a teleological progression of ideas) and to discuss some of the problematic texts in the syllabus. He assures her that he will lay aside the penalty for late submission if she can see to it that all her assignments are submitted by the last day of class. Although he is still angry that he will have to now take the midnight bus home, it is consoling that at least one student can go home today with renewed determination. The uncompleted AFR form on the desk fails to make him guilty as he rushes to the Port Authority to catch the last bus.

Somewhere out there is a place that's cool
 Where peace and balance are the rule
 Working toward a future like some kind of mystic jewel
 And waiting for a miracle.

The next few days Josephine will continue to struggle--she will come late to class when her accounts don't tally at the end of the day; she will miss a class because her drugs didn't let her get up from bed the whole day; and she will collapse as she walks out of the college building at the end of the class and will be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance hailed by the college security officers. But the fact that she still manages to finish all her assignments on the last day of class and completes the semester with a B is because she realizes that there is still community, respect, and understanding in a heartless world. That is what she shares with some of her peers at the end of the semester. Perhaps she senses at least vaguely in the depths of her heart that behind the towering buildings, bureaucratic institutions, demanding work relationships, ever-changing technology, and unforgiving rules and regulations in a postmodern metropolis, there is still a place for the spiritual--and even the miraculous--in life.

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About This Member Community

About the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus

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.

Community Leaders, 2004-2005

Chair: Mary Shepard Wong, e-mail cetc@tesol.org

Chair-Elect: Karen Asenavage

Editor: James J. Mischler

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

Discussion e-list: Visit <http://www.tesol.org/getconnected> to subscribe to CETC-L, the discussion list for the group, or <http://lists.tesol.org/read/?forum=cetc-l> if already subscribed.

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