Editorial: A Time for Change

A First and A Last

This is the first editorial I (Andy) have written for the journal and, unfortunately, it will also be the last. It has been an amazing experience to have worked with Michael for several years. When Michael and I started the journal three years ago, I had little faith in the journal’s sustainability because of all sorts of reasons. First, we started it with “no funds, no release time from work, and no technical expertise” (Lessard-Clouston & Gao, 2014, p. 2). Looking back, I feel truly amazed by the fact that we managed to publish this journal against all odds for three long years. Before the IJC&ELT was launched, we were concerned whether we would have enough submissions since it was an online journal with no established reputation. We felt that publications in such a journal may not count for our contributors’ academic achievements in many institutions. We weren’t sure whether we would have enough reviewers who would be willing to sacrifice their free time to review manuscripts for us. For these reasons, Michael and I have been counting on the Lord’s blessings every year to overcome all these challenges. So far, we have been doing really well with the dedicated help of our contributors, readers, and reviewers. We do receive a steady number of manuscripts, and a number survive rigorous editor and peer reviews at the journal every year, though we certainly would like to have more that make it into print. We have been particularly successful in attracting short papers on critically engaging issues. Our editorial board members and occasional manuscript reviewers have given us insightful review reports to ensure that all the accepted manuscripts meet the required academic standards for publication in this journal. We are also extremely grateful for the financial support that has been provided by Michael’s institution for a graduate student assistant.

Over the years, I did feel the stress of managing and editing a journal which was in addition to many other duties I needed to fulfill for my employer. However, I have been lucky to be working with Michael, who takes on the lion’s share of the work. The secular nature of my institution, too, has been a huge challenge in that I had to decide whether I should declare my identity as an editor working for a journal covering Christianity and English Language Teaching. I work in isolation from other Christian colleagues though we work at the same Faculty. Faith is not something that is openly discussed at my workplace. My geographical location also prevents me from deeper engagement with Christian colleagues in my academic community. For this
reason, I have been thankful Michael has had success in identifying suitable reviewers for manuscripts. I believe it is time for the journal to find someone who is better positioned to assist Michael in editing and managing this wonderful journal. In this regard, we are particularly fortunate to have Dr. Michael Pasquale of Cornerstone University joining the editorial team. Dr. Pasquale teaches linguistics and directs an M.A. TESOL program, and we are grateful that he will work together with Michael Lessard-Clouston from now on as they prepare Volume 4.

Over the last several years I have learned much while working as the journal’s co-editor. I came to know Michael Lessard-Clouston, a warm-hearted Christian colleague, much better, although my first impression of Michael was that he was quite a serious, stern person. Michael and I also learnt more about colleagues who have served on the editorial board and helped with the review process by reading and providing constructive, rigorous comments on manuscripts. We are deeply impressed by their generosity and kindness. We knew that many of them squeezed time out of their busy schedules to read and comment on manuscripts submitted to the journal. We feel truly blessed with these generous, thoughtful, and compassionate readers who are willing to evaluate and help contributors produce high quality manuscripts. As a token of our appreciation, we list them at the end of this editorial, with gratitude. We also have a group of contributors who are eager to share ideas and research into the integration of faith and professional practice. They give us inspiring ideas and models for us to emulate in our own practice. For this reason, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our colleagues who have helped the journal in different ways, in addition to our reviewers and contributors. It has been a great pleasure for me and Michael to work with you all.

In This Issue

In this volume, we have four articles set in a variety of professional contexts. Mary Hills Kuck’s article, The Reception in Jamaica of Non-native Speakers of Jamaican Creole, discusses how Christian and other foreign English teachers who speak Jamaican Creole were perceived by Jamaican Creole speakers. The study encourages Christian colleagues to be critically aware of the ‘power’ that expatriate teachers may be bestowed with by historical heritage. It also presents a thought-provoking challenge to Christian colleagues who wish to address this power imbalance by acquiring a working knowledge of Jamaican Creole. Mary contends that Christian colleagues’ efforts to learn Jamaican Creole may not be received well and are in fact likely to be treated as a
threat by the Jamaican Creole speakers. This means that we should undertake efforts to deepen our critical engagement with the historical colonial legacy in order to achieve *accompaniment* with Jamaican Creole speakers in classrooms. Mary’s paper is a sober reminder that we should be highly sensitive to both socio-historical and immediate contexts where we utilize our learners’ language to build a mutually respectful and trusting classroom community.

Echoing Mary’s call for Christian colleagues to deepen our critical reflection on historical legacy, Eun-Young Julia Kim’s paper, Empowering English Language Teachers Through History, proposes to incorporate courses on critical examination of political and philosophical aspects of ELT. Traditional TESOL teacher education programs have courses in pedagogical methods so that participants can be prepared for teaching in terms of pedagogical skills and knowledge. In light of Mary’s challenge to Christian colleagues, we concur with Julia that such preparation is insufficient for teachers who teach the language in contexts heavily burdened with historical and colonial legacy. Christian colleagues need to involve themselves in critical reflections on topics related to power relations in English language teaching. Otherwise, we may fail to help bring justice in language classrooms and empower language learners even as we are empowered by the Lord.

Also addressing the power imbalance associated with the English language, Marlene Schmidt’s Language Partners: The Church, Multiple Languages, and ESL article argues that we should seriously consider the lack of linguistic diversity in most churches against the background of the rising number of US residents who speak languages other than English. She proposes that ESL classes should be effectively used to promote language partnership in multilingual churches. To achieve this, she identifies key strategies, such as having a clear vision, selecting appropriate pedagogy, valuing cultural diversity, and building relationships for church leaders and ESL practitioners, to consider for promoting unity among church members of different languages. We appreciate the importance of church communities as critical social networks that help immigrants adapt to new contexts by providing appropriate cultural, linguistic, and spiritual support.

A related example of such a community is dealt with to some extent in our Forum article, which is a timely interview between Alzo David-West and Amanda DeCesaro on Teaching English to North Korean Refugees at Banseok School in South Korea. In a world with migration and challenges in English language teaching, this article offers a glimpse into one teacher’s volunteer conversation class, providing reflections on caring for North Korean refugee students.
In addition to these thought-provoking articles, we also have three book reviews. These include Megan Reiley’s on *Exploring Parables in Luke* (by Cheri Pierson, Will Bankston, and Marilyn Lewis), Shalom Bay’s on *New Ways in Teaching Adults* (by Marilyn Lewis and Hayo Reinders), and Cristy Brink’s on *Virtuous Minds* (by Philip Dow). We believe our reviewers have provided insights into these books of professional interest to our readers. Accordingly, we hope that readers will be encouraged to read these books as they go through these reviews.

**Appreciations and Invitations**

Once again we thank Biola University’s Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL for offering support to Michael, as well as for the platform to provide information about the journal and to publish our first volumes on the web. We recognize Michael’s Dean at the Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Dr. Bulus Galadima, for encouraging this work and for providing funds to hire a graduate student editorial assistant. Hannah Jackson has filled that role well this last year, and we thank her for her attention to detail reflected in the present issue. Finally, thank you to our readers, for whom the *IJC&ELT* exists! Please do spread the word about it to others.

The survival of a journal like this relies on the generosity and hard work of people and institutions. The *IJC&ELT* still needs to develop an updated submission and reviewing platform. Please pray for that to happen soon (and for the funds for it). Time is a key commodity when everything is volunteer. So we need volunteers, and if you want to help or offer some computer or other service we might require, please contact us. And please assist us as we try to continue to implement what God is doing – through your prayer support, submissions to the journal, and by reading it and sharing with others about it in your circles of influence. To God be the glory!

**Reference**

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From the Editors: With Appreciation and In Recognition

The helpful individuals listed below have served as consultants and referees at various times over the last three years, in the preparation of Volumes 1-3 of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. Many of these people have completed several reviews of papers submitted for our consideration. In printing their names below we note our debt to these helpers for their dedicated and knowledgeable service, which we appreciate as we aim to publish manuscripts that uphold academic and professional standards. Authors of both accepted and rejected papers frequently comment on the helpfulness of the feedback they receive from reviewers, which reflects many hours of volunteer service. We express deepest thanks to:

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