

Reviews

Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of the Global Refugee Crisis

Stephan Bauman, Matthew Soerens, and Dr. Issam Smeir. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2016.

Refugee

Alan Gratz. New York: Scholastic Press, 2017.

Once We Were Strangers:

What Friendship with a Syrian Refugee Taught Me about Loving My Neighbor

Shawn Smucker. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2018.

Reviewed by R. Michael Medley, Eastern Mennonite University

English language teachers (ELTs) need to be advocates for their refugee and immigrant students. Such advocacy includes educating school administrators, community leaders, and fellow citizens about the needs of their learners. Their young language learners will have the greatest chance of success if the surrounding community offers them sympathetic support. One or more of the three books reviewed here could enhance ELTs' advocacy by evoking empathy for their learners.

These three books will appeal to different kinds of readers, confronting them with the realities of refugee life in different ways. Three main approaches embodied in them are persuasive rhetoric (Bauman, Soerens, and Smeir); personal reflection (Smucker); and dramatic fictional experiences (Gratz).

Writing as the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 spiraled upward and as the nomination campaigns of the 2016 Presidential election heated up, Bauman, Soerens, and Smeir aimed their book, *Seeking Refuge*, specifically at evangelical Christians, arguing that the U.S. church's response to the refugee crisis would be its defining moment. Bauman is the former president of World Relief, the international relief and development agency of the National Association of Evangelicals. Matthew Soerens, a legal expert on refugee resettlement, is the director of church mobilization for World Relief. Issam Smeir, a consultant for World Relief, is a psychologist providing therapy for traumatized Middle Eastern refugees.

In addition to laying a biblical and theological foundation for granting refuge to those fleeing human cruelty and oppression, the authors highlight information that would have special appeal to evangelicals: for example, the idea that refugees are God's way of bringing the world

to neighborhoods where Christians may evangelize them. They also highlight the fact that many refugees are Christians, e.g., those fleeing persecution in countries such as Myanmar.

In describing the challenges of resettlement, the authors take up one that should be familiar to most trained ESL teachers—cultural adaptation. Co-author Smeir takes up the less familiar, but perhaps even more weighty challenge—the effects of trauma. The cultural and psychological challenges of resettlement are developed well through the case study of a man from Iraq named Sameer. The book also describes the harrowing experiences of asylum seekers.

Bauman, Soerens and Smeir's call to evangelical churches is both realistic and idealistic. They entreat Christians not to remain silent about the plight of refugees and not to allow politicians and news media to manipulate them by depicting refugees as a menace to our society. They cite discouraging statistics that point to lukewarm support of refugees among evangelical Christians (p. 183). Churches, they contend, are contributing much less than the magnitude of the problem demands.

Even though *Seeking Refuge* makes a persuasive case for a compassionate Christian response to the global refugee crisis, postmodern readers may be more powerfully influenced by the personal and fictional accounts provided, respectively, by Smucker and Gratz.

Shawn Smucker's *Once We Were Strangers*, taking the form of a personal diary, provides insights into the refugee experience from the perspective of an American who befriends a Syrian refugee in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In recounting his visits to the Church World Service refugee office in Lancaster and his encounters with a Syrian family, Smucker evokes the 2016 post-election mood of fear and discouragement among those ministering to refugees. His diary entries alternate between the Syrian family's hardships and his personal meditations on the struggle to develop a relationship with Mohammad, the head of the household.

Smucker at first intended to portray the experiences of Mohammad and his family making the difficult decision to leave their home in Syria, navigating their way through Jordan, and eventually landing in Pennsylvania as a riveting action-adventure tale, one in which he would play the role of a "middle-aged man in search of meaning [who] helped a Syrian family find the American dream" (pp. 181-182). The book did not turn out that way. Instead, even though readers gain some acquaintance with the Syrian family's experience, they learn as much about Smucker's own growth as an American who gets stretched in ways that are not always comfortable for him. By the end of this diary-like memoir, he has arrived at these conclusions:

My belief that they need my help more than they need my friendship was brought low. My deep-seated, hidden concern that every Muslim person might be inherently violent or dedicated to the destruction of the West was exposed and found to be false. (p. 182)

If you insert me into the story of the Good Samaritan...I'm not only the one who stopped to help. I'm also the man lying along the side of the road beaten down. I'm the one dying from selfishness and hypervigilance and fear. (p. 183)

If Smucker's hard-hitting self-examination does not force readers to reconsider the consequences of their response to refugees, then Alan Gratz's dramatic fictional account might do the trick. Written at a fifth-grade reading level and intended for middle school students, *Refugee* is a novel that many adults can enjoy and profit from reading. Gratz is an award-winning author of young adult literature, and *Refugee* remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over six months.

Refugee cleverly weaves together the stories of three young refugees: a Jewish boy fleeing Nazi Germany with his family; a Cuban girl and her family, who were part of the flotilla of refugees headed to Florida in 1994; and a Syrian boy and his family fleeing to Germany from civil war in his country in 2015. Given the current political atmosphere, Gratz has masterfully juxtaposed self-evidently "good refugees" — ones fleeing Nazi brutality or Communist cruelty — with the "feared Muslim Syrians."

Some of the strengths of the book include its realistic portrayal of trauma associated with the refugee experience; personal degradation and humiliation as key elements of that trauma; triggers of retraumatization; and characters who are generous and kind to refugees as well as those who cruelly inflict harm. Gratz's exploration of the theme of visibility and invisibility is especially insightful. He shows how, in situations of grave danger, refugees learn to be invisible; yet this invisibility lies in tension with their need to make themselves visible by exercising their agency.

Adult readers should be warned about one annoying aspect of the novel: the obviously manipulative cliffhangers at the end of many chapters. Since the book is intended for juveniles, the cheap suspense may be excusable as a device to keep middle schoolers reading. There is, however, an emotional surprise at the end of the novel that could help to assuage irritation with this device.

Adults reading the novel will understand more readily than young readers the politics and politicians behind each of the interwoven narratives. In a lengthy afterword, Gratz details the historical incidents and real individual experiences which inspired the novel.

English language teachers who have experience working with refugees probably know a great deal of what is presented in these three books by having learned it from their students. However, teachers who have less experience with refugees, and those with less training who work as volunteers in community- and church-based ESL programs, or who work as teachers or support staff in private or public schools, may gain a deeper understanding of refugee learners from these books.

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***Thinking Theologically about Language Teaching:
Christian Perspectives on an Educational Calling***

Cheri L. Pierson and Will Bankston (Eds.). Carlisle, U.K.: Langham Global Library, 2017.

Reviewed by Michael Pasquale, Cornerstone University

How can we live out our vocation as teachers in a way that is scriptural? This is the unifying theme of this broad collection of essays edited by Cheri L. Pierson and Will Bankston. *Thinking Theologically about Language Teaching: Christian Perspectives on an Educational Calling* is an important resource for teachers and educational administrators concerned about the integration of faith and teaching. Pierson is an associate professor of TESOL at Wheaton College (IL) and Bankston holds degrees in both theology and education. Both editors bring their broad backgrounds in education and theology to the forefront in this volume.

The strength of this collection is its focus on both theological contemplation and educational application. The chapters are organized into three thematic units on Theology and Language “Our Content,” Theology and the Teacher “Our Calling,” and Theology and Practice “Our Classroom.” The authors in this volume set out to answer the question, “How can my work play its proper role in the cosmic narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration?” (p. 1). This question is clearly covered in the first two sections relating to the role of theology and

language and also its relation to teacher identity. What is equally valuable is its application to the classroom context, which is rich and rewarding.

The first section, on theology and language, “Our Content,” contains essays relating to theological considerations of language and its functions. In Michael Lessard-Clouston’s chapter, “Biblical Themes for Christians in Language Teaching,” he focuses on biblical themes relevant for Christians teaching language. He discusses seven themes (creativity, understanding, communication, community, sin, diversity, and redemption) and includes a helpful chart with corresponding Bible verses, observations, and potential classroom applications. Karin Spiecker Stetina’s chapter gives practical instruction on how to help students understand context, types, methods, and genres in language teaching. She considers “how can Christian educators equip language learners to recognize, understand, and respond to God’s truth” (p. 31). Will Bankston’s chapter on “Using Words to Change the World” is the final chapter in this section. He devotes space to explain the linguistic framework of Ludwig Wittgenstein and sees its use to “help bridge the gap between theology and language pedagogy, providing us with a much richer understanding of speaking, an action common to both us and our Creator” (p. 55).

The second section, “Our Calling: Theology and the Teacher,” contains three essays that focus on teacher identity and vocation. Kaylene Powell, in a biographical piece, focuses on the place of glory, humility, and worship in the life of a teacher. Bradley Baurain argues in his chapter that there is a tendency for teachers, especially Christian teachers, to have an issue with pride and he calls teachers to humility and for Christian teachers to live out biblical virtue in the classroom. He writes that “[w]e approach teaching as learners and strive to remain open to reflection, criticism, and discovery while simultaneously believing that we have something good and true and eternal which we must try to live out and to which we must bear witness” (p. 130). Robert L. Gallagher’s chapter emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a teacher and how we must be “Spirit-filled” to remain effective as teachers. He suggests that teachers should follow in the footsteps of Christ as the Master Teacher who relied on the Holy Spirit through prayer and meditation.

The third and last section, “Our Classroom: Theology and Practice,” is comprised of four essays which aim to apply various scriptural ideas to teaching praxis. Cheri Pierson’s chapter focuses on using metaphors to help express biblical concepts. Her purpose is to “explore some well-known methods in second and foreign language education as metaphor and then to offer

some scriptural reflections for second language educators to consider as they think more deeply about the process of teaching in the classroom” (p. 166). Marilyn Lewis’s chapter “Managing Twenty-First-Century Classes Biblically” addresses classroom management issues and the roles that teachers play as servants, leaders, and ultimately as salt of the earth. Bankston returns to contribute another chapter on “Dialogue, Divinity, and Deciphering the Self.” He illustrates the power of dialogue as an effective didactic approach. He writes that “well-designed dialogues elicit essential and accurate self-knowledge, they likewise elicit knowledge of God. And so, we must never underestimate the truly transformative power of dialogue” (p. 211). Melissa Smith contributes the final chapter of the volume, entitled “Yahweh’s Taxonomy of Deeper Dimensions.” She considers Bloom’s taxonomy and views it through the lens of a Christian worldview. This in turn is considered in relation to the importance of educational outcomes and objectives. She argues that language teachers “can and should plumb the deeper dimensions with their students as the Master Teacher does with his” (p. 242).

The audience for this book is obviously teachers who share a Christian world and life view, particularly those who are teaching at Christian schools and universities. This volume is extremely practical and is helpful for those teaching in a Christian context where we are often asked to reflect on the integration of faith and our disciplines. The authors clearly lead us in this task and demonstrate “best practice” in this regard.

While the book had strong chapters throughout, it would have been helpful to have introductions for each section. This would have been beneficial in order to fully understand how the essays in each section fit into the theme. This would also have helped delineate how theology and its subsequent application to language, teacher identity, and practice clearly relate.

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***Spirituality and English Language Teaching:
Religious Explorations of Teacher Identity, Pedagogy and Context***

Mary Shepard Wong and Ahmar Mahboob (Eds.). Bristol, U.K.: Multilingual Matters, 2018.

Reviewed by Frank Tuzi, Liberty University

Mary Shepard Wong and Ahmar Mahboob work together with more than 15 other authors to investigate teacher identity, pedagogy, and context through the window of instructors' religious experience and beliefs. The editors recognize that spiritual beliefs and religious/philosophical experience have always influenced teaching, though many in the profession would like to ignore or suppress those experiences. Their overarching focus examines how teachers build and enhance a critical, reflective, conscious teaching practice because of a spiritual experience.

What is interesting and important to note is that these authors pen their experiences from a variety of religious backgrounds, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. The authors also investigate and share these perspectives from their own personal cultural foundations, which further individualizes the religious experience these language educators describe.

The chapters in the book explore three primary areas: (1) Religious faith and teacher identity; (2) Religious faith and pedagogical practice; and (3) Religious faith and the language learning context. Each of these areas includes different perspectives of the topic based on the personal experiences of the teachers, and each section closes with a chapter responding to the section's other content. The authors believe that given the opportunity to review and reflect upon those who mold and enhance their teaching through their spiritual experience, they can motivate their readers to reflect on more effective ways to develop a rich pedagogy while providing superior education enhanced with a deeper spirituality.

The forward, written by Suresh Canagarajah, describes three primary reasons why spirituality is growing in importance in the educational realm. The first point is that language learning and research do not exist only within a logical-positivist worldview but also encompass qualitative and experiential worldview research. Additionally, it is important to recognize that teaching is actually the combination of an identity that integrates skills and knowledge into one overarching method founded on individual beliefs. Finally, language learning is more than the mastery of syntax and lexicon. It incorporates the interactions of behaviors and personalities from a diverse group whose philosophical, religious, and cultural backgrounds impact individual language learning.

Part 1, Religious Faith and Teacher Identity, includes three chapters attempting to explore teacher identity from the perspective of a religious faith. The Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim

authors in this section ponder the impact of their religious underpinnings on their teacher identity. The reflections identify how their beliefs bring unique benefits and some possible precautions to their teaching and their identity. Hartse and Nazari explore how their respective Christian and Muslim faiths were received, expressed, and parts that were even concealed and changed because of the comparison of common values. They discovered through this dual ethnography a dynamic of individuals trying to weave their understandings and beliefs from their history into their teacher identity. The section ended with asking the question about how teachers can have an identity that is distinctively religious and still teach language in a professional manner. Each of the participants in this section of the book began to realize that they could learn from each other's culture and religious foundation.

Part 2 explores Religious Faith and Pedagogical Practice. The authors in this section have backgrounds in Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism. They explored how their faith helps to influence their pedagogical practices. For example, Brown recognized that part of her teaching pedagogy included a preference for teaching and cultivating a respectful and curious attitude that incorporates meditative reflection. Using these pedagogical tools enables students to not only reflect on and consider their own language learning, but does so using Buddhist methodologies, which may be unknown to language learners. Another author, Sharma, recognizes that his pedagogical tools incorporate values and ideas inherent in Hinduism such as learner-centeredness and learner autonomy. Although these two authors recognize their religiously influenced pedagogical methods, Vandrick came to a different conclusion, which is that teachers can be influenced by spirituality and even be spiritual, but not religious, or that teachers can be ethical without being religious. In other words, it is possible to embody some of the spiritual tools in pedagogy without linking them to religious dogma or history.

Part 3 focuses on Religious Faith and the Language Learning Context. The first author, Shaaban, clearly demonstrates how the cultural context in which a language is taught has a tremendous impact on language teaching. Life in Lebanon, for example, is replete with diverse people groups, languages, cultures, and religions. Thus, teaching in such a context favors acceptance and diversity of many different ideas and groups with the primary cultural group being Muslim. Although these different religious groups have varied reasons for teaching language, they try to train their students to not only master language, but also "character, identity, morals and values" (p. 148). The next two chapters in the section were actual studies in which

researchers tried to identify how teachers thought about religious values impacting pedagogy and language education. Each of these studies focused on specific groups, one in Egypt and one in Canada. Each study discovered there was indeed a religious impact on pedagogy.

Spirituality and English Language Teaching is a captivating and thought-provoking text. To be sure, some readers would struggle to identify the advantage of the text due to their nature to dominate. Some readers do not favor collaboration and cooperation but rather seek to isolate and remove the voices they find offensive. This book was a refreshing deep discussion reflecting on how people from diverse faiths and cultural backgrounds can work together and learn from each other while at the same time focusing on providing superior education, both from a linguistic and from a moral and ethical perspective.

This book also brings to light many faith-filled teachers who have a heart and passion for teaching and caring for people. These teachers have a philosophical or spiritual base. And although they embody beliefs and methodological tools from their faith, these teachers are not proselytizing. They are fulfilling their duty as teachers and people who seek to train up good and moral people who can live in a diverse society.

The editors of and contributors to *Spirituality and English Language Teaching* do not try to hide the fact that all teachers have some religious or spiritual foundation. Therefore, they encourage English language teachers to remain diligent to imbue the beneficial components of their faith into their teaching and identity while not allowing their faith to hamper the training and maturity of the language learners they are attempting to nurture.

Spirituality and English Language Teaching will benefit any language teacher or researcher by helping them to better understand the impact that faith has on language teaching. This text will challenge readers' perceptions of the benefits or dangers of faith in language teaching and will motivate them to consider the possibility that their faith can have a positive impact on their teacher identity and pedagogy. Highly recommended!

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***Teaching English for Reconciliation:
Pursuing Peace Through Transformed Relationships in Language Learning and Teaching***
Jan Edwards Dormer and Cheryl Woelk. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2018.

Reviewed by Michael Westwood, Bakersfield College

As Christian English language teachers continue to explore ways to appropriately integrate their faith and profession, teaching for peacemaking and reconciliation has come to the fore as a way of maintaining respect for learners and fidelity to the Christian faith. While peacemaking and reconciliation are generally well-regarded concepts, these terms can appear vague and unclear. This leaves many Christian English language teachers uncertain of how to teach for peace and reconciliation in their own classrooms. Dormer and Woelk successfully address this gap between good-sounding ideas and actual practice by clearly defining teaching English for reconciliation and exploring how this can be accomplished in a wide variety of educational contexts.

Dormer and Woelk divide their text into three main sections. In the first section, they establish the foundation for English teaching for reconciliation, clarifying a concept that has earned them “puzzled looks” in the past (p. 2). They define what language teaching for reconciliation is and situate it within the field of peace studies as well as biblical and pedagogical frameworks. In this first section, they introduce several approaches to teaching English for reconciliation (i.e., relationships, issues, skills, methodologies, and systems). The authors explore these approaches throughout the book, looking at each approach through the lenses of language, faith, and peace.

The second section of the book describes the people involved in teaching English for reconciliation. Rather than simply list and describe potential participants, Dormer and Woelk emphasize the relationships *among* participants, exploring issues such as identity, power, and group dynamics. Additionally, in this section, the authors provide a list of ideal dispositions for English teachers.

The third section of Dormer and Woelk’s book explores the resources available for teaching English for reconciliation. Here, the authors also dive into language teaching theory and explore how different methodologies, group arrangements, and textbooks could be used to foster a classroom environment where students learn language through the process of learning empathy. Dormer and Woelk conclude their text with an extensive appendix, providing concrete activities and lessons to help teachers better understand how these concepts could be put into practice.

Dormer and Woelk provide a thorough exploration of a complex topic, making a strong case for Christian English teachers keeping reconciliation and peacemaking at the forefront of their minds when teaching. In addition, the authors make a thorough connection between teaching English for reconciliation and well-established language teaching principles, making it clear that teaching in this way has pedagogical benefits. By taking the time to establish such a thorough and logical foundation, the authors provide a sense of order and continuity, helping readers not only to understand the specific examples they provide, but also to reflect on their own practices. While they do include a number of specific activities in the text and in the appendices, the authors also make it clear that teaching for reconciliation is not a one-size-fits-all practice. Teachers who purchase this book hoping for a ready-made curriculum that can be applied to any teaching context will be disappointed. However, those who read this book with an aim of becoming more empathetic, reflective, and creative in their own classrooms will be highly satisfied. The effective integration of language teaching, peace studies, and Christianity throughout the text shows that teaching English for reconciliation is not simply a good idea, but rather an emerging field worthy of continued exploration. Further, the authors succeed in their attempt to write a book with a wide potential audience. Both new and veteran teachers will find themselves challenged to think more critically about their craft. Also, while the book has a clear Christian emphasis, there is plenty here for peacemakers of other faith persuasions. Through this text, Dormer and Woelk take a complex and occasionally ethereal subject and make it concrete and relatable.

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Theological English: An Advanced ESL Text for Students of Theology

Pierce Taylor Hibbs with Megan Reiley. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2018.

Reviewed by Jan Dormer, Messiah College

Theological English is a welcome addition to the growing but still limited selection of materials designed to help English learners studying theology. Two distinctives stand out in this text. The first is that it is written from and for a particular theological perspective, the Reformed tradition. The second distinctive is that it is rooted in the concept that “Language is Trinitarian”

(p. x), reflecting the perspective that God is the creator of language and that language is a “trinity” of grammar, phonology and reference. With “Trinity” as a thread tying together the theological and linguistic elements of the text, the authors masterfully address the complexities of both theology and language, leading students to not only comprehend texts, but to develop the skills to analyze, synthesize, and formulate their own theological understandings using English at an advanced level.

This text is designed to be used in a class setting, though “individual study” tips throughout also make it a viable resource for students of English and theology to use in personal study. There are ten units, each comprising three lessons. The first lesson helpfully introduces the format and purposes of the book. It explains the five theological genres addressed: apologetics, biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology. In addition, it provides an overview of the grammar content and an introduction to the various kinds of tasks and activities that students will encounter.

Each lesson follows a similar pattern: Lesson goals are outlined, the theme of the lesson is introduced, and discussion questions and pre-reading activities set the stage for the main reading. The readings are drawn from standard theological materials, and are not adapted for language study except for the provision of word definitions. Because definitions are provided in footnote form at the end of the passage, readings feel authentic rather than reformatted for ESL instruction. An activity on “Main Ideas and Details” always follows the reading, to ensure basic comprehension. Then, various exercises follow, which further develop reading skills, grammar understanding and usage, and vocabulary. Finally, each unit contains at least one practical language production task, utilizing the grammar or vocabulary learned in the unit.

A complete answer key is provided in the back of the book. Following the answer key are three helpful appendices: (1) A theological chart showing the essential questions in each unit; (2) An extensive punctuation guide, and (3) A bibliography of introductory theological texts, each aligned with one of the five genres addressed in the book.

It is not easy to simplify theological English, and yet a readability check found that the authors were able to do just that. The main text is written at about a 9th grade reading level, making it a solid “advanced” ESL text, as it claims to be. Of course, the theological passages have a much higher readability level. But the passages are scaffolded nicely with helpful

introductory statements, discussion opportunities, and the footnoting of many possibly unknown words.

The authors utilize more oral activities than might be expected in a book on theological English. There are conversation tasks both integrated into the classroom activities and as out-of-class application exercises. Online lectures are utilized for listening skill development, and I had no difficulty accessing the lecture and even focusing in on the right segment of the lecture, with the provision of the minute count. The full transcript is also provided, and those who may not have Internet access are provided an alternative activity.

A very attractive feature of this text is its presentation and practice of grammatical features. I have seen and used dozens of grammar texts, and find them to be pretty similar and often similarly uninspiring. This text focuses in on key areas of grammar that are both frequent in theological writing and troublesome for advanced English learners, and draws examples and practice activities from theology. Clear and straightforward charts and tables are used for both teaching and practice. Grammar points are not over-explained, but rather illustrated, and then practiced through theology-focused activities. For example, in lesson 12 the grammar focus is on modals. The function of modals is explained as providing the writer's perspective, and a theological passage provides practice on discovering the writer's perspective by looking at the modals used. Then, a simple modal chart is presented, providing common uses and examples drawn from theological writing. Two application activities follow, inviting students to use modals in their own writing and speaking.

Though many texts have a focus on vocabulary, this text includes a specific focus on collocations in every lesson. This intentional zeroing in on words and phrases which occur together may be the key way in which the authors help students develop "English for theology." Utilizing a variety of presentation forms, such as tables and graphic organizers, this text helps students not only understand collocations, but also develop a working use of many phrases or "chunks" of language within the field of theology. For example, in lesson 16 students learn collocations with the verb "understand." They are instructed to find words and phrases collocating with "understanding" in the reading passage, in order to fill in the blanks in a graphic organizer. The completed graphic organizer is provided in the answer key in the back of the book.

A final strength of this text is the inclusion of authentic, real-world application tasks. At least once in each unit, students are asked to use the language they have learned to complete a task—something that they will likely be doing in ministry in the future. For example, in one task, students must write an email to a lead pastor, outlining a sermon idea. In another, students are asked to verbally help a classmate understand a theological point. In yet another, they are asked to write a comment on a blog post. Tasks include simulated interaction with both Christians and non-Christians, and with those in full-time ministry and those who are not.

Widespread use of this text may be enhanced by a few additional edits, publication in different formats (it is currently available only in hardcover), and a closer look at the framing of Reformed positioning.

Some additional editing may increase clarity and ease of use. Sometimes text or examples were referred to as being “above” when they were “below” or vice-versa. In addition, some quoted material is neither in quotes nor indented, making it difficult to distinguish the quoted material from the text. Finally, words and passages are highlighted in the readings, but it is sometimes difficult to discover what the highlighting means, or where it is referenced.

At nearly three pounds, this book will weigh down a backpack! Alternatives might include producing it in a softcover edition, dividing it into two volumes, or producing a version without the answer key. An online resource for teachers could include the answer key and other teaching resources.

Finally, in some instances theological statements were prefaced as representing a Reformed tradition, when in fact other traditions would also embrace those statements. These statements may pose an unnecessary barrier for individuals from other theological traditions, who may find this book to perfectly meet their needs in every other way.

This book was a 2019 finalist in the “Bible Reference Works” category of the Christian Book Awards given annually by the Evangelical Christian Publishing Association (ECPA). I would love to return to a theological English classroom just to have the chance to try it out! The grammar and vocabulary instruction is solid, and the practice activities would no doubt lead to strong theological English development. The readings are well-scaffolded, helping students to make sense of the complexity that is theology. Finally, the practical application tasks are stellar, ensuring that theology is not an end in itself, but a means for impacting our world for Christ.

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Growing Up with God and Empire: A Postcolonial Analysis of 'Missionary Kid' Memoirs
Stephanie Vandrick. Bristol, U.K.: Multilingual Matters, 2019.

Reviewed by Mary Shepard Wong, Azusa Pacific University

It seems that about every ten years Stephanie Vandrick publishes a notable piece reflecting on the complex connections of colonialism, missionary work, and ELT (Vandrick 1999, 2009, 2018); however, it was not until this book that she has provided an evidenced-based account of the connections and contradictions of missions and ELT. In this book she provides both a personal reflection on, and academic analysis of, 42 memoirs of North American Protestant “missionary kids” (MKs) in the 20th century. This work provides much food for thought and a list of implications for English language educators that are especially pertinent to those who position themselves within the community of Christian English language educators.

The nine chapter titles of the book provide a quick overview of its contents. In Chapter 1, Introduction, Vandrick acknowledges that Western Protestant 20th century missionaries “did many good things” (p. 1) although her analysis focuses more on the “long-lasting colonial after-effects” (p. 1) of their presence and work than the benefits she alludes to. A strength of the work is the lens of postcolonial theory and critique that she applies to the missionaries’ participation in the “Western colonial enterprise” (p. 1). An example of her critical analysis is her description of “MKs” as a subset of “Third Culture Kids” (TCKs) who enjoy both insider and outsider status, which is something that she brings to the analysis as an “MK/TCK” herself. She problematizes the term “TCKs” with its connotations of being “well-traveled, culturally aware, [and] sophisticated” (p. 9), noting that these positive qualities are not used to describe immigrant children who come to North America. Vandrick then discusses the psychological and social stresses experienced by missionary kids, and concludes the chapter with a brief history and evolution of the missionary enterprise, her positionality, and an overview of the structure of the book.

In Chapter 2, *Research*, Vandrick comments on the vexed and contentious nature of this area of inquiry. After a brief section on the role of narrative, she describes the data set and her analysis procedures. The next six chapters discuss the themes she found in her research. Chapter 3, *The Exotic*, notes that missionaries often portrayed locals as “exotic others” through references of local people’s appearance and behavior as well as their food, animals, geography, and ceremonies. Chapter 4, *Treatment of Local People*, reveals the sense of superiority that some missionaries harbored toward the local people. Chapter 5, *Schooling*, takes a hard look at missionary boarding schools and the abuse some MKs faced as well as stresses created while in country and upon reentry. Chapter 6, *Learning Local Languages (or Not)*, focuses on attitudes toward language learning and the “privilege” of being a monolingual speaker. The missionary gendered experience is the theme described in Chapter 7, which is further explored in Chapter 8, *Race and Social Class*, where the intersections of race and gender are brought to light. The final chapter provides implications for our work as language educators, making some connections with other publications and research completed in this area.

Vandrick is in a unique position to provide this analysis, given her background as a missionary kid in India and her current standing as a scholar of feminist, critical, and postcolonial theory. It is her ability to strike a conciliatory tone, her willingness to seek a balance, and her genuine vulnerability that allows a range of readers from conservative Christians and religious others to agnostics and atheists to come to her work and find it meaningful, engaging, and insightful. She speaks candidly about working through the “contradictions,” “conflicts,” “mismatch,” “mixed feelings,” “guilty pleasures,” and “severe ambivalences” (pp. 120-121) that she has experienced in this work that she finds hard but personally fulfilling. Strengths of the book not often found in other critiques of missionary work include acknowledging the agency of local people and the diversity among the missionaries.

While the negative aspects of mission work that her analyses reveal may be difficult to accept and perhaps not represent what some readers may have experienced as MKs themselves, this work nonetheless offers an important contribution to our understanding of the connections among missions, colonialism, and ELT. I should acknowledge that I consider Vandrick a mentor and critical friend, who provides a much-needed “other than Christian” perspective on my work. In spite of our different starting places, I find myself resonating with her dilemmas and regard her analyses as credible and informative. I hope the (mostly) Christian readers of this journal will

take the time to consider her experiences and perspectives as we (referring to the community of Christian ELT educators) have much to learn if we are open to suspending judgement and critically examining our assumptions and actions, while not compromising our Christian faith, which we view as central to our lives and work.

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Teaching Across Cultures: Contextualizing Education for Global Mission

James E. Plueddemann. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018.

Reviewed by Timothy R. Sisk, Moody Bible Institute

Hall of Fame college basketball coach John Wooden is famous for noting, “You haven’t taught until they (the students) have learned” (Nater & Gallimore, 2005, p. 3). He has rightfully observed that a teacher who simply vocalizes their material, without regard to whether what is being said is actually being understood and absorbed by the students, really isn’t teaching. Effective teaching is more than a proclamation of knowledge.

Teaching Across Cultures is a book designed to help those who have the privilege of teaching cross-culturally by sensitizing them to the cultural chasms that exist and then offering suggestions on how to build bridges across those gaps. From his decades of experience as an educator and missiologist, author James Plueddemann packages a plethora of pedagogical principles and ideas to help one grow as an effective cross-cultural teacher.

We all have our assumptions about what good teaching is and how an effective teacher will communicate to their students. However, we often fail to acknowledge that one's culture highly influences what is understood to be quality teaching. Plueddemann's main premise is that those who aim to be effective teachers in cross-cultural settings must possess three competencies: (1) they've mastered the content to be taught; (2) they appreciate the cultural values, needs and context of the host learners; and (3) they foster connections between the content and the context of the learners (p. 2).

Subject matter experts (SMEs) often have spent years mastering the first necessary competency (the content to be taught), but often give little regard to the second and third competencies that are vital if transformative learning is to take place. Therefore, throughout the book, the emphasis is to help the teacher realize that the only way to teach effectively across cultures is to seek to understand the learners' culture. This requires the teacher to be more than just an SME. Plueddemann argues that effective teaching demands that the teacher be as well-versed in the learners' culture as they are in the subject matter. "To be a teacher of students, one must first be a student of students" (p. 30).

In the remaining chapters, the author lays out cross-cultural teaching principles and techniques to move the reader to this end. He does this by advocating that teachers embrace the hard and sometimes uncomfortable work of being pedagogically flexible. This will require cross-cultural communicators to be fluent in more than one teaching style. Every chapter of the book ends with the insights of teachers from across the globe, who offer practical steps for the implementation of the pedagogical principles which are highlighted in each chapter.

This concise book of 156 pages can be read in a short period of time, but the adoption and implementation of its contents will be something a teacher will have to lean into for a lifetime. That's a worthy investment of time and effort as one seeks to facilitate transformative learning. One doesn't have to travel overseas to be teaching across cultures. It happens in every pulpit and every classroom one has the opportunity to occupy as teacher. I highly recommend *Teaching Across Cultures* as a valuable resource to anyone seeking to sharpen their skills in the art of teaching.

Reference

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