

My Neighbour Series

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Revelation 7: 9-10

(Contemporary English Version)

"I saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They shouted 'Our God who sits upon the throne has the power to save His people and so does the Lamb.'"

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COMMENTS

"Making friends with my migrant neighbours is better than travel. Everyday I can visit their country and culture, and still go home at night to my own bed..."

"Helpful, informative and interesting. We are often fearful of things we don't understand... I'm sorry that we as Christians are sometimes seen as arrogant, self-assured and lacking in unity. We (must) demonstrate by our lives the reality of a relationship with our Lord, and the grace, peace, joy and hope that this brings to our lives."

MAILING

I would like to receive 'MY NEIGHBOUR' leaflets as they become available. Please include me on the DCCM-Wollongong mailing list.

\$ _____ Donation is enclosed to "DCCM-Wollongong"

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Return to : Rev. John Thew, Department of Cross Cultural Ministries (Wollongong)
74 Church St, Wollongong, 2500. Phone : 042. 288402

MULTI-CULTURAL AUSTRALIA

"It is impressive the way Oz society has moved into multi-culturalism," writes an international Christian leader, visiting our country.

"There are very few societies where different races don't fear each other, and then fight. (My country) is torn by ethnic and religious hatred. But here I see a basis to build real appreciation and a unity in diversity.

"There is sufficient unity in being human beneath our differences to hold us together, if we are prepared to work at it," he said.

"It is great to see the way the Church has taken up this challenge, and allocated people and money to ethnic and cross cultural ministries, although there's always much more that could be done." #

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CONGRATULATIONS!

As an Australian, you are part of the host culture to those who have more recently arrived in the country. Hosts take the initiative. They put neighbours at ease, they make friends, they bridge the gap, they offer hospitality, friendship, help and support.

The "MY NEIGHBOUR" leaflets may help you be a good host. Not everything in the leaflets will apply to your neighbour or contact. Being so brief, they can only really wet your appetite.

You may be the first true Christian your neighbour has ever met. As they look into your life, so they will judge the Christian faith, and the Lord Jesus Christ. #

TRUTH AND TOLERANCE

"Being patient and fair towards those whose opinions, practices and situations differ from one's own." - Macquarie Dictionary.

The world expects Christians, perhaps above all others, to be tolerant.

* Tolerance means accepting people as fellow human beings, which makes good Christian sense. This happens as we listen, understand, befriend and love others, which is our Christian duty and joy.

True friends can express their deepest beliefs to each other, along with their reasons for believing. They can disagree, and still be friends, accepting each other as fellow human beings, created in the image of God. And they pray for the present and eternal good of their friends.

* Tolerance does not mean accepting all ideas and practices of life as equally valid, as some people suggest. This makes no sense at all.

Tolerance allows you to hold to what you believe, always ready to give reasons for the truth of your beliefs, and always able to accept others who don't believe, as people created and loved by God.

* Truth and tolerance are the two sides of the one coin. Christians, above all others, should be models of truth in their integrity of living, and models of tolerance towards all people, in their love and acceptance. #



MY NEIGHBOUR IS A MIGRANT.

If you live in one of the major cities of Australia, chances are that you have at least one neighbour who is a first or second generation settler. Almost one Australian in four was born in another country, or has at least one parent who was. More than half these first or second generation Australians have a non - English speaking background (called NESB for convenience).

While Australia is still predominantly Anglo-Celtic, we have perhaps the greatest ethnic diversity of any country in the world.

HISTORY Throughout history, people have been moving from one area to another. There has never been a time when people were not migrating somewhere, for some reason.

For the past 200 years, the history of Australia has been a story of the arrival of migrants. The first European migrants regarded the land as available for take over - which they did. Only recently have we started to redress that sin of history.

As most of the early migrants were Anglo-Celtic, they perhaps naturally thought of Australia as "white Anglo-Celtic", and Government policies reflected that. So our immigration policy, from

1901, was called the "White Australia Policy". It was only in 1967 that this policy was changed, and over the next 15 years the policy of "multi-culturalism" was slowly born.

Until very recently, the general expectation was that all non-Anglo migrants should assimilate into the Australian culture (whatever that was) as quickly as possible, and so become "invisible" by becoming "like us".

MULTI-CULTURALISM

Now, under the policy of "multi-culturalism", new settlers in Australia are encouraged to keep alive their former cultures and languages to enrich society. At the same time, English is to be maintained as the predominant language, and the established norms of Government and Law are to be upheld.

Cultural diversity brings together an exciting and colourful variety of faces, foods, clothes and dances. But it means much more. Every new settler brings his or her deepest ideals, philosophies of life, religion, fears and hopes. It is at this deeper level of life that ethnic diversity feels the strain.

MIGRANTS

Migrants to Australia come for a variety of reasons. Some are seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Some come to rejoin their families. Some come for personal or financial security. Many come at the invitation of the Government to help build the fabric and economy of the nation.

Current immigration policy seeks to match the natural increase in population with new-migrant numbers. That was 80,000 in 1994.

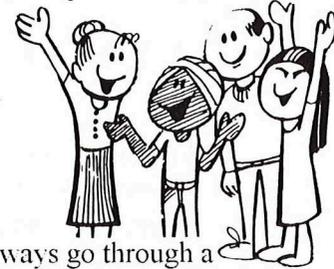
REFUGEES

But not all who come to live in Australia are migrants. Some come as refugees.

Refugees flee their homes and countries for reasons of war, security, politics, religion or natural disaster. In 1994, world refugee numbers grew from 19 million to 21 million. Refugees are almost never refugees from choice.

Many have experienced torture and trauma before (and in) coming, and would like nothing better than to be able to return in peace to their own countries.

In 1994, Australia accepted about 13,000 refugees.



HOME

Whether migrant or refugee, new arrivals almost always go through a process of grieving. They have left the known and familiar, and arrived in a country where they often know nothing - not even how the banks work. They need lots of help and support, and naturally look for this first from others of their own background.

Refugees and migrants almost always continue to think of their country of origin as home, and Australia as their country of adoption. They often have very mixed feelings about Australia and "home".

FEELINGS AND PREJUDICES

We share, of course, a wide variety of opinions and feelings about our government's policies on immigration and refugees, and a variety of feelings towards the people themselves. This will depend on our past experiences, to a large degree.

Ethnic and language differences, fear and prejudice date back to the beginning of humanity. Genesis 11 documents the diversity of languages and peoples. Since the beginning, tension and strife between peoples has been part of the human condition. These are a reminder of the breakdown of fellowship between God and people.

Christians need to recognise this heritage of sin in each of us, and work at mirroring the acceptance of Jesus.

A WELCOMING PEOPLE

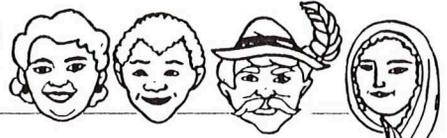
Christians are called to be a welcoming people. A people who reflect God's heart of love, forgiveness and acceptance. A people who cross the boundaries to those who are different from themselves. This is what God did in Jesus.

In fact, if we are longer term Australians, we are part of the host people and culture, with all the obligations and opportunities that go with the role.

With so many migrants and refugees close at hand, here is a marvellous opportunity for us to be witnesses to the love of God. For many new settlers in Australia, our welcome will be the first Christian witness they have experienced.

Where could it lead to?

MY NEIGHBOUR IS FROM A NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND



Nearly 1.5 million people in Australia have come from a non-English speaking background (NESB). Whether migrants (here by choice), or refugees (here without choice), for them English is a foreign language, that often demands more effort to understand and be understood.

NEW ARRIVALS

Most new comers suffer grief and loneliness as they arrive in a totally unknown land. This is especially true for those with little or no English.

The government provides good English teaching services for new arrivals. But learning the words is one thing. Finding the confidence to face an unfamiliar world is another. They wonder: "Will I understand, and be understood?" "Will I be accepted?" "Does anyone care?"

THE FORGOTTEN MIGRANTS

There are many longer term migrants, especially women, whose lack of English forces them into isolation. For most, their children have been

their interpreters. But as the children grow older and leave home, these women find themselves alone.

They don't qualify for help in government English classes, and often don't know where to turn. Isolation leads to loneliness and depression. This doesn't make for a happy person, family or society.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

There are a growing number of international students studying in Australian universities. Most are accompanied by spouses (mainly wives), who often have poor English, and a lot of time on their hands.

These student spouses don't qualify for the government English classes, and so many are looking for help with English, and for friendship. (See the leaflet: "My Neighbour is an International Student".)

LEARNING ENGLISH

Most government offices and some businesses now provide interpreter services. These are good, but never a substitute for learning English. It is important that NESB people learn English as soon and as well as possible.

For permanent resident new arrivals (migrants and refugees), the government's Australian Migrant English Services (AMES) offers 510 hours of free class tuition. For those who can't attend classes, there is an excellent "Home Tutor Scheme", that uses volunteer tutors. New arrivals have to register with AMES within 3 months of arrival.

After initial AMES classes, new arrivals can take a variety of work-related English classes offered by TAFE and CES.

COMMUNITY CLASSES

Many churches offer ESL classes for long term migrants and student wives. (ESL is English as a Second Language.) ESL classes help these people in their immediate language needs, and build friendships and trust. ESL groups are always looking for volunteer teachers and helpers.



ON BEING A NEIGHBOUR

- * Recognise in yourself the seeds of pride and racism. Even with the best of intentions, we all share in human sinfulness. We need to approach our NESB neighbours (indeed all our neighbours) with a good measure of humility and generosity.
- * Take the initiative. With your NESB neighbours, you are part of the host people and culture, and so it's your move to make friends.
- * Make regular contact. Frequent small contacts "over the back fence" are more useful than occasional big ones.
- * Be open to learn. Broaden your own horizons as you learn more about your neighbours. This will help them feel more accepted.
- * Be available. NESB neighbours often need help reading bills, visiting the school, the doctor, or the CES office, and much more. Help them to become self-sufficient, not dependent.

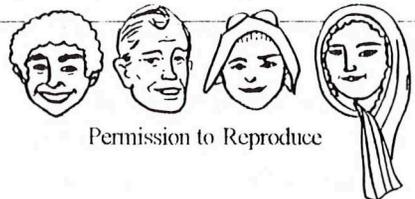
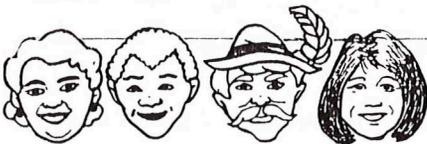
- * Invite your neighbours home. Return invitations will soon follow as friendship and trust grow. In the home is where best friendships grow.
- * Out of friendship grows trust, and opportunities to share the good news of reconciliation with God. This is news that can change lives now, news that international students will take back to their own lands.

ENGLISH PRACTICE

- * When speaking with your NESB neighbours, if their English is not strong, speak a little more slowly than normal (not louder), and try to speak clearly. Our accent and idioms are often very difficult.
- * Offer conversation practice. Many NESB neighbours will really appreciate the offer. You could become an informal home tutor, revising lessons for those who attend classes.
- * Ask about helping at (or starting) your Church's ESL class. Or consider the possibility of becoming an AMES Home Tutor. This will introduce you to more NESB people in your neighbourhood.
- * If you need any help or ideas, ring your local Church's ESL coordinator, your local AMES, or ring us.

Produced by John Thew.
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MY NEIGHBOUR IS IRANIAN



Some statements in this leaflet may not be true of your neighbours.
All people are unique, created and loved by God, and need good and true friends.

Iranian Language and Culture

* Iran is a country of 60 million people, sitting on the Persian Gulf. It includes the fertile Mesopotamian Plains (Gen.24:10)

* The people of Iran speak Farsi, also known as Persian.

* They belong to a long, rich and proud civilisation dating back almost 3 millenia, to Old Testament times. (See Ezra 1:1)

* Until the 1979 Revolution, Iran was one of the most westernised of the Islamic nations. Since then, law and society have been strongly Islamised.

* Some of the Iranians in Australia have come to further their education; others have come to the West for a variety of reasons.

* Those who have sought permanent residency in Australia, still often grieve for their own country of Iran. Some find it very difficult to settle.

Iranian Religion

* Christianity reached Iran (Persia) long before the start of Islam. It was Iranian Christians who first took the Gospel to China.

* Now, most Iranians are Muslim. Others religions include Baha'i, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Only a small minority of Iranis are Christian. Since 1979, life has become difficult for non-Muslims in Iran.

* Even when Iranian Muslims have fled their own country, they are still Muslim. They do not like to hear criticism of their religion, their people or their country. To criticise is impolite, and will only push them to become defensive and isolated.

* As Muslims, they have been taught a lot about Christianity. Unfortunately, much of this teaching is wrong. So they have much to re-learn if they are to understand true Christian Faith.

* These wrong understandings of Christianity are about such concepts as human sinfulness, the reliability of the Biblical text, Jesus being "Son of God", the death of Christ, God becoming Human in Jesus, and the divinity of Jesus.

* Most Iranian Muslims are quite scandalised by the secular and godless morality of Australian culture. They equate Western society with Christianity, and so have a low view of Christian morality.

For Iranian Muslims to meet true Christians, and to grow close to them, is very revealing indeed.



Making and being Friends

* Be open, polite, frank and warm in friendship. In many cases, friendship is the only means of contact we have.

* Helping with English may be another good contact. Many Iranians, especially the women, have had few opportunities to learn English, and would be happy to go with you to a class. Call your Cross Cultural Department for information about ESL (English as a Second Language) classes.

* Iranians like to talk about religion. Most will be happy to tell you about their faith, and will be interested to hear about yours.

* Keep the Bible off the floor, and treat it with care. Iranians hold Holy Books in high respect.

* In sharing Christian truth with Iranian friends, talk first about God as Creator and Master; about our difficulty in keeping God's Law; about God being like a Father, seeking us out, coming towards us in acceptance and forgiveness, like the Father of the Prodigal Son. (Luke 15:11)

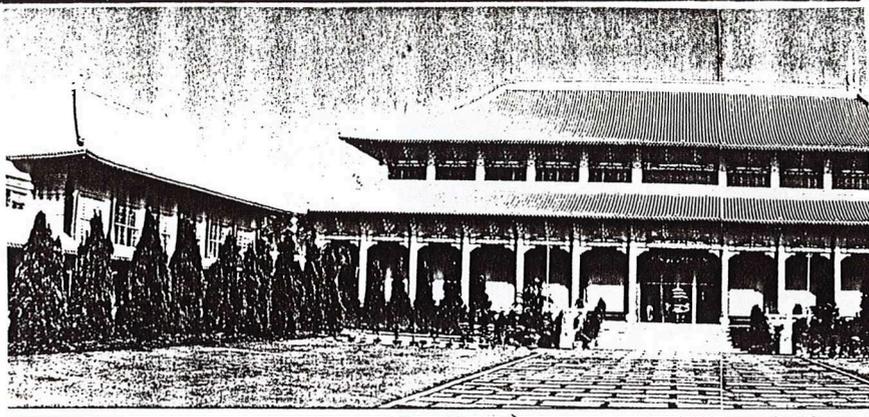
* Most Iranians will be happy to receive a Gospel (Luke is best) so they can read it themselves. After this, they may want to ask questions, and discuss.

* Most will be reluctant at first to join a Bible discussion group. They may be more comfortable listening to a Teacher, than discussing and sharing ideas.

* Friendship with Iranians will mean hospitality - inviting, and accepting invitations. It is a time consuming ministry. It is never appropriate for a man to visit a woman alone. Best is for a husband and wife to visit a family together.

* Many Muslims, when they are your guests, will appreciate the reassurance that you will not be serving any alcohol or pork products. If you are serving red meat or chicken, it must be "halal" killed. (See your Yellow Pages for a local Halal butcher.) Otherwise, stick to vegetarian foods.

A BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD.



The bright orange tiled roof topping a vast complex of buildings set between Mount Kembla and the sea, marks the Buddhist Temple at Berkeley one of the Illawarra's newest tourist attractions.

This is the Nan Tien Temple, built and run by the Fo Kwang Shan sect of Buddhism. But it is more than a tourist attraction. With its pagodas, teaching rooms, conference facilities and 100 room motel, this multi-million dollar project is being established to "promote cultural exchanges between the East and the West, and especially to propagate Buddhism."

HUMANITARIAN AND EVANGELISTIC

Fo Kwang Shan is a large sect of the more liberal branch of Buddhism, with its headquarters in Taiwan. It focuses on

humanitarian works, with the aim of building a "Pure Land on Earth". The Berkeley Temple is called Nan Tien, which in Chinese means "Paradise of the Southern Hemisphere".

The monks and followers of Fo Kwang Shan are very active in evangelism. They may visit you at your house one day. Their offer will sound appealing - a way of peace, a life of high morality, and a society that respects old age.

THE TEMPLE

The Temple will have a strong emphasis on teaching. Staff will offer classes in cooking, meditation, self-awareness, and much more. This is a way of making contact, similar to the methods that many Christians have long used.

While cultural exchange is part of the platform, always the ultimate aim of all classes and contacts will be to introduce people to the Noble Eightfold Path, the Buddhist way of life and peace. (See the leaflet "Buddhism".)

Followers or seekers of Fo Kwang Shan will visit the Temple

- * to ask for guidance
- * to seek the blessings of health, fertility, success
- * to seek the spiritual wisdom of a monk
- * to meditate and draw aside from the busyness of life
- * to burn joss sticks or paper money, and so please the spirits, and aid their departed loved ones.

Many Buddhists will come from overseas to visit this Temple.

The Temple will have a large columbarium wall, a resting place for the ashes of ancestors. Sutras, or prayers, will be said for these ancestors, to help them to the pure land of paradise, nirvana.

Images of the Buddha, and other religious artefacts, will be sold at the Temple, having first been prayed over. Buddhists buy these as a means of blessing their houses and families.

From time to time, Monks may also lead pilgrimages, perhaps to Mt. Kembla or Mt. Keira.



VISITING THE TEMPLE

Should you visit the Temple, even for a cooking or yoga class?

You need to understand why the classes are being held, and then ask yourself why you want to go. If it is to learn Chinese cooking, there are other places you could learn that. If it is to make friends for the Lord Jesus, you will need to know your own faith well, and be acquainted with Fo Kwang Shan Buddhism.

Of course, some Christians will not have the gift and calling to enter such unfamiliar territory. Others of you will. You will need to know the support and prayers of the rest of us.

You will need to always be open, gentle and gracious in your dealings. You should be careful not to criticise others' beliefs, but be gracious and open sharers of the Good News of Jesus.

Your first calling is not to show where others may be wrong, but to rightly reflect the grace of the Lord Jesus.

In your contacts, it will be helpful to remember that many of the Buddhists you meet will be struggling in an unfamiliar culture, and will need human warmth and care. Some will struggle with their English. Your acceptance of them as people may be very important, and meaningful.

IN OUR MIDST...

God, in His good purposes, has brought the Temple and its followers to our doorstep. In the grace of God, we have a double opportunity:

- * to meet, learn from and appreciate people of other cultures;
- * to introduce them to the Love of God, the Grace of Jesus, and the fellowship of the Spirit of God.

The greatest honour we can do our neighbours, and our God, is to make a mutual introduction of each to the other. The terrible temptation will be to harbour resentment or hatred towards these neighbours, or simply to ignore them because we don't know how to respond or cope with their presence.

Most of the Buddhist people associated with the Temple will exhibit a grace and gentleness that will quickly show up any hypocrisy in us. This can only be a challenge to us to rightly reflect in our lives the Love of the God we follow.

MY NEIGHBOUR IS A BUDDHIST.



Some statements in this leaflet may not be true of your neighbour.
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THE APPEAL OF BUDDHISM

For more than 20 years, Buddhism has been experiencing a resurgence of growth all over the world. In both traditional Buddhist lands, and in the west, the Buddhist way is seen by many as a very attractive alternative in a world of greed and strife.

Many westerners have grown cynical of the hypocrisy of western democracy, and the failure of the traditional ethic of society. They feel a deep concern for the environment and the viability of our world. The traditional Christian values are under suspicion. As they search for alternatives, Buddhism is one.

PEACE IN STRIFE

Buddhism acknowledges that life in general is unsatisfactory, and it offers a way of coming to terms with the world, of finding self fulfilment and inner peace. Along with this, it promotes a high moral code of living, with a gentle spirit.

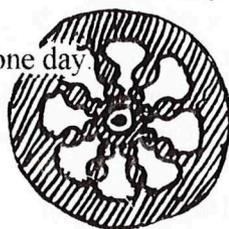
In Buddhist teaching, there is no absolute right and wrong. Therefore it is not judgmental. Instead, it encourages you to overcome your own shortcomings; it allows you to be master of your own destiny.

Buddhism is essentially atheistic. It has a very high view of ecology, because it sees us and nature as one, nirvana the state of being consumed into the totality of the universe.

BUDDHISM ON THE MOVE

Many forms of Buddhism are strongly evangelistic, as adherents spread their "good news". In Australia, there are a number of Buddhist sects (like the Fo Kwang Shan sect based in Wollongong) who are actively recruiting followers for their way.

You may well have a visit from a Buddhist evangelist one day



HISTORY

When the young Prince Siddartha Guatama took his first excursion out of the sheltered Nepali Palace precincts, in about 500 BC, he saw a dying man, an old man, and a begging monk. He could find no cause or reason for these problems of sickness, death and poverty. Just that they are so, and what can change is one's attitude to them.

This first shocking encounter with the cruel facts of life led the Prince to his "4 Noble Truths":

- * suffering is universal
- * the cause of suffering is selfish desire
- * the cure for suffering is the elimination of desire
- * desire is eliminated by following the "Noble Eightfold Path".

Following the "Noble Eightfold Path" means having right views, right aspirations, right speech, right action, right mode of working, right effort, right awareness and right meditation.

This, the Prince surmised, will lead the follower to enlightenment or nirvana, where the cycle of rebirths is finished, and the person becomes one with nature and the universe.

As the Prince formulated his philosophy of life, and lived it out, his followers came to accept him as "the Enlightened One", the Buddha.

As Buddhism spread, it developed into two main branches: a more traditional and philosophical Buddhism in Thailand and southern Asia; and a very different, more progressive Buddhism in China, Taiwan, Japan, and the north. This diversity within Buddhism accommodates many different beliefs.

A CHALLENGE

Many Buddhists are more than a little surprised by what they see in Christianity. Surprised and disappointed. While they hold Jesus in high respect, as a great and gracious teacher, they see many Christians as arrogant and self-assured. They see divisions between Christians, and sometimes look in vain for lives of grace. This is in contrast to the apparent peace and gentleness of Buddhist monks.

Here is a tremendous challenge for Christians.

- * to be unified, loving each other and working together
- * to be active, welcoming and accepting in witness and evangelism
- * to be well founded in the faith of Jesus the Way
- * and yet to be gentle, and full of the grace of our Lord.

Your Buddhist neighbours will generally show a graciousness and peace of spirit that is uncommon in our culture. The challenge? How can you demonstrate to them the reality of knowing God, and the peace of being made acceptable to Him?

SUFFERING AND RECONCILIATION

Jesus often spoke of suffering. He explained that when God created the world, all was good. It was only through the wilfulness of people, that strife and suffering, hate and evil became part of this world.

He said that His suffering and death (which quickly followed) would be God's way of reconciling people and the world to God. Jesus' self sacrifice would carry the sin and shame of all who accept and trust Him.

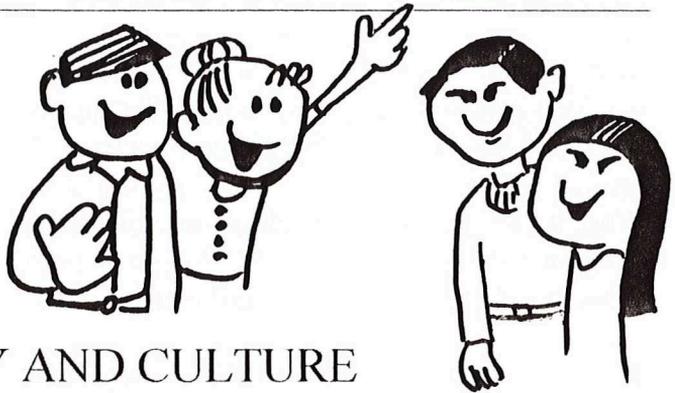
Through his obedience, Jesus perfectly honoured His Heavenly Father. Through His sacrifice, people of all nations can now stand without shame before God the Creator.

And stand we must. For the Bible says that after death we will answer to God for the way we have lived, and for the way we have regarded Him, the Creator of all.

Following Jesus, and trusting Him as Master and Saviour, will not always bring peace in this life. In fact, it may bring conflict. (See Matthew 5: 1-12) But it will bring peace in eternity.

MY NEIGHBOUR IS CHINESE

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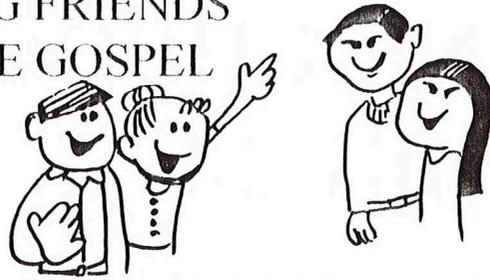
HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Chinese are the most populous people of the world. One person in 5 is Chinese, and there are Chinese living in every country of the world. There are many spoken dialects in China. Mandarin and Cantonese are the most common, and share one common script.

Chinese culture spans over 5,000 (often glorious) years. Most Chinese people have a certain quiet pride in being Chinese.

The Chinese in Australia have come from Mainland China (PRC), Hong Kong, Taiwan (ROC), Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and beyond. Some have come as refugees, some as students, some for financial reasons, some because they see Australia offering their children a good education.

MAKING FRIENDS FOR THE GOSPEL



Welcome your Chinese friends. If Christians, as brothers and sisters; if not yet Christians, with love and genuine respect.

Invite them home. When it's for tea, be sure they know it is a cup of tea. They will be flattered if you can offer them the choice of Chinese or English tea. You may find Chinese tea bags in the supermarket.

When it's for a meal, you might try an oriental style dish. Allowing for different tastes and preferences, chicken is probably the best. Some Chinese will feel that if they haven't eaten rice, they haven't eaten.

To eat first, then talk, is the usual way. A good board game, or family photos, are often a lot of fun, and good aids to conversation. To invite them "out" for a meal may put on them an obligation to respond later.

Your Chinese friends, especially those from Mainland China, may have trouble with your Australian accent. If their English is not strong, speak a little slower, and clearer (but not louder). Avoid idioms.

They will be warmed by your interest in them as people, and their country and culture. This shows a humility, a desire to learn, and is flattering.

Politics and human rights are very sensitive issues. If they arise in conversation, listen and learn, but avoid passing judgments. Generally, the Chinese are more pragmatic than idealistic, and so will tend not to be outspoken on political issues.

Wherever the Chinese have moved, they have adapted to local culture, but rarely "assimilated". Here, they see themselves as Australian Chinese, and would never dream of forsaking their Chinese roots.

The Chinese know of Australia's less-than-good attitude towards "foreigners" in the past. Most know of the old "White Australia Policy", and fear that deep down, Australians are still somewhat racist.

For Chinese, as with many other people, to lose face, and to be humiliated, is most shameful. Therefore, the Chinese will say and do what is right, for fear of criticism from others.

At the same time, to boast is bad, even when there may be good cause. Chinese culture is one of self-effacing humility. To be seen to be humble before others is a great virtue. Some Chinese therefore find Australian directness less than appealing.

RELIGION

Most Chinese would call themselves Buddhist. This covers a wide range of beliefs and practices, and happily accepts the traditional Chinese ancestor worship, which is part of most Chinese families. This is why it is so important for Chinese to care for the aged, honour their forebears, and hold to family decision making.

Although there may be 50 million Christians in China, Christianity is seen by most Chinese as a foreign religion, associated with imperialism and divisiveness.

Their pragmatic spirit allows them to examine Christianity, indeed all religions, to see if they work in real life.

The book "Wild Swans" will give you some insight into the recent history of mainland China.

Your Chinese friends may be confused about what it means to be Christian. Australia is reportedly a Christian country, but it does not appear so, and Churches aren't full.

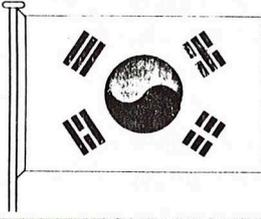
Frankness about society can lead to personal testimony - how you became Christian, and the difference it makes in your life. To your Chinese friends, the "real meaning of life", and "how it works", are important questions.

For first reading, your Chinese friends will find it easier to manage a good tract in Chinese. The Chinese Bible is not an easy translation. In English, however, the Contemporary English Version (CEV) is very good for new readers.

An excellent monthly magazine is available in Chinese, from: CHINESE CHRISTIAN MISSION AUSTRALIA, PO Box 754, Chatswood, 2067. You may wish to write for it.

Special events and celebrations at Church (like Christmas and Easter programs) are wonderful opportunities to invite your Chinese friends. Pot luck suppers also go well, when you explain that everyone brings their favourite food to share.

Pray for your Chinese friends, and pray with them. Make it a habit to pray at meals, and at the end of a visit for the whole family.



MY NEIGHBOUR IS KOREAN

Some statements in this leaflet may not be true of your neighbour.

All people are unique, created and loved by God, and need good and true friends.

An nyong haseyo - hello my Korean friend.

HISTORY

Korea is a tiny country with 5,000 years of proud history and culture, which have been greatly influenced by its mighty neighbour China. 1945 marked the end of Japanese domination of Korea, but the (Korean) Civil War in 1950-53 left the country divided into the Communist North, and the Democratic South. Most Koreans look forward to a time of national reunion.

South Korea has a population of 43 million, with 22 million in the North. The Southern capital, Seoul, hosted the Olympic Games in 1988.

The North is relatively isolated from the rest of the world, but the South is very westernised, one of the emerging "Asian Tigers", with a buoyant economy and growing affluence. Sophisticated industrial and consumer products boast names like Hyundai and Daewoo.

CHRISTIANS IN KOREA

Catholic Christianity came to Korea more than 200 years ago, Protestantism a century later. During the 1950's war, many Christians fled south to avoid persecution. Now, Christians number some 25% in the South.

Christianity in South Korea looks quite westernised. Evangelical Christianity is well known for mega-churches, marathon prayer meetings and dynamic growth. Korea has also become a major source of international missionaries.

Korean churches work best under strong leadership. Where another leader or pastor arises, another congregation often forms. There are few churches that operate under a pastoral team ministry.

The Korean Bible was translated from the Chinese, and is not easily understood. (Somewhat like the KJV.) There is a modern, simpler language version, but many feel this is too light and chatty for a document as important as the Bible.

The non-Christian 75% in the South, plus most in the North, share a mixture of religions including traditional ancestor worship, Confucianism, Buddhism and Shamanism. Village life is still steeped in traditional religious practices, most of which are aimed at appeasing the spirits to make life more comfortable.

Through westernisation of the cities, much of traditional religion and culture is being lost, so the South Korean Government is promoting an education campaign to preserve the old religious ceremonies and customs. While most urban South Koreans may be westernised in appearance, they still think with Buddhist minds.

RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY LIFE



Age and position are very important in Korean culture, and must always be respected. When greeting in more formal situations, both hands are generally offered, as a sign of respect.

Koreans think collectively, in terms of "we" and "our", reflecting the importance of family life. The individualism of Australians (who think "I" and "my") is often perplexing.

In church, as at home, it is traditionally the responsibility of the oldest person present to set limits to children's behaviour, and administer necessary discipline.

Korean children growing up in Australia are losing touch with their cultural roots, and often feel trapped between two cultures. Traditional family rules were clear, but as the children bring home local ways, uncertainty and tensions creep in.

KOREANS IN SYDNEY AREA

More than twenty thousand Koreans have arrived in Sydney in the last 15 years - almost all from the South. Most are young, run small businesses, and have come to better themselves and their families.

Few have any religious practices. The Korean Buddhist Temple in Sydney, for instance, attracts only small numbers. Many are happy to take on an appearance of being Christian, in an effort to be more acceptable.

LEARNING ENGLISH

Most Korean migrants find English hard. Though well educated in Korean, they have difficulty with conversational English. Long periods of continuous conversation for new language speakers is very tiring.

To speak too fast, or to use idiomatic English is effectively to exclude many migrants from the conversation and the group.

One way of helping, and making friends, is through English classes, or conversational tutoring. Ask at your Church about ESL classes, or tutoring, and see the leaflet "Tutoring my Neighbour".

When Koreans smile a lot, they may be saying: "I'm sorry, I do not understand what is being said." And when they say "No thank you" it may be politeness, that is really begging to be asked again.

ON MAKING FRIENDS

Korean friendships start slowly and formally, but can grow deep and personal with time. By contrast, Australians want to be instant friends. This can be very perplexing to Koreans, when the friendship does not seem to progress past a facade of friendliness.

The Australian desire for privacy, is also perplexing, and is often read as a rebuff.

In answering the phone, you might ask: "And what can I do for you?", a common conversation opener. Your Korean neighbour can embarrassingly interpret this as: "He thinks I always want something." Most Asians would be less direct, patiently waiting to hear the reason for the call.

When you visit your Korean neighbours, look for the shoes at the door, and leave yours there too. Inside, you will generally be offered tea or coffee or fruit, or even a meal. As a guest you will be given a place of honour. When you are invited for a meal, you don't need to take anything in the way of food.

When you invite your Korean neighbours, start by offering some refreshment. They may politely refuse at first, so another offer is in order. When it's for a meal, include a rice dish, but don't try to serve Korean food.

Some activities like board games, cooking, gardening, family photos, visits and picnics, can be lots of fun, and good relationship builders. .

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Australian racist attitudes, even in church circles, do not escape Korean notice. The fact is most races tend to think of themselves as superior to others. If unintended, these attitudes can isolate us from others, and effectively exclude them.

Friendship towards Christians must be to encourage them to live Christianly in a foreign land. We are children of the same Lord, and will be in heaven together.

Friendship with non-Christian Koreans gives us the opportunity to help them settle into this strange and alien culture, and to come to know the Lord, who is and Saviour of all nations.

an nyong hi ky eseyo - good bye my Korean friend.

MY NEIGHBOUR IS VIETNAMESE



Some of the statements in this leaflet may not be true of your neighbour.
All people are unique, created and loved by God, and need good and true friends.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

In 1975, the Vietnam War ended. As the North over-ran Saigon, a flood of refugees left Vietnam, escaping communist rule. Now, some 150,000 have arrived in Australia, most of these as boat people, and most having been through terrible suffering.

Vietnam is a country of 74 million people. The government is communist, and wary of western influence. Despite this, the Vietnamese economy is becoming more capitalist, as the country slowly opens to trade and western ideas, in a bid to modernise.

Domination has been part of the politics of Vietnam for a long time. There was 1,000 years of Chinese domination, followed by 100 years of French colonisation. During and following World War II, the country experienced terrible turmoil and division, until in 1965, the Communist controlled North invaded the South. This was the start of the Vietnam War, with heavy US and Australian involvement. The Vietnam War ended in 1975, when the US withdrew, and the North over-ran the South.

Through the centuries of foreign influence, the Vietnamese people have preserved their language and culture, and guard them jealously, even in "exile".

PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

The Vietnamese are a hard working, quiet, even shy people. To offer opinions or ask questions, especially to question authority figures, is regarded as impolite.

Traditional culture respects the extended family. Many will stay all their lives, mixing only with their extended family. Vietnamese culture also respects the aged, with the expectation that the young will care for the older generation.

Vietnamese families want their children to do well at school, even when the parents are uneducated. There is a tendency to concentrate on the academic subjects, which are regarded as more important than other school activities.

Outside of traditional society, there is the inevitable clash of cultures. The second generation of Vietnamese are often "Aussies". They forge links outside the family. They accept Australian values towards authority and the aged. They think differently from their elders.

This inevitably creates conflicts within the family. And where the elders' English is poor, and the younger's Vietnamese is poor, both sides can feel the pressure.

For many first generation Vietnamese migrants, language is possibly the greatest barrier to integration. Vietnamese and English have nothing in common, except roman lettering (introduced by the French). Many Vietnamese have difficulty both learning English, and pronouncing English sounds. They often feel isolated, and ache for help to mix and be accepted.

RELIGION

The Chinese brought to Vietnam their religions of Buddhism, Confucianism and ancestor worship. These combined easily with the Vietnamese ancestor

worship, to produce a Vietnamese Buddhism. While most Vietnamese are Buddhist, few visit the pagoda as a high priority.

The French brought Catholicism to Vietnam, and won some converts. Protestantism followed later. Currently there might be several million Catholics, and perhaps 400,000 Protestant Christians.

The Government of Vietnam discourages religious activity, whether Buddhist or Christian. The Evangelical Church of Vietnam has suffered some restrictions, along with other religious groups.

In Australia, there are several Vietnamese Buddhist temples, some Vietnamese Catholic churches, and a small number of Vietnamese Protestant congregations.



FOOD

Rice is the staple diet of Vietnamese cuisine. In Vietnam, this is supplemented with a fish and vegetarian diet. In Australia, where meat is comparatively cheap, many Vietnamese have incorporated meat, and fatty foods. Cholesterol and diabetic problems are widespread among older Vietnamese migrants.

There are a number of good Vietnamese restaurants that will give you the taste of genuine Vietnamese food. Ask your Vietnamese neighbours which they would recommend.

INVITING AND BEING INVITED

Despite their natural shyness, the Vietnamese are very hospitable. They will rarely stand and talk to you at the front door, but will take you in, and offer you something to eat or drink.

Because of their natural shyness and family orientation, your Vietnamese neighbours may be slow in responding to friendship. Don't be concerned by this. Advance slowly, and after some time, you can invite them home for a meal. You should expect the small children, of course, but the teenagers may stay away.

It's probably better not to attempt Vietnamese cooking - an Aussie meal that includes rice and vegetables is fine. Tea or coffee can be offered.

When you receive an invitation, try to accept. You can look forward to an enjoyable time, and wonderful food. A gift is not always necessary, but some family photos might be useful for conversation starting.

STRANGERS AMONG US

It is not by accident, but in God's providence, that there are a number of Vietnamese families among us. Most need friendship, acceptance and love. Here is a marvellous opportunity for Christians to share the love of God, in practical and eternal ways, with strangers among us.

Most Vietnamese have a thankful heart and spirit. So do not hesitate to share the Good News of God's grace and forgiveness, as many will want to receive it with thankful hearts.

Produced by Rev. John Thew with Pastor Dau Ho, 1995.

Dept. of Cross Cultural Ministries, Anglican Church Centre, 74 Church St, Wollongong, 2500.
Phone: 042.288 402

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My Neighbours are MUSLIMS

by Margaret Booth

Afternoon tea was just about ready, with all the trimmings. The time was 3.45 pm. We waited for the doorbell. Silence. 4.30 pm. Nothing happened, so we proceeded with our jobs. Then 5 o'clock. Doorbell at last! It was 13 year old Sana, eldest daughter of our new neighbours. "How many of us do you want?" she asked. "All of you," I replied quickly, knowing that unless I stipulated, she would be left to mind the younger children.

So about 5.15 pm two women, nine children plus two babies arrived for afternoon tea! Just what their thoughts were as they entered our dining room and noted the contents, I've never enquired. We didn't know then that their main meal was 4 pm when the children arrive from school and before the men leave for work. I didn't realise either that when I asked Ali, the eldest son of 14, to pour orange juice for the younger children, I was breaching Muslim etiquette.

The women knew little English. However, we had bought musical rattles for both babies and it was amazing how we were able to communicate. It was obvious they appreciated the invitation. The children attending school spoke good English and we learned that two brothers, Abdul and Hulo, had moved into our street with their wives and families

Contact had been made the previous Saturday, when three of the children, on their way to the park, had admired our Labrador. I was in the front garden and greeted them. Lina, then seven had answered in perfect English and I remember noting her luxuriant hair and magnificent black eyes. "What country are you from?" I queried. "Lebanon," she had replied. "Come in and meet my dog," I invited.

Half an hour later, Sana came looking for them. We had gone into the house, so that the children could meet my mother. As she walked through the den, Sana noted a poster advertising the Children's Club with its pictures of children from different nationalities. Her tone was wistful as she asked, "Are there any children from my country at that Club?" "No," I answered, "but there's some from Yugoslavia, Sweden, Greece, Holland and Australia. You could come." "You'd have to ask my father," she said. And so it was that the following Sunday afternoon found me paying my first visit to a Muslim household.

I was welcomed cordially, offered fresh fruit and Lebanese coffee, plus a packet of cigarettes. Before leaving, I had the father's permission for some of the children to attend Club and invited the two families for Afternoon Tea the following Tuesday. Thus began a chain of events which welded our family and theirs into a close friendship, which has already spanned four years.

Many incidents come to mind. I'll always remember the look on Sana's face when she first heard the visualised story - "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," or Ali's smouldering eyes when he asked - "If Jesus Christ is God's Son, then who's God's wife?" One of the first gifts I gave him was a Parker pen with his name and John 3:16 inscribed on the back. God wonderfully arranged that during the next few weeks he heard John 3:16 explained three times at various Christmas functions.

On his 16th birthday he accepted a copy of "Good News for Modern Man." We've had many discussions when he's shared different aspects of his faith and early childhood, when grand-father in Lebanon used to read from the Koran each night. He has shared too, his dreams about the prophet Jesus and the prophet Mohammed.

Both parents are illiterate and listened intently twice to a 90 minute Gospel tape in Arabic. I had the thrill of showing them the Blue Mountains for the first time - what a wonderful day! We've enjoyed many such happy outings together.

Often when I call, they're sitting on the carpeted floor eating the main meal in the large community living room - for all the world like a regular Sunday School picnic! (I'm always welcomed enthusiastically). It is in this room that Sana is responsible for the seven younger children every night. The mattresses are stacked from floor to ceiling and laid out a night. Ali has his personal bedroom suite in the front of the house, while his parents have their own room. Lounge and dining rooms are kept for visitors.

Once in the early morning hours, I had to drive the little mother to the emergency labour ward and wait patiently until the men arrived from work. Later that week, father called to say that his new baby daughter bore my name and was registered accordingly.

We have shared their joys and sorrows, have prayed with and for them. Fanatically staunch to their faith, yet in many ways not comprehending it, they have proved their sincerity and friendship and accompanied us many times to our church services.

There have been strong culture clashes when I have sobbed in protest; there has been disappointment and heartache and at such times God has given - "Be not dismayed, for the battle is not yours, but God's."

We believe for them and trust that ultimately the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, that he did die on the cross and rise from the dead, that he is the Way, the Truth and Life will become clear to them. They are "his other sheep" and them also we must bring.

Friendship, fluency and confidence grow steadily.
Emmy and Eddy share a family problem.
Ray and Shirley pray for them in short and simple sentences.



Soon tutor time includes a short prayer, and reading practice from the CEV* New Testament. Emmy and Eddy always want to know more.



Ray and Shirley take Emmy and Eddy to Church for the Family Tea and Service. They're looking for other easy English activities to invite them to.



TELL ME MORE:

- I would like to learn more about Tutoring in the "English for Life" Program.
- I would like to be a Tutor in the "English for Life" Program.

Name : _____

Address : _____

Phone : _____

I am interested in Beginners / Intermediate / Advanced level

Return this to Miss Sue Keevers, "English for Life" Co-ordinator
74 Church Street, Wollongong, 2500. Phone: 042. 288402

* CEV is the Contemporary English Version of the New Testament. It is written for 8 year reading level. Today's English Version (TEV, or Good News Version) is for 12 year reading level, as is Reader's Digest.



TUTORING MY NEIGHBOUR

"English for Life" is the ESL (English teaching) program of the Anglican Church in the Illawarra. The program attracts long term migrants and refugees, and international university student spouses.

Classes are taught and staffed by local church volunteers, and resourced and co-ordinated from the Department of Cross Cultural Ministries, Wollongong. Most classes are held in local Church facilities, or University facilities.

In 1995, there are 13 classes in the "English for Life" Program, with more planned.



Emmy speaks little English. For 15 years, she has raised her family and kept house, while Eddy has worked. Emmy used the children as interpreters, but now they are grown up, she's alone and vulnerable.

In the Illawarra, there are 25,000 long term migrant women like Emmy, who now feel isolated and a little frightened. Having missed the opportunity for English classes, they need help and encouragement.

Emmy eventually agreed to attend the "English for Life" class in her area. Eddy decided to go too. They attend weekly, along with 12 other students. In class, they get group tuition, encouragement, and form friendships with staff and other students.

"English for Life" Classes are sponsored by the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission.

But an English class once a week is not really enough.
New English speakers need someone who'll visit, and give them practice.

ENTER THE TUTOR

Tutors are volunteers who love the Lord, and want to help people like Emmy and Eddy to learn English, feel at home in Australia, and find the secret of Eternal life.

Tutors need:

- * one or two hours a week to give to their students
- * to be true Christian friends, with a spirit of care, love and encouragement
- * good English, but not necessarily any teaching experience

Getting started:

- * Tutors receive some basic training in how to tutor
- * they are introduced to their students by the "English for Life" Teacher
- * a mutually convenient time to visit is arranged

What Tutors do:

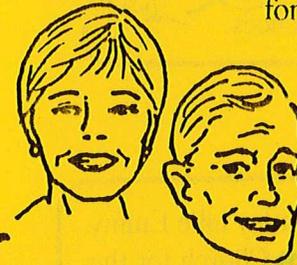
- * visit their students weekly (or more often)
- * provide conversation practice, and answer questions
- * revise class lesson materials (so minimal preparation required)
- * gently correct and encourage
- * report back to the Teacher with progress and problems

And what follows:

- * growing friendships of mutual care and trust
- * delight in students progress and personal growth
- * opportunities for Christian witness
- * a solid link with the local Anglican Church

THE RAY AND SHIRLEY MODEL

for tutoring ESL (English as a Second Language) students
in the "English for Life" Program.



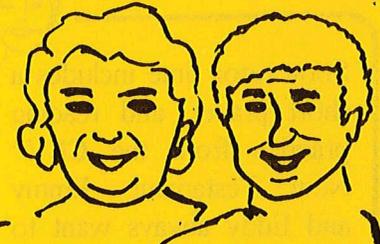
Ray and Shirley have volunteered as tutors. They also want to make friends for the Gospel.



After some instruction, Ray and Shirley are assigned to tutor Emmy and Eddy. Through the "English for Life" teacher they arrange a convenient time and day to visit.



The second visit is easier. They quickly get to the lesson materials and revise them. Emmy and Eddy say the phrases & sentences over and over again.



Emmy and Eddy are students in their local "English for Life" class. They attend class weekly, but need more conversation practice & encouragement.



First visit. Ray and Shirley, Emmy and Eddy sit round the kitchen table and share family photos. Ray and Shirley listen carefully and speak clearly. They enjoy the cup of tea.



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