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## On Being a Neighbor In the Context of Teaching Excellence and Biblical Foundations

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### ABSTRACT

Who is my neighbor? For whom am I responsible? How can I be a neighbor? To whom should I answer, is a question that has followed mankind through the millennia, beginning with the Genesis story. The fact that this question has been part of the legacy of mankind throughout history begs the question: Who is my neighbor? We go to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary to discover man's definitions: 1) one living or located near another; 2) fellow man [woman]. As elucidated in this paper, the second definition is the principle pertaining to the portrayal of the attitude of the Christian towards his/her fellowmen or women. We then turn to the Ultimate Source of knowledge, the Holy Scriptures: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another", according to Jesus Christ. It is the author's contention that "neighborly" is the secular concept that summarizes the divinely-appointed principles in John 13:34. The question is: what do these texts mean when applied to the Christian walk? Are there biblical examples which one should reference to seek wisdom and understanding for maneuvering today's world?

While answering the question of the Christian walk, it is necessary to consider the following mandate: Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven", must be borne in mind. This, in this author's understanding, should be the guiding principle that directs the conduct of the educator, which then, by God's grace will be emulated by the students. The reader will discover that this attitude can be fostered and developed through a marriage of an understanding of another's culture and language.

The application of the principle of being neighborly, which facilitates being a light to the world will be addressed through the structure, mindset, and daily operations of the Modern Languages Department. Biblical principles have been integral in the building of the focus on the "other" within this department, nurturing a culture of collegiality and acceptance. This paper will provide a vision of the Modern Languages Department.

**Key Words:** neighbor teaching strategies language culture modern languages Biblical principles The Good Samaritan Peter and Cornelius, The Woman at the Well, The Centurion's servant Cain and Abel The Tower of Babel Pentecost model

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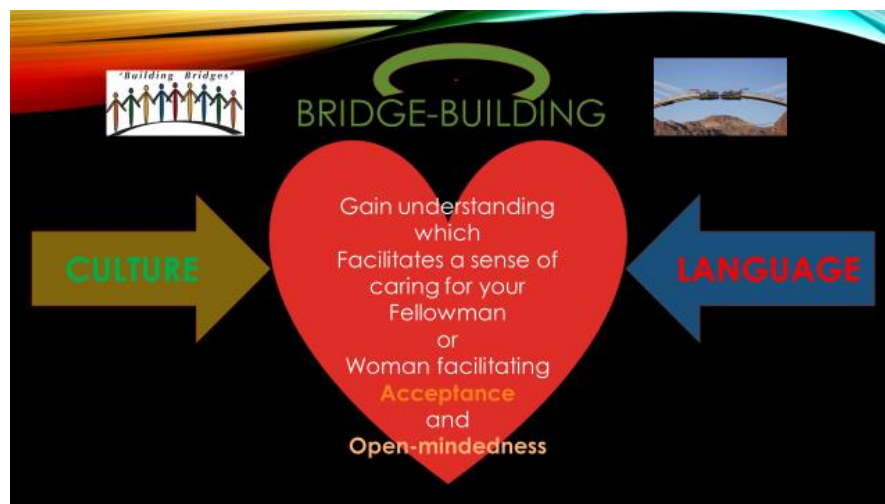
### I. Introduction

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Who is my neighbor? For whom am I responsible? How can I be a neighbor? To whom should I answer, are questions that have followed mankind through the millennia, beginning with the Genesis story, Genesis 4:2-16, of Cain and Abel. God came to the Garden of Eden inquiring of Cain for the whereabouts of his brother Abel. In Genesis 4:9, God asked of Cain "...Where is Abel thy brother..." to which Cain answers "... I know not, am I my brother's keeper?" In so many words, Cain is saying, is that my problem? Should that be a concern of mine? Why are you asking me?

The word *neighbor*, as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, interestingly provides two definitions: 1) one living or located near another; 2) fellow man [woman]. As will be elucidated in this following pages, the second definition is the first biblical principle pertaining to the portrayal of the attitude of the Christian towards his/her fellowmen or women. It is the author's contention that "neighborly" is the secular concept that summarizes the divinely-appointed principles in John 13:34 (KJV used throughout this paper, unless indicated otherwise), ".A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The above-mentioned Scriptural references, beg the question: What do these texts mean when applied to the Christian walk? Are there biblical examples which one should reference to seek wisdom and understanding for maneuvering today's world?

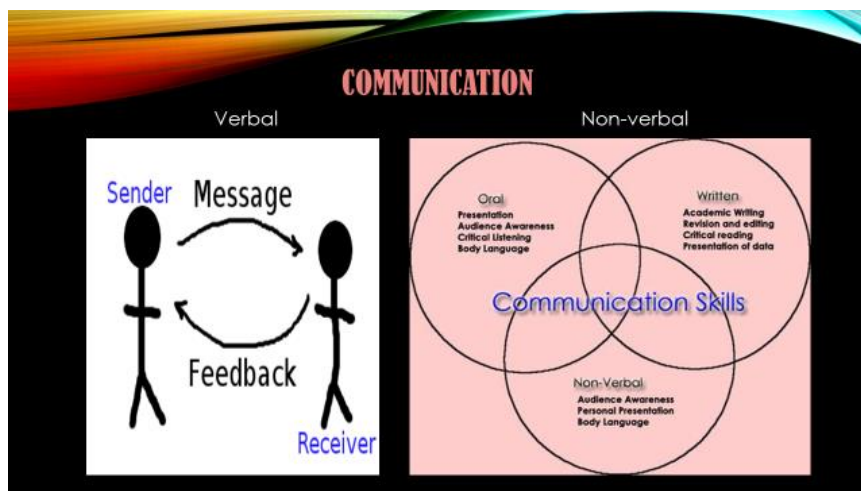
In the Christian walk one must seek a balance between one's attitudes and perspectives in living the Christian life and how one must treat mankind, what is the strategy? How does one build the bridge between oneself and one's neighbor? Are there points of commonality that can facilitate one's growth in a wider and deeper understanding of neighborliness? How is this perspective applied to everyday life?



The author contends that becoming culturally and linguistically equipped is a means through which one can answer the above-mentioned questions and prepare for being a 21<sup>st</sup> C. world citizen. Acquiring a knowledge of other cultures and languages provides the tools to reach across the communication chasm building a bridge between me as an individual and that of the "other". When I, as an individual, develop cultural and language sensitivity for the "other", my ability to respond to other's needs and to share the gospel increases exponentially; I become an accepting and open-minded individual, which is readily perceived by the individuals with whom I come in contact. I come to understand that communication is not only verbal; more significantly it is non-verbal. Words are only a fraction of true meaningful exchanges between individuals. Attaining cultural and linguistic capital facilitates a broader perspective of compassion. As explained by Kuo and Lai, "The cultural stereotypes affect how people think, speak, act, and interact with one another." Furthermore, Samovar, Porter, and Jain, as quoted in Kuo and Lai state:

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“Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how, and how the communication proceeds, but also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed or interpreted. In a word culture is communication.” (2)



When an individual assumes the title of Christian, it is of paramount importance to study the life of Christ, and by His grace, and through the direction of the Holy Spirit, Christ's example can be emulated. The example of Christ's life on this earth must be the model for each one that seeks to, not only do His will, but to encourage others to do the same. The example that is modeled must permeate every aspect of one's life, whether at home, in the workplace, or in the marketplace. Christ's followers must intentionally seek ways to be God's ambassadors wherever one finds oneself. One's family, one's coworkers, and all those that are touched by one's life must be able to identify Christ's emissary as such, without a formal introduction that states the fact. It should not be necessary to announce what should be the obvious.

The question is, how does one obtain this attitude and way of thinking? How does this position become a reality in one's life? How does one set aside pre-conceived notions and regional partisanship and adopt a stance of meeting needs and considering what Jesus would do, rather than remaining static in the mindset of the way you were raised, or the way you always seen things done, or even worse, maintaining a position of prejudice against anyone that does not think or speak like I do.

As a Spanish professor in higher education, I have to ask the question, what is my role in answering these questions for and to my students? How can I guide my students in their understanding of their role in this world? In responding to this questions, I have to ask, what tools can be draw upon, as human beings to fulfill the Biblical principle of assuming responsibility for my neighbor. I also must be cognizant of the fact that the answer to these questions must transcend the educational institution that has as its stated mission, the guided purpose of Biblical principles; because, one cannot plan to live in an isolated world when one considers Christ's declaration in Matthew 5:13 that Christ's followers are to be "the salt of the earth."

The second guiding principle to keep in mind is found in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In order to answer the questions about how one can exhibit these principles, one must turn to the Scriptures to gain insight from the Ultimate Example.

## II. Cultural Sensitivity

When one reflects on the life of Christ it is discovered that He shared parables through which He taught the principles that should be followed by a Christian. In His parables He provided His teaching moments through stories in which someone's life was touched, such as the Good Samaritan.

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The story of the Good Samaritan offers a key that opens the door of understanding to the attainment of a definition of neighborliness, in addition to an understanding of the appropriate response to “my” neighbor. Through the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37, Jesus answers the question of who is one’s neighbor and how that individual should be treated.

A certain lawyer came to Jesus asking about how to inherit eternal life, recorded in Luke 10:25: “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” whereupon Jesus answers that he should love God and love his neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:5, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” & Leviticus 19:18, “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”), drawing upon Old Testament teachings that would be accessible to the Jewish people, as alluded to in Jesus’ response: “He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou?” Luke 10:29 then illuminates his intent, “But he the lawyer, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour?” Jesus then states, “...He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, “Go, and do thou likewise. “ Thus, showing mercy, which could also be characterized as compassion and caring for those that are encountered in one’s daily life, not simply limiting our sphere of activity to those that we know or are customarily in contact with. The Christian must be willing to step out of their comfort zone, and make a difference in the lives of those persons that would not necessarily be the persons with whom he/she would associate, that one agrees with, or one likes.

Another story in which the Scriptures illustrate Christ’s example is that of the story of the centurion’s servant, found in Matthew 8:5-13. In this story a Roman centurion, of those that were despised by the Jews due to their domination of the country of Israel, came to Jesus and asked that He heal his servant, who is sick of the palsy. Matthew 8: 5 & 6 explain the setting: “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” This scenario is significant because Jesus is in Capernaum of Galilee, a Roman center of operation where a garrison of soldiers was located. Also, this city is of significance to Jesus as His center of Galilean Ministry (Matthew 9:1), being the area where the Sea of Galilee is located and from which five of His disciples (Peter, Andrew James, John, and Matthew) had as their place of origin, in the area around Capernaum (Mark 1:16-21).

When the centurion made the request of Jesus to come to his home, Jesus stated, as recorded in Matthew 8:7: “... I will come and heal him.” It is apparent that Jesus did not hesitate to offer to go the centurion servant’s side. Jesus was not deterred by nationality, place of origin, or political conditions. What is of interest though, is the centurion’s response, in v. 8: “The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” The awe and respect of this self-described man of authority, who in v. 9 says: “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it”, is of note. This is a man who could have “commanded” Jesus to go to his house to heal his servant; however, he did not feel worthy, nor that he had the authority to do so.

In Matthew 8:10 the Scriptures state – “When Jesus heard [the centurion’s faith statement], He marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel”, which is a chastisement of the Children of Israel, referring to the fact that an individual of another nationality demonstrated greater faith, than those who should be setting the example of faith. Jesus responds, in v. 13, to the centurion’s faith by saying: “And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

Due to the tensions between the Romans and the Jews, as well as, this not being His city nor region of origin, Jesus had every reason to not be in this area. Additionally there would be no logical reason for Jesus to offer relief to a Roman official; however, Jesus did; because, for Him it was someone in need, a “neighbor”. Jesus’s response, as the neighborly thing to do was to give the gift of healing. The centurion demonstrated an amazing faith in approaching Jesus of Nazareth to bring relief to his servant. According to David Padfield, in his article, *The Biblical City of Capernaum*: “Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” Jesus puts it this way, in verses 11 and 12 of Matthew 8: “And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In other words, those who were chosen to be God’s representatives to/in this world and to convey the gospel to all around them failed in their God-assigned mission; however, there were Gentiles who realized and appreciated the gift that had come to this earth and responded

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with faith, through their actions. The Jews, in general, rejected Christ, yet there were Gentiles who recognized Christ as the Life-Giver, through His neighborly acts with all those with whom He came in contact.

Another enlightening illustration is the story of the woman at the well, found in John 4:5-44. The woman of Samaria was approached by Jesus when He requests of her assistance, in His moment of need; He was thirsty, and she had the means of providing for His physical need. The key thought upon which one must focus to grasp the connotation of this event comes in John 4:9: "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, how is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." This woman could not comprehend how it was possible that a Jew would be willing to have contact with a Samaritan, let alone ask a favor of an individual of that background. Whereupon Jesus responds in v. 10: "...If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. Jesus's response depicts not only a willingness to associate with such an individual, but to offer life. Then, the Samaritan woman demonstrates what affect acceptance and understanding can produce, in verse 11 "The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?" The outcome of Christ reaching across cultural barriers comes in verse 12: "And many [Samaritans] said unto the woman, now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Christ's attitude of sharing with someone of a different nationality, brought a desire and a willingness to believe in what He had to offer. Direct contact with Him brought a saving knowledge of the Saviour of all mankind.

The story of Peter and Cornelius, in Acts 10, brings to light another dimension of how we are to understand God's ideals for Christians. This story speaks to being no respecter of persons. Acts 10: 34 & 35 reads: Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. God speaks to all nationalities in diverse ways, but the gospel meets each person on their own level. It is noted, through Peter's vision of the sheet that God wishes that each be willing to reach out to all, no matter what their background.

The setting for this story is the following, from Acts 10:

<sup>3</sup> He [Cornelius] saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. <sup>4</sup> And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, what is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: <sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. . . . <sup>9</sup> On the morrow, as they [two of Cornelius' servants and a devout soldier] went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: <sup>10</sup> And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, <sup>11</sup> And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: <sup>12</sup> Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. <sup>13</sup> And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. <sup>14</sup> But Peter said, not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. <sup>15</sup> And the voice spake unto him again the second time, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. <sup>16</sup> This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

As Peter was pensive about what he had seen and heard, the Bible states: <sup>19</sup> While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. <sup>20</sup> Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. As a result of the explanation from the "voice", Peter explains to those present in Cornelius' house:

<sup>28</sup> And he said unto them, ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

<sup>29</sup> Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

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God's desire is for all human beings to be respected. God is not partial to any race, kindred, tongue, nor people. Christ's mandate in Matthew 28: 19 is: "Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Rita Mae Brown (1944- ), an American writer, activist, and feminist asserts: "Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going." As inhabitants of this world, as we learn about our "neighbors" one can not only come to appreciate the diversity that we encounter around us, but we can also have an eternal impact upon those around us, and can be prepared to spend eternity with all of God's children.

### III. Language Abilities

With respect to the importance and significance of languages, the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11:1-9, is the ultimate example of the pivotal role of communication skills. Genesis 11:6 states: "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do". With the absence of the ability to communicate the building project had to be abandoned and the peoples of the earth were scattered across the land, grouped with those who had a commonality in language, in verses 7-10, note God's command:

<sup>7</sup>Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

<sup>8</sup>So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Having one single language was facilitating man's self-sufficiency and lack of trust in God, leading to selfish attitudes and negative reactions to God's attempts to bring change to man's sinful ways. The destruction that God brought upon the earth through the event of the Flood demonstrated God's desire for a new start, but the attempt at a transformed world was thwarted by the enemy, who sought to instigate man to take things into his/her own hands and reach heaven through their own efforts, rather than through the plan of salvation.

Interestingly enough, the opposite result is found, when the reverse circumstances exist with the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1-22. Acts 2:4 states: "...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." One single language facilitated corporate thought, which led to actions against God's will; however, multiple language capability enabled individualized understanding of the gospel. The disciples were able to see the outcome of the Holy Spirit using them as God's instruments, verse 41: "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The South African anti-apartheid revolutionary politician, president, and philanthropist Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) verbalized this concept when he said: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language that goes to his heart." When one speaks to an individual in their own language, they are reached in a way that cannot be accomplished through any other means.

### IV. Teaching Strategies

In what ways can the educator convey the concept of neighborliness to his/her students, in order that they might adopt the lifestyle of the divinely-appointed perspective on life? Christ demonstrated the principles of "love your neighbor as yourself", how can one do the same, in order that one's students might become conveyors of that philosophy of life.

The foremost method through which this principle may be transferred to one's students is through the model that the educator brings to the classroom. Of paramount importance is that as a proponent of this perspective one must make it a priority to spend time in The Word and in communion with God on an ongoing and daily basis. The pedagogue must strive to follow David's words in Psalm 119:11: Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee. One must do this to facilitate a knowledge and understanding of what it means to follow Christ's example, as well as, familiarity with what it looks like to be an ambassador for Christ in one's daily life.

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As the educator seeks to model a perspective of embracing the diversity of the 21<sup>st</sup> C., one must provide strategies through which the students can experience this mindset. The viewing of typical conversations amongst Spanish-speaking individuals, being readily available on YouTube, is one of the principal methods through which this attitude may be visualized, thus facilitating an adoption of the uniqueness of the linguistic and cultural context.

Following the viewing, students are paired and are provided an opportunity to experience the same through a think-pair-share classroom activity. Through this method students are paired, then assigned a scenario that they must act out in front of the class. Within this created venue, the students will model a typical dialogue, including greetings and salutations, pertinent vocabulary, and indicated non-verbal communication. This strategy facilitates an opportunity for the students to experience the difference, not simply view it. The medieval Spanish philosopher and Sephardic Jew Maimonides (1135-1204) stated it this way: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Experiential opportunities, afforded to the learner, is how a concept is internalized. Simply reading or hearing about a concept, maintains the knowledge about the subject at the theoretical level. Jack Richards, in his book, *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*, puts it this way: "Language is behavior and behavior can be learned only by inducing the student to behave" (p. 25).

When students are provided the means by which they can contextualize their language and cultural knowledge, the information moves from the realm of the theoretical to the application plane of relevance to daily life. As Alice Omaggio Hadley states in her book, *Teaching Language in Context*, quoting from Richard Schmidt's article, *Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Second Language Fluency* states: "Practice seems to be the necessary condition for fluency in an L2 (second-language), and this is given a theoretical justification in models of authentication". Role-playing seems to be one of the most effective and retention-rich language acquisition tools. Spackman asserts that "...Performing' realistic scenarios in the classroom and thinking about the underlying meanings of the actions/reactions could be very useful for second culture acquisition as well as language acquisition." Language acquisition is not only content-rich, but has the behavior and attitudinal-rich component. Students must have, to the extent possible, the opportunity to gain a cross-cultural experience.

Additional resources are available in this author's publication titled, *Teaching Resources for Spanish Instruction: Treatise and Bibliography*, as well as such websites as: *Summit Learning*, which provides free materials for teachers seeking classroom materials and other resources.



## V. Application to the Modern Languages Department

The Modern Languages Department has chosen to follow a "neighborly" Christ-centered perspective in its approach towards each other, as well as, whomever comes through the doors of the department, whether it be colleagues, students, parents, or visitors. This section will focus on characterizing various aspects of what this model looks like, how they are executed, and why the departmental activities are structured in this way.

In first place, we realize that if it were not for students, we would not have a job; therefore, student needs and requirements must be met, in whatever way possible, to foster student success. The needs must be identified, then either handled within our department, or be referred to the appropriate individual or office.



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These are strategies that the Modern Languages' Department has implemented to facilitate a "neighborly" environment for all of our "customers":

1) With respect to accessibility, our department seeks to respond to incoming queries in a timely fashion. Our goal is to be available to interested and inquiring students/faculty/parents/visitors, seeking information concerning our department, the courses offered in our department, and the Adventist Colleges Abroad programs. Our faculty is available to present in varied venues, as invited, as well as, respond to inquiries as one moves about on the campus, recruiting, or other settings, as they arise. 2) The department has changed the process for individuals seeking to earn academic credit for prior language knowledge, by means of a challenge exam. The AVANT Stamp4S is the testing instrument that we are using, which has proven to be very appropriate to meet our needs. Instead of administering the exam in the department, on a limited basis, we are working through the Southern Adventist University Testing Center that is available year-around, on an appointment basis and is very well equipped to handle the Challenge Exam requests. 3) The department has expanded the use of the Placement Exam to include not only language-level class placement, but Challenge Exam pass eligibility, as well as, a component of the tutor-hiring process. 4) The department realized that there was a need to enhance the opportunities for the language students to enrich their conversational skills; therefore, we put in place a plan of 30-minute conversation groups/week, in addition to the classroom time. Initially, this process was accomplished by collecting student schedules and then organizing the times when the activity would take place. However, due to the time-consuming nature of this method, and the complexity of matching student schedules and tutor schedules, the conversation groups are now pre-scheduled and posted on the "Course Schedule", requiring students to register for their Conversation Group when they register for the language course of choice. 5) For those students pursuing an International Studies major, whether in French, German, Italian, or Spanish, when they return from their Abroad Experience, must complete the MDLG sequence of course: MDLG 350 (Global Citizen Seminar), MDLG 450 (Global Citizen Seminar II) and MDLG 490 (MLD Exit Exam [DEE] Prep course as prerequisites to graduation. When these courses were initially structured, there were challenges with establishing the course requirements to be in alignment with the fact that we wish to enrich our student's preparation for their future career, meet their academic goals, and balance the course demands. We have now created a 2-day retreat for MDLG 350, with a semester-long conversation group in the target language, with the final project being a reflection paper in the target language, MDLG 450 is a course which includes content material that seeks to illuminate the students of career opportunities, and related matters. Additionally, the instructor invites outside speakers from the community to present in the class to inform the students of the significance, the role, and the relevance of the students' language facility. Finally, MDLG 490 has been established as the course that prepares the students for the DEE Exam through a structure of each student choosing a Spanish-speaking country, then each week, for 10 weeks the student must present on topics assigned by the instructor, thus providing the students with the venue to read, speak, listen and write in their target language. This class organization was implemented during the 2015-2016 academic year, during which time all students passed the DEE exam, which had never occurred before since the inception of this class. Adjusting credit value to course demands has brought the demands and expectations into alignment, just fostering consumer satisfaction. Lastly, the Adventist Colleges Abroad (ACA) response process has been simplified and streamlined: a) applications are obtained online; b) each language has its designated faculty advisor, within the Modern Languages Department; c) An ACA checklist has been developed jointly by the Modern Languages Department and the Finance Office, providing a summary of the steps that need to be fulfilled to accomplish the application process.

Seeking out the good of the students, in addition to all other interested parties, with a goal of success and accomplishment, wherever possible, has proven to be a recipe for a department that is delivering a "customer service" product that recognizes the academic needs of a program, the responsibilities of a department, and a recognition of making the department's products and services to be consumer friendly, while respecting best practices and academic rigor.

## VI. In Summary

The above-cited examples elucidate: "...Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free", John 8:32. Life fosters teachable moments, through the Scriptures and through life's experiences. Christians gain freedom when moving from the realm of stereotypes to a world of understanding based on fact and divine revelation. As individuals, when we remove ourselves from reliance upon our own wisdom, or that of others, to an advantageous

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locus of drawing on Scriptural authority for how our lives are conducted, 2 Corinthians defines the new person: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne (747-814) is quoted as having said: "To have another language is to possess a second soul." Attaining a "second soul" denotes having the "other" in one's consciousness, when making daily decisions. It is adoption the perspective of seeking Christ's likeness, when loving one's neighbor as one's self.

As one considers the Biblical passage from the first book of the Bible, that is Genesis 1:27, the Scriptures say: "...God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created he them." This text brings into focus the notion that as humans, created in God's image, humanity is elevated to a higher plane, in that mankind is not here by chance. In God's sight, all are on the same playing field. There is no differentiation, with reference to place of origin nor gender. Society imposes mores, beliefs, and perceptions, but we have all come from God's hand, albeit into a sinful world with its challenges of physical identity, mental prowess, ethnic barriers, and societal definitions. As a Christian, one adopts the responsibility to exemplify what Christ's stance as an inhabitant of this earth.

A poetic view of being a "neighbor" is found in excerpts from "Salut au monde (from the French meaning salvation or greeting to the world)", Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Leaves of Grass (first published in 1856):

O TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman!  
Such gliding wonders! Such sights and sounds!  
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next!  
Each answering all—each sharing the earth with all.

As human beings we are all linked together. We all, as mankind, share this world as one. We are neighbors. These closing lines of the poem afford a sampling of what it is to think globally, with every human being a neighbor:

...And you, each and everywhere, whom I specify not, but include  
just the same! Health to you! Good will to you all—from me and

America sent.

Each of us inevitable;  
Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the  
earth;  
Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth;  
Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

12

You Hottentot with clicking palate! You woolly-hair'd hordes!  
You own'd persons, dropping sweat-drops or blood-drops!  
You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive  
countenances of brutes! I dare not refuse you—the scope of the  
world, and of time and space, are upon me.

You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look down upon,  
for all your glimmering language and spirituality!  
You low expiring aborigines of the hills of Utah, Oregon, California!

You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!  
You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive lip, grovelling, seeking your

food!

You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!  
You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd, Bedowee!  
You plague-swarms in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!  
You bather bathing in the Ganges!  
You benighted roamer of Amazonia! you Patagonian! you Fejee-

man!

You peon of Mexico! you slave of Carolina, Texas, Tennessee!  
I do not prefer others so very much before you either;

## On being a Neighbor

I do not say one word against you, away back there, where you stand;  
 (You will come forward in due time to my side.) My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination around the whole earth;  
 I have look'd for equals and lovers, and found them ready for me in all lands;  
 I think some divine rapport has equalized me with them.

It does not matter what one's place of origin, one's social status, one's intellectual capacity, one's socio-economic ranking or one's background, all citizens of this world are linked and must be considered A NEIGHBOR!

On a personal level, having lived abroad for nine years, become fluent in Spanish, and learned to have an open mind towards "my neighbor" God has afforded me numerous opportunities to be neighborly. Over the years I have been central to the founding of Spanish-speaking Seventh-day Adventist churches, have had multiple opportunities to witness through translating/interpreting requests, participated in multiple mission trips preaching in Spanish and seeing individuals baptized as a result of learning about the gospel, and equipping numerous students towards the acquisition of language facility, in order that they be prepared for the future that God has for them.

This paper, through Biblical examples, and real-life illustrations, has revealed the fact that cultural awareness and language acquisition are Biblically-based fundamentals for approaching the individuals that are encountered in life, in an openhearted manner. In the process of growing and developing into an accepting person, one seeks means by which bridges may be built. Open mindedness with respect to cultural and linguistic diversity are keys to opening doors of understanding and opportunities. Tools for people connections are instruments for evangelism, which is the directive for each of Christ's followers, as mandated in Matthew 28: 19 and 20:

<sup>19</sup>Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup>Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

## On being a Neighbor

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