

FAREWELL FROM MADELINE JOHNSON, CESLM FOUNDER



It has been a joy to serve with CESLM (Cooperative ESL Ministries), but I will be 80 this year. Since 1997, it has been a privilege to work with many volunteers and donors committing our ministry for our part in God's plan to *bless all the nations of the world* (Gen. 22:18). God wants *everyone* to hear the Good News of His love and grace, newcomers included. We can share his love to them by welcoming them into our churches, neighbourhoods, and communities. Recent newcomers from non-European heritage seem to appreciate this Good News more. They appreciate the love that causes churches to reach out to help them in their new home of Canada.

In 2015 Canada took in 271,660 immigrants, with 49% coming from only five countries: 1) Philippines, 2) India, 3) China, 4) Iran, and 5) Pakistan. In the same year, Canada had 392,902 births and 269,012 deaths (for a net gain of 123,890). Filipinos culturally have a strong reverence for God. The Christian faith has been in India for 2000 years¹. Iran was Queen Esther's Persia. The Chinese said to me "Yes, we want to study the Bible. We know it's a very important book in Western Culture and we haven't been able to study it." How much easier can it be, as Christians, to bless those who have come to us by helping them with English and acculturation training?

If more churches could catch the vision of connecting with newcomers as soon as they come—to bless them and help them adjust, our society would be much better, and more cohesive. Retired teachers, business people, and others who have cross-cultural experience love to find a ministry they can do credibly with some training. They find their lives are enriched by getting to see the world through different lenses. And God is pleased. Love is more powerful than fear.

CESLM multiplies caring connections by training volunteers from every denomination. In God's good plan He has brought an excellent new board together under the leadership of reverend Allan Pole, president. We are so grateful. You can confidently put your support into this registered charity. It is committed to help answer the prayer of Jesus in John 17 that His followers would demonstrate their unity "so that the world would believe." Is there any better time?

Personally, Mel and I will continue supporting CESLM both financially and prayerfully. Please join us to help fulfill the Cooperative ESL Ministries mission to *empower churches to reach out in love to the immigrants and internationals in our communities*, envisioning a future where *churches are key leaders in welcoming and integrating newcomers to Canada*.

For the Glory of God,

Madeline Johnson

¹ Truth + Life Magazine, February-March 2019. Good News Broadcasting