



Episode 004: Reaching our New Neighbours Show Notes

Rick and Patti Love are the founders of Love New Canadians (www.lovenewcanadians.ca). They have been involved in Cross cultural ministries since 1994. Rick has taught at a seminary in the Philippines and at Ambrose Seminary in Calgary Alberta. Patti is the Pastor of Intercultural Ministries at Foothills Alliance Church in Calgary. Rick and Patti share a passion to help Canadian churches become friends with immigrants.

Could you share with us a little bit about who you are and how you became passionate about New Canadians?

- Served overseas for 11 years. While in the Philippines, God was already laying this idea of using ESL to minister to New Canadians in Canada. When they returned to Canada, they were surprised to find that the pastor at their church had had the same idea.
- Spent 3 months of doing demographic research of the neighbourhoods around their church.
- Have between 200-300 people attending their settlement programming at Foothills Alliance church.
- Other churches started coming and observing their programs to learn from them and discover how they can start similar ministries in their churches.

What does a welcoming Canadian church look like to new Canadians?

- Biblical foundation on welcoming foreigners
- Built prayer support among their church members
- Allocate resources (facility, funds and personnel) towards this ministry
- Free of racism; expand their comfort zones to interact with people from other countries
- Place a high priority on offering practical settlement help to New Canadians
- We want to respect immigrants – we don't want them to feel pressed to engage spiritually; respect them as adult learners
- We want immigrants to encounter contextually appropriate gospel presentations
- We want to be a church that welcomes New Canadians as volunteers in our church ministries – to make friends and gain Canadian volunteer experience
- We want to see New Canadians represented in our church leadership as well

Do you find that many Canadians are ready to expand their comfort zones and reach out to New Canadians?

- Yes. We want to be friendly to everybody. People are just people. If people are friendly and respectful, we have found there is little problem.
- We continually work on helping our church family expand their comfort zones. We offer cultural awareness seminars from time to time to help our church understand different values and cultures.
- A potential volunteer can feel more secure if there is a secure, structured place to volunteer and interact with New Canadians.

What are the services that you offer to New Canadians?

- English as a Second Language Classes
 - Conversation Classes in a small group format
 - ESL class just for women
 - Beginner ESL
- Employment class (6 weeks long)
- Citizenship Test Preparation Classes
- Parties, camping, bowling,
- Sports nights for families

What needs to be true in a church in order to step into a research phase?

- Being aware of the demographics found in their neighbourhood – can be found online on government websites. 38% of the residents in the neighbourhood of Foothills Alliance were not born in Canada
- A lot of churches think that they don't have very many New Canadians but when they do some researching of the statistics they find out that even 20-30% of the people living around their churches were not born in Canada. It's eye opening.

In some cases, God has brought Unreached People Groups right to our doorsteps.

Could you describe the Bridges program that you offer?

- It can be difficult for a newcomer to make a transition between an ESL or employment class to a Bible class

Many newcomer's desire to learn about Jesus is greater than Canadian's desire to share their faith.

- In the Bridges class, students learn about the life of Jesus in a non-offensive way while practicing English and learning new vocabulary. It starts with a Canadian cultural lesson, and then they read a portion of Scripture from the Gospels. In small groups, they learn and

practice new vocabulary. It is a legitimate English class. We then go through discussion questions that discuss how what they learned about Jesus applies to them.

- The goal is to use the Bible to ask questions to understand the newcomers. We want students to talk about their home country, their experience of moving to Canada. We want them to share their goals and dreams, failures and mistakes.
- ESL Bible study and ESL Alpha are also offered for those who are more spiritually interested.
- Settlement programming leads to Bridges and Bridges leads to Alpha

How do you present the Spiritual side of Bridges to your students?

- “Bridges” is a class with friendly people from around the world studying English language, Canadian culture, and Christian faith. The class is offered in a context that is welcoming, respectful, and interactive.
- People from all backgrounds come to Bridges and come faithfully month after month.

How do you advertise your ESL programs?

- Word of mouth is huge – brochures for students to give out to their neighbours and friends.
- We use a boulevard sign as well – every time we use a sign, we have 10 or 15 come into our church building to ask questions. Many of these people have never stepped foot in a church before.
- We don’t pressure people – if we advertise an employment class that is what they get. We don’t try to sneak a Bible study in there, but we do invite them to join our Bridges class.

What are some first steps for churches that would like to run a similar program?

- Contact the Loves – rick@lovenewcanadians.ca
- www.lovenewcanadians.ca
- We start to develop a conversation about what is happening in their neighbourhoods.
- If you’re close to Calgary, they invite you to come to an observation weekend to see their programs in action.
- Offer curriculum for ESL and for Bridges
- We encourage churches to start with parties – they are a great way to start developing relationships