

## Southland Connect August 2010

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Term 3. We trust that the term has started well and that it develops a freshness that will correspond to coming out of Winter to moving into Spring.

Thinking about seasons, I recently heard Brian Harris (Principal of VOSE College in Perth, WA and a Southland adjunct lecturer) speak on three movements of our age. It seemed to me that he was describing shifts in the seasons of our nation<sup>1</sup>.

The first shift he described was the *movement from a naive faith to a naive atheism* amongst the general population. He suggested that in the 1900's the favourable assumptions about God being real and going to church and living with approximate reference to the Ten Commandments were commonly, but shallowly held. However, with the 'new atheists' movement, there are many more in our country who carry general assumptions about there being no God, the irrelevancy of the Church, and the appropriateness of relativised morality.

The second movement was *from assuming the Church had a right to speak to earning the right to speak*. When it is assumed that God is real and He communicates to people, the Church's voice was much more readily heard, listened to, debated upon and responded to. Not so these days – we may well be moving from a period of a 'soft secularism' to a 'hard secularism'. Perhaps we need to reflect on what Jesus taught in terms how people would know that we are His disciples?

The third change in season was one from *a personal stance of relating through certainty to needing to relate through trust*. If God was accepted and His Church was listened to, then people would accept the certainties of Christian teaching and relationship much more freely than currently.

I suggest that Brian's three suggestions in response to these three shifts are worthy of deep reflection:

- a. In the face of a growing naive atheism, can we be a more thoughtful people?

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<sup>1</sup> The description above is my interpretation of what Brian said... hope it is OK Brian!

- b. In the face of having to move to earn the place to be heard, can we love more clearly?
- c. In the face of less certainty, can we build bridges of trust by doing the good that others neglect, thus demonstrating our response to the reality of God's goodness over history?

Shalom,

Stephen

### A Connecting Question - Assessment

In the last *Southland Connect* we asked some questions about *Assessment*. Many schools have assessment policies, particularly as it relates to external exams as per Government requirements.

However, does your school have a policy that covers any form of assessment (including assignments) for every year of schooling? If not, we recommend Chapter 5 of Harro Van Brummelen's third edition of *Walking with God in the Classroom*.

We particularly commend his section on Biblically informed metaphors for assessment, and Biblical principles that inform student assessment. If you are in leadership and have not taken time to reflect on these things with your staff for a while, then you can confidently expect that any number of them do not understand these deeper principles of assessment – and therefore are at greater risk of accidentally slipping into practises that are not God honouring.

If you do take the time to consider these Biblical issues, then Harro's sample policy becomes an even more meaningful point for discussion.

### A New Question...

At the start of the last *Southland Connect* we asked questions about educational narcissism. It seems that the corollary question to ask is:

*What does a Missional school look like?*

Do you have any ideas? Be free to send them in to be shared with others...



We will be workshopping this at the upcoming CSA Leaders' Conference – we will bring you an update in the next edition.

Southland CARDS – a reminder...

In the last edition we introduced you to this partnership opportunity:

**Christian Action Research and Development...**

If you are interested in this as a way of helping your school grow into maturity, please contact us at the office.

### Southland Face to Face Opportunities

We want to maintain our commitment of serving the teachers in our schools in new and creative ways. Here are some opportunities that we have put on our calendar – please let us know if you think of ways of improving these suggestions:

#### Leadership Seminar Day

#### **FROM TALES OF TERROR TO TALES OF JOY**

*5<sup>th</sup> November at Morling College, 9am to 3:30 pm*

This workshop day is designed to equip leaders to understand more deeply the Biblical principles of community building as they relate to leadership – what can tear down ministry, and what can build it up... the worked examples will be mostly from the Christian schooling context, but can apply to any Christian ministry...

#### HOW DO I REGISTER?

Ring Judy Henderson (event coordinator) at Morling College on 02 9878 0201 or email her on [judyh@morling.edu.au](mailto:judyh@morling.edu.au). The cost for the day is only \$50 per person, and that includes morning tea and lunch. For catering purposes, participants must register by the close of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October. Discounts of 20% per person are available for bookings of two or more from the same organisation.

#### Southland Summer Schools – note the change of dates...

We will be running two weeks of Professional Development over the Summer Break. They are:

Week 1: Monday 17th to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January

*When: Monday – Friday 9am to 4pm*

*In one stream - **Introduction to the Old Testament for Christian teachers**: its implications for Christian education. The unit outline describes the purpose of the course as:*

*Given that most teachers have not been trained in educational philosophy and methodology in institutions that specially promote a Christian way of being in the world, it is vital that teachers in Christian schools are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of Biblical theology and, subsequently, of a Biblical understanding in relation to the whole of life and the undertaking of education.*

*This unit hopes to contribute to that process by providing opportunities for reading, writing, speaking, thinking and active responding to the Old Testament Scriptures as part of the complete Bible, and the consequent implications for life and education.*

*In the process of completing this unit you will be encouraged to read the books of the Old Testament and to begin to develop a coherent Biblical theology for your understanding of the complete Scriptures. On that basis you will be further encouraged to begin developing a comprehensive worldview as a framework within which you will engage with all areas of life, including of course the undertaking of education.*

*In the other stream – This course will be an **Introduction to leadership and management** for those in Christian education. It is focussed on those in leadership or preparing for further leadership, and can be taken by teachers or those involved in leadership who may not have a first degree in education (e.g. Pastors and Board Members). The unit outline describes the course as follows:*

*The purpose of this unit is to examine the principles of Christian leadership, their application to leadership practice and implications for the development of school leaders.*

These courses are based on units from the Master of Education / Master of Education (Leadership) programs, and as such can be counted as credit hours for professional development points. If participants wish to claim academic credit for either course, then they can choose to do the assessment tasks. This will give them two thirds credit towards completing the respective Masters units. Others will be enrolled as ‘audit only’ participants.

Week 2: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January

We will be running another **Grad Dip Ed (Secondary) orientation** the following week – so please let any friends who are interested in training to teach as a Christian secondary teacher know about this opportunity.

### Southland Face to Face in the Hunter Region

As part of our continuing commitment to increasing opportunities for ongoing professional development, we will be offering two face to face opportunities for teachers in the Hunter region of NSW in 2011.

In the next editions will be outlining more details about a Masters class after school one day per week; and the possibility of intensives run during the school breaks.

Watch this space for more details about all of the above... and be free to email us if you want to give an early bird expression of interest...

### Psychologists in Schools

I have often been asked about the professional responsibilities of registered psychologists working in schools. It is a question that like many that deal with relationships, can have many shades of meaning and interpretation – particularly with the tension between client confidentiality and the need for a team response to issues (which is one of the themes of the recent Child Protection review as expressed on the *Keeping Them Safe* website).

The Australian Psychological Society (which is the peak professional group in Australia, but is separate to the government registration group) has recently given a briefing on this. Contact Stephen at the office if you would like a copy of this.

### Personnel News

→ Last issue we reported a change in our Finance Officer position. We welcome Craig Corby to the team to now help with that part of our ministry. Craig can be contacted on [craigc@morling.edu.au](mailto:craigc@morling.edu.au) and on the Morling College phone number 02 9878 0201 for any questions about finances.

- Congratulations to Claudia (nee) Lau who was married during the last break! The wedding was a wonderful celebration of God's mutual call on two people's lives, and the love that has ensued.
- If you think that you have finished your program of study with us in the last semester, please confirm this with Jasmin ([jasminh@morling.edu.au](mailto:jasminh@morling.edu.au)) so that we can follow through with the appropriate graduating processes.
- We welcome of group of FIFTEEN Indonesian students who are now studying with us. They are part of a partnership program between Southland College and the Association of Christian Schools International in Indonesia. It is a privilege to have them be the pioneers of this program.

## Financial Support for our Development

One of the ways that Southland has been able to proceed in its development is because of the generous support of people and organisations. We encourage you to consider this opportunity. If you are part of a school, consider taking this request to them as an organisation.

Traditionally those Christian Schools Australia schools who contributed to this opportunity through that organisation have been given a discount on their enrolment fees. CSA has ceased collecting through their agency, and so we encourage any school to make a donation to us directly. As of 2011, it will be those schools who are financial contributors to our development who can attract the discount for their staff members.

## SO WHAT ARE WE DEVELOPING?

Here is a summary of what we are currently developing and some of our plans for the future:

1. Units of study for our new Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) / M Teach (Secondary)
2. Further units for these programs – we are applying to have Science, Food Technology and Business Studies added to our list
3. Re-accreditation of our B Ed (Conversion) course
4. Development of our Intensive and Face to Face opportunities
5. Submission for a B Teach / M Teach (Primary) program
6. Other programs are also being investigated

So you can see that we are working to do all that we can to equip teachers for our schools who can teach as a Christian...

Please consider supporting us in these developments...  
Contact Craig Corby as above to do this...

### A Research Thought...

Amitai Etzioni has been one of America's leading organisational theorists. He has made a number of comments about the emphases that schools should undertake... here are some of his latest<sup>2</sup>:

A good society requires good people. It cannot allow character education to be driven out by parents and educators who are keen to prepare kids for college starting at a very tender age and focusing almost exclusively on academics.

To ensure that this core educational principle is heeded, an annual assessment should be made of all schools for the educational (as distinct from teaching) messages they impart and for their character formation methodology. If these are defective, schools should be encouraged to bring the experiences they engender in line with their desired educational message. Hard work should be well rewarded, minor infractions of discipline should be viewed as educational opportunities rather than ignored, peer mentors should patrol the corridors and playgrounds and cafeterias to help mediate verbal conflicts before they turn into violent fights, and so on.

Education that calls on young people to "Just Say No" (to drugs, alcohol, sex, smoking, and aggressive expressions) will be much less successful than education that provides positive and meaningful challenges, something to which they can say yes. All forms of anti-social behavior are low in communities in which there are strong positive values.

### A Devotional Thought...

*People will be lovers of themselves...  
Always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth...  
(I Timothy 3: 2 & 7)... But not in our teaching and learning???*

<sup>2</sup> Amiiitai Etzioni *Next: The road to good society* Basic Books 2001