



SRE Update

INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHAIR

At an Extraordinary meeting of the Commission on November 12, 2013 Neville Cox was unanimously elected as the new ICCOREIS Chairperson.

Through his family and church connections, Neville grew up learning that the Christian life was not only for Sunday. He was encouraged to contribute to life in the community during the rest of the week too.

He concluded an extensive career with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in 2001 where he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Bank and a director of twenty-six companies in the Commonwealth Bank Group. Since that time, he has undertaken consulting roles in the business environment and mentors business and community leaders. He has a desire to encourage people to use their gifts and exercise leadership in their



spheres of influence.

He is a director of several companies in the Corporate and not-for-profit sectors and recently concluded as Chairman of AMP Bank. In addition to being Chairman of Advertiles Corporation, WorkVentures Limited, the Australian College of Ministries, Focus on the Family Australia and the Sydney Prayer Breakfast, he is a Trustee of Christian Super and a Director of Wesley Institute.

Neville has been married to Marilyn for forty-three years and is a member of the Castle Hill Community Church. They have three adult children and seven precious grandchildren.

We welcome Neville and look forward to his contribution to the work of ICCOREIS in 2014.

CHRISTIAN SRE BROCHURES – AN UPDATE

The first printing of 15,000 Christian SRE brochures disappeared very quickly. The second printing which arrived in October 2012 contained 100,000 primary school brochures; 50,000 high school brochures and 3,000 posters (which are double-sided: one side for primary and the flip side for secondary).



The purpose of the brochures are to inform parents and carers of what Christian SRE is, which makes them a perfect addition to enrolment packs for new students. There was a rush to get as many as possible to SRE coordinators before Kinder Orientation days were held in last term.

Up to this point in time, approximately 20,000 brochures have been distributed in about 200 primary schools. An additional 3,000 brochures have been distributed in high



schools. This is very encouraging, but as there are over 2,200 schools in NSW (both primary and high school) we still have a long way to go.

Some brochures are available for collection in regional centres such as Moruya, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn, Nowra, Wollongong, Canberra, Miranda, Strathfield, Newcastle, Gosford, Dubbo, Forbes and Lismore.

If you would like to obtain copies of the brochures or posters, please contact Sue Sneddon on 4979 1335, or email: execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au

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VALE BOB CORKILL 1932 - 2013

A CHAMPION FOR SRE

I first met Bob when I travelled to Lismore to speak at the February gathering of the SRE teachers of that region. Teachers came from Murwillumbah, Bangalow, Lennox Head, Kyogle and many other places. Over many years Bob and his small team organised regular teaching sessions for the teachers of the region and the attendance was always good and the atmosphere very positive.

Bob had a battle with cancer which he lost in October but I found this note from his wife to be very uplifting:

'Bob was very pleased to be able to extend his support and encouragement to SRE teachers through ICCOREIS, as well as through his involvement with fellow "Scripture teachers" in local schools. It was his

wish, that in lieu of flowers at his funeral, friends might make a donation to continue his gift of a New Testament to Year 6 students leaving his SRE classes for High School each year.'

Endnote: Roy Cowin is continuing on the work of supporting and resourcing SRE as part of the North Coast SRE group (affiliated with ICCOREIS)

Sue Sneddon



REVIEW OF SRE IN 2014

A Parliamentary Enquiry in 2012 generated the following recommendation:

That the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) commission an independent review of both Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education in Ethics (SEE) in NSW government schools to be conducted by appropriately qualified early childhood educational reviewers in 2014-2015, that includes the following:

- Survey of the nature and extent of SRE and SEE;
- DEC Implementation Procedures for SRE and SEE including: parent/carer choice through the enrolment process and opting out; approval of SRE and SEE providers by DEC; authorisation of volunteer teachers and curriculum by providers;
- Development of complaints procedures and protocols;
- SRE and SEE providers training structures;
- Registration of SRE and SEE Boards, Associations and Committees;
- New modes of patterns of delivery using technology;
- Pedagogy, relevance and age appropriateness of teaching and learning across all primary grades in a variety of demographics;
- Need for annual confirmation by parents/carers on SRE choice or opting out;
- Review of activities and level of supervision for students who do not attend SRE or SEE.

At the Department of Education and Communities

Consultative Committee (DECCC) meeting, November 2013, we were informed that the review is to take place in 2014 and be completed by November 2014.

Bryan Cowling (Sydney Anglican), James Athanasou (Greek Orthodox) and Cheryl Clendinning (Baptist Union) were nominated by the DECCC to be the Project Reference Group to oversee the process once the reviewer is contracted. The DEC is putting this project out to tender.

It is the responsibility of all approved providers to ensure they comply with the implementation procedures.

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/spec_religious/REimplementproced.pdf

When Heads of Churches sign the Annual Assurance Letter they are acknowledging the DEC's requirement that all teachers have done (or will do this year) initial/Basic SRE training and also commit to ongoing training. ICCOREIS has an agreed framework for Initial (Basic) SRE training, and times and venues for those training days will be on the ICCOREIS website.

Ongoing training includes training days and workshops that focus on skill development and information that SRE teachers require. Check the ICCOREIS website and/or your denominational consultant (or website) to find out what is available and what is approved to be used as part of each denomination's authorisation process for SRE teachers.

It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that we are all doing the best that we can. If you have any questions please contact your local coordinator or ICCOREIS denominational representative.

*Cheryl Clendinning
Honorary Secretary*

CHRISTMAS IN THE LISMORE DISTRICT

2013 finished for SRE teachers and students with a celebration of the wonder and joy of Christmas and none more so than those in the Lismore district of NSW. In 23 schools Rev Roy Cowin and a team of local SRE teachers reminded their students of the coming of the 'New King of the New Kingdom', in keeping with the theme from the Connect™ curriculum.

Roy writes the script for each 35 minute Christmas Assembly, and the regular SRE teachers from each school lead it. Year 6 students volunteer to do the Bible readings. Roy utilises the technology of Smart Boards and data projectors, and there's lots of singing as God's gift of Jesus to us is celebrated by all. Whether the assembly is for 4 students or 600, Roy and the Lismore SRE teachers help ensure every child has the chance to hear the timeless story of Christ's birth.

Presenting the Christmas Assemblies also provided Roy with the opportunity to distribute the Christian SRE brochure for parents and carers which received very positive responses from Principals and staff.

The North Coast SRE Support Group are holding their first combined "Connect" Team meeting and Commissioning on Wednesday 5 February, followed by the first ICCOREIS Basic SRE Training/In-Service on Monday 10 February.

Allyson Parker



Nativity by Gerard van Honthorst - Wikimedia Commons

PREPARING FOR EASTER

Would you ever consider not telling the Easter story in SRE? Do you present it in an assembly form? How carefully do you prepare the presentation?

These are questions, which should be carefully addressed as many of us think we know the answers, but maybe we should re-think it, preferably with other SRE teachers.



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The story of Easter has a great ending: one deserving celebration and often a huge surprise! But the story of Jesus' arrest, betrayal, crucifixion and burial are emotionally very sad events and potentially disturbing, especially for young children.

So let's consider that in the context of SRE. What if your SRE lessons are staggered over the school year, and you only teach part of the school in first term? Often we want to include the whole school, forgetting that this means that for some of the children (perhaps a kindergarten child, or one who has come from a school which has not had SRE), there is no context for the Easter story.

Consider how a child who has never heard of God or Jesus, might perceive the Easter story: a story about a stranger called Jesus, who never did anything wrong and was killed. It's an essential reflection for each of us to undertake in our preparations: to consider the elements of the story in the light of age appropriateness. Shield children from graphic portrayals of Jesus' suffering. Children love Jesus. Hearing that he died is enough to make them sad. They do not need to know all the graphic details.

The appropriate context is that God is a loving father. Speak of how God the Father sent his Son out of love for us, as Scripture says. The one God became a man to save us. God willingly died on the cross for us. Speak of forgiveness not guilt. Without this setting, the story of Easter is a pretty gruesome one.

For some guidelines on preparing assemblies, see the link <http://www.iccoreis.asn.au/documents/GuidelinesForAssemblies.pdf>

RECRUITMENT RECIPES

Here are two simple recipes:

1. Display the Christian SRE poster in your church to spark some interest. Use either the primary or secondary side (or both) depending on which SRE is most relevant to your Church. Follow it up with brochures and ask a current SRE teacher to speak for 2 minutes on why they teach SRE.
2. Download and show the video <http://www.viddler.com/v/48e090df?secret=29171959>

Follow up as above. (Any life can be changed by the Gospel, but in this case the student, Joel A'bell, became a pastor of Hillsong Church.)

ICCOREIS WEBSITE

The new look website is nearing completion. It has been a long process because we wanted to make sure that you have the most up-to-date information on SRE. Please be patient and check on its progress:

www.iccoreis.asn.au

RESOURCES

There are a number of conferences about religious education in public education and children's ministry coming up in 2014.

1. Re:Thinking a Public Faith featuring renowned Yale theologian Miroslav Volf, author of *A Public Faith and Exclusion and Embrace*.

March 18 – 20, Wesley Conference Centre, Pitt St, Sydney

Join Tim Costello, John Dickson, Mark Sayers, Mark Scott, Melinda Tankard Reist and others to discuss ideas that have the potential to reshape our world. Explore how Christianity can speak into every area of life.

<http://www.rethinking.net.au/>

2. Australia Talks Family in 2014 - a project of global children's forum, facilitated by children's ministry network.

May 14 and 15, Melbourne City Conference Centre, 333 Swanston Street, Melbourne

The Conversation: A strategic gathering of people to explore possibilities for a better future for our children and their families. (2014 is the 20th anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family and provides a timely mandate for a renewed focus and coordinated approach to providing some urgently needed solutions.)

<http://australiatalksfamily.org.au/>

We long to get the right people in the room, the decision makers, the change agents within the Australian Christian community in 2014 and dream and discuss what we could do together to make a change!

3. KIDSREACH 2014 Children Ministry Conference and Expo - Connected - this conference is a must for all kids workers.

February 15, Wesley Conference Centre, Pitt St, Sydney

Bring your senior pastor for free. Guest Speaker: Terry Williams
24 workshops | Huge expo of resources and ministries | Discounts for early bird regos, groups and others |

Go to www.kidsreachconferences.com | Registrations now open |

Paper copies of the Conference flyer are also available.

Please email kidsreach@gmail.com for as many as you can distribute.



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