**Towards a Scholarly Christian Educators Gathering (SCEG)**

1/7/15 - Revised

**Vision: An informal, scholarly community of Australian Christians who choose to come together to think deeply about Christian approaches to schooling across all discipline areas to the glory of God.**

**Informal**, in the sense of a network of individuals from different organisations who come together in fellowship, away from their usual formal structures, their histories, and their political and organisational contexts.

**Scholarly Community**, in the sense of a reflective, academic approach that wrestles with challenging ideas and perspectives; that is rigorously yet gently critical; that is not exclusively for academics, but for all who think deeply.

**Australian**, in the sense that this group is focussed primarily on the Australian school context, yet welcomes fellowship with others of similar interests in other countries, especially those in our region.

**Christians**, in the sense of those who are disciples of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, based on God’s Word.

**Who choose to come together**, in the sense that we are all very busy and do not need more obligations, yet we see this community as being of great importance, so we choose to make time for it, we choose to come together, at a cost to other activities we could be doing.

**Think deeply**, in the sense that we will be scholarly in our reflections, but also that we will think beyond academic matters to the deep truths of the Christian faith, and seek how this transforms our whole life.

**Christian approaches to schooling**, in the sense that our focus includes Christian schools of many kinds, as well as educators who seek to bring a Christian approach to schooling in secular contexts, and those who seek to train educators in Christian approaches to schooling. We hope to learn from other fields, such as theological education, church teaching, Sunday schools and non-Christian education, while retaining our core focus on Christian approaches to schooling.

**Across all discipline areas**, in the sense that all topics are relevant to our reflections, not just Christian Studies or “Scripture”.

**To the glory of God**, in the sense that in all we do, our primary motivation is to give glory to God, and that this should shape not only what we discuss, but how we discuss it with each other, and with others beyond this community.

**Purpose: To serve all Christian educators by enhancing the integration of their Christian faith with their teaching, appropriate to their school context, and to collate and conduct research to support this integration.**

**All Christian educators** includes Christian teachers in any school. It also incorporates Christian leaders of schools, as well as Christian trainee teachers and Christian tertiary educators who train teachers**.**

**Integration of their Christian faith with their teaching** means a thorough understanding of how their Christian faith is relevant to all aspects of their role as a teacher – including their content, their character, their choice of learning activities, and their behaviour as a role model.

**Appropriate to their school context** means that the way this integration is worked out in practice is appropriate to the mission and culture of the school, and to relevant Government curricula and regulations.

**Collate and conduct research to support this integration** means this gathering will seek to bring together existing research, and where appropriate conduct new research, to assist teachers in their integration of faith and teaching.

**Context for this Vision and Purpose**

We acknowledge a great history of those who have gone before us with similar visions, both in Australia and overseas, and we hope to learn from them. At the same time, we recognise a new sense of purpose and calling that brings us together at this time.

We recognise that some organisations may address a similar vision within their organisational context. But this community seeks to address this vision across all of those with an interest in Christian approaches to schooling.

We can take the words of Jesus in John 13:34-5 as our guide:

“*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*”

in the sense that we will seek to love each other across our organisational divides, across our theological divides, across our pedagogical and political divides, so that in our actions we show the world we are disciples of Jesus.

We will no doubt disagree, sometimes with great passion, yet we will seek to understand our disagreements in a context of fellowship and community, while seeking truth and acting with love.

We will explore our vision and what it means for each of us in our own life as an educator. From time to time we may take up projects on specific topics under the wider umbrella of this vision, and subgroups of our community may work on these projects (such as training for Christian educators).

We will seek to come together regularly in both face to face and digital contexts.

We will offer to facilitate a national scholarly conference for Christian educators.

We will seek to publish our reflections where appropriate, and to share our thinking generously with others, including a growing website of resources.

As summarised by James Dalziel

From discussion at a meeting of Christian Educators on 12/3/14 at Robert Menzies College, Sydney, and revised following a similar meeting on 6/3/15 in Sydney.