

Biography: George Sears

I was born in Hertfordshire, England, in 1950, and came to Australia in 1958, to grow up in Elizabeth, SA, in a Christian family. I have an older sister and younger brother who both are actively committed Christians and Christian parents who are now both with the Lord. I came to know the Lord Jesus as my Lord and Saviour at the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade in Adelaide. The Lord's claim on my life was very real at that time, even as a young boy, and has remained so throughout my life. Since my acceptance of the Lord as my Saviour and continuing to the present, the Lord Jesus is the centring focus of my life and my interests, with my chief desire to live a life that honours Him as a "good and faithful servant".

I have been involved in the field of education since my first teaching appointment by the South Australian Department of Education in 1970, as a Maths Teacher at Ceduna Area School. In 1971 I was conscripted to do military service with the Australian Army during the Vietnam War. After initial recruit and infantry training I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant to become an Educational Instructor at an Officer Training School in Lae, Papua New Guinea. Discharged (honourably) in 1973, I returned to the SA Education Department and taught mathematics at Elizabeth High School for 9 years. During this time I was involved with the Craigmore Christian Church and their commencement of the Craigmore Christian School in 1981. I resigned from the Education Department to become the Principal of Craigmore Christian School (now Hope Christian College) for its first 25 years through to the end of 2005. After this lengthy period, the time seemed right to transition the School to the next generation of school leadership, and I was pleased to assist with this appointment.

As the Principal of Craigmore Christian School, I served as the President of the South Australian Christian Schools Association (SACSA) for five years. During this time I helped to develop this organization as a means of strengthening unity and collegiality amongst Christian School Principals in SA. I served as a foundation State Council member on the Christian Schools Australia (CSA) Council in South Australia.

In 2006 I became an Education Consultant in a Christian Education ministry based in Brisbane, which supported a network of approximately 180 Christian schools in Australia, the South Pacific and Indonesia. With my educational experience and qualifications, which include a Master of Education degree in Educational Administration, and a Doctor of Education degree

conferred by the University of Adelaide in 2006, and my involvements at that time as a member of the Australian Council for Educational Administration, the Australian College of Educators and the Australian College of Educational Leaders, I was pleased to be able to support the extension of God's Kingdom through Christian Education in the Australasian region. My role in this, through to 2015, was to provide support for school staff and leaders via professional development and curriculum support. During this time I also served as the Executive Director of a not-for-profit company, International Certificate of Christian Education (Australasia) Ltd, and as a director, representing the South Pacific region, on the Board of the UK parent organization, ICCE Ltd. These roles concluded in 2015 with a changed direction of the ministry and coincided with my 65th birthday.

Retirement from the Lord's work has never been in my focus and since 2015 I have been seeking the Lord's direction for future service. During this, waiting and praying time, I enrolled as a full time student at the Bible College of SA. After completing a Graduate Diploma of Divinity in 2016, I commenced studies towards a Master of Ministry degree in 2017.

Throughout the above opportunities and experiences, I have been greatly blessed by God through my wife Christine, to whom I have been married since 1971 and whose love and support for me has been exceptional; no children just several Burmese cats. Apart from my continuing interest in the Lord's work, my interests in recent years have included sport, reading, gardening and bushwalking.

From 1974 to 2015, Chris and I were members of the Open Brethren fellowship at Craigmore Christian Church. During this time Chris and I lead the youth programme and then transitioned into adult Bible ministry. Chris served as the manager of the Church's retirement village from 1987 to 2015, which I had participated in establishing in 1987 as an Elder/Trustee at the Craigmore Christian Church. From approximately 1980 to 2005, I served as the Chairman of the Elders at Craigmore Christian Church.

After an invitation from the Elders of church@paravista in March 2015, to become part of the Church Teaching and Ministry team, Chris and I joined church@paravista, having had confirmation of the Lord's leading in this matter. Since joining church@paravista, Chris and I have both felt welcomed and accepted. We consider church@paravista to be our church home

until the Lord's coming, and are both keen to fulfil our responsibility and privilege to be actively involved in the life and ministry of the Church.

The role of Senior Pastor at church@paravista was something of a surprise development when the Elders approached me in August/September 2017. I was greatly humbled by the Elders desire in this matter, but such a role was not something I had sought or in fact considered to be part of God's plan for me. However, my initial reluctance was eventually overcome as I prayed for God's leading and sensed His peace about undertaking the role. My appointment as the Senior Pastor of church@paravista commenced on 8th October, 2017. In this role my desire is to serve the Lord of the Church and the Lord's people at church@paravista, in such a way that will encourage the church to fulfil its mission to help people become active, committed followers of Jesus Christ.