



RURAL NETWORK NEWS

GREETINGS FROM THE CANTERBURY RURAL MINISTRY UNIT

This newsletter is a trial effort with the aim of making connections across denominations in rural ministry matters. Please let us know if you will find such a newsletter helpful. Also please send in your news of events or activities for us to include.

NETWORKING

At this stage we have gathered quite a list of names of people across the country and in a number of denominations who would like to receive rural ministry news and information. If you know of people who are interested please let us know. The Christchurch Diocesan office is generously enabling this postal network to function.

We can keep in contact with you individually, but we do encourage you to make your own local connections with those of other denominations and others in your wider district who share your rural enthusiasm. The Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit itself is simply a collection of such individuals, from across denominations and across Canterbury, who meet to discuss common concerns and to plan ways of developing better ministry in rural situations.

"PROVIDING PASTORAL CARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES"

Some of you will have received the report of this event held in North Canterbury in early May this year. If you have not and would like a copy please contact the editor of this newsletter. It was a three-day event visiting three rural communities involving both different patterns of ministry and relationships between denominations.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Did you know that there is a course on Rural Ministry that is both affordable and easily accessible? The Ecumenical Board of Theological Studies, which offers a range of distance courses, has recently established a rural paper using a Study Guide along with a personal tutor. Enquiries for 1996 enrolments: EBTS, P O Box 12286, Christchurch; ph: 03 338 0363 or 0800 667 969, fax: 03 339 0124.

YOUR FEEDBACK PLEASE!!

Please respond by highlighting what does apply and crossing out what doesn't on this cut-out slip and send to Robyn McPhail, 9 Jackson St, Methven.

I support the idea of a rural newsletter.

I suggest
be included on the mailing list.

I am enclosing a news item for the next newsletter.

EKETAHUNA RURAL MINISTRY EVENT

Thirty-eight people gathered at Eketahuna for a half-day rural ministry event on August 15th. Participants came from Parishes in the Waiararapa, Hawkes Bay and Manawatu and from the National Churches: Kathryn McKenzie from the Negotiating Churches Unity Council, Brian Eagle from the Conference of Churches and Prue Neild from the Mission Resource Team of the Presbyterian Church. Planning was done by Robert Bruere of the Hawkes Bay Rural Ministry Unit, Ian Hewson from the Wairarapa UDC and Garth Cant from the Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit.

The gathering began with hot soup and a pooled lunch. Ian Hewson welcomed us and Robert Bruere led devotions on the theme of "listening". After introducing themselves, participants worked in geographical groups and reported on "local stories" and "insights into the Mission of God at work in our community".

Brian Eagle summaries the insights in these words: *"We heard of the isolation of solo parent beneficiaries living in vacated shepherd cottages, of commuters at work in a city by day, of uncertain futures for farmers because of high interest costs and low returns, of threats about less access to education for children, high stress levels affecting family relationships, of churches struggling to survivewe heard painful and encouraging stories of the Church engaged in rural mission."*

Groups responded to each others insights. Bishop Murray Mills from Waiapu and Presbyterian Moderator Margaret Schraeder added reflections. Garth Cant and Robert Bruere provided information about rural ministry events and rural ministry resources.

NEW APPOINTMENT WITH A RURAL FOCUS

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has recently appointed a new member to their Mission Resource Team. Primarily responsible for resourcing people for mission in parishes and communities south of the Waitaki. Mr Allan Paulin will also take a special interest in rural matters across the country.

HAWKES BAY INTERCHURCH RURAL MINISTRY UNIT

This has met for about ten years now. It is an ecumenical group of clergy and laity, meeting four or five times a year. The programme varies, sometimes topics are discussed such as baptismal preparation or environmental issues. Other times we have guest speakers and in recent years we have been making field visits to places such as the local Health Centre, Lime Works and Pan Pac in Napier to hear about forestry developments.

Members of our group were responsible for co-ordinating the Australasian Rural Ministry Conference in Waipawa (1992) and setting up the East Coast Rural Support Trust. The Trust now employs four co-ordinators from Gisborne to Masterton. In the March 1994 hail storm this meant we had people on the ground within an hour of the storm - talking to residents and offering advice. We have also encouraged St John's College to make Summer Field Placements in Rural Parishes.

The present convener is:

Robert Bruere, 37 Nancy Street, Takapua^{CU}

FARMLAND FAITH

Bill Bennett of the Hawke's Bay Rural Ministry Unit has produced a brief clear and perceptive overview of rural community and rural church. Subtitled "*a guide to those unaccustomed to rural ministry*" its purpose is to help people with an urban background to understand the dynamic of life and ministry in rural New Zealand. It provides an overview of rural community in the 1990s and identifies the changes and continuities which shape rural life and rural Church.

The rural Church is embedded in the fabric of rural community. Rural parishes frequently have multiple worship centres. Those who provide sacramental ministries travel to varied places of worship and share with very different congregations. Maori and Pakeha in rural areas each have their own spirituality. Worship and social life and seasonal activities are woven together.

The special situation and needs of the rural Minister are identified and the dynamics of pastoral ministry explored. This is a slim but substantial resource: twelve pages which provide insights and trigger all sorts of further reflections.

Copies of "*Farmland Faith*" are available from Rev Bill Bennett at P O Box 227, Napier. We suggest you send \$5.00 to cover costs and help provide further resources.

RURAL MINISTRY DAY IN MARTON

Wanganui Presbytery's Mission and Ecumenical Committee hosted a day event recently in Marton. 25 people including a good representation from most denominations met to look at the strengths and weaknesses of ministry in the different geographical areas within the Wanganui Presbytery region. At the end of a hard-working and enjoyable day they resolved that selected small groups go to each area and meet with people in the parishes to work on ministry strengths, needs, and resourcing.

RUMINATIONS

Insights into Rural Ministry in Australia are invaluable for those involved in Rural Church in New Zealand. The Rural Ministry Unit in New South Wales resources a variety of training events and publishes a small journal called *Ruminations*. Recent issues have covered topics such as drought, Future Church, Life after the farm, Rural Weddings and Theology in Australia.

Ruminations is published four times a year.

Please send A\$10.00 to Mr Bruce Irvine, "Beltana", Narromine 2821, NSW, Australia.

MYRTLEFORD RURAL MINISTRY CONFERENCE

The next in the series of Australian New Zealand Rural Ministry Conferences will be held in north-east Victoria from April 15 to 19, 1996. It will be an Ecumenical Conference designed for lay people and clergy involved in the rural Church or part of the wider network of support for rural ministry.

The Conference will include Workshops and Bible Studies, Keynote addresses, group discussions and plenary discussions. The theme of the Conference is "An ecological vision for the Rural Church". The three sub themes will be 'Spirituality and the rural Church', "Education for Rural Ministry" and "Tasks for the Rural Church".

New Zealanders of all denominations are invited to attend. Please check with your own national Church to see if some funding support is available. Garth Cant, 7 Owens Terrace, Christchurch 4, is compiling a listing of those who plan to attend from New Zealand.

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