

RURAL NETWORK NEWS

April 1996

no. 2.

Greetings from the Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit

Our second newsletter: your responses indicate that we should continue. Thank you to those who sent in news items. Please share your news with us.

Contact with the Hawkes Bay Rural Unit raises a hot issue at this time. Hawkes Bay Unit members have made a submission on the Ministry of Education's draft document "Education Provision for Young New Zealanders". The Ministry's plans for rural schools is like a mountain totally covered in misty cloud. We know there's something there, something big, but we can't see it. Our Form 1 to 7 (now year 7 to 13!) school in Methven was badly hit last year by staff reductions based on the MRG (Ministerial Reference Group). What support can we offer as churches in our communities? Check with your local school. Find out what is happening and what they are concerned about, and they may suggest ways to support. Perhaps our news network can also be of some help.

Robyn McPhail

Commuting and Community Changes

Recent years have brought dramatic changes in the rural areas surrounding cities and large towns. Hugh Paterson has written a short paper on this phenomenon in the area around Christchurch, entitled "Population Movements in Central Canterbury". It is available from the author at St Ambrose Vicarage, Sheffield.

Myrtleford

"An Ecological Vision for the Rural Church"

New Zealanders from as far afield as Mangonui and Ruawai in Northland and Waimatuku in Southland will attend the Trans-Tasman Rural Ministry Conference to be held at Myrtleford in Victoria from April 15 to 19, 1996. Some thirty New Zealanders will join more than 130 Australian delegates and ten invited guests from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Those attending are a mix of Clergy, Religious, and Lay People from front line rural parishes, together with Church Leaders and Mission Resource Staff from National Churches and Ecumenical Agencies. Mrs Julia Stuart from Anglican Media will cover the event for the New Zealand media and prepare the publication which will record the event and its findings. The following New Zealanders are attending: -

Anglican: Rev Canon Wayne Bunny (Wanganui), Mrs Elspeth Bunny (Wanganui), Rev Dawn Illston (Taihape), Rev Di Le Cren (Cheviot), Rt Rev Penny Jamieson (Dunedin), Rt Rev Murray Mills (Waiapu), Rev Pat Olds (Raetihi), Mrs Julia Stuart (Anglican Media), Rev Lois Warburton (Chaplain, Lincoln University).

Roman Catholic: Sister Joan Kinney (Rakaia).

Methodist: Mrs Audrey Bruce (Waiuku), Rev Lois Clarke (Ashhurst-Bunneythorpe-Pohangina), Rev Lynne Frith (Pukekohe), Rev John Murray (Mission Resourcing Unit), Ms Joy Rogers (Mangonui, Northland), Mrs Gwenda Welch (Tuakau).

Presbyterian: Rev Doug Grierson (Waitaki), Mrs Beverley McCaw (Hakataramea Valley), Rev Dr Robyn McPhail (Methven), Mr Allan Paulin (Mission Resource Team), Rev Howard Smith (Kuwai), Mrs Beth Strang (Waimatuku RD, Riverton), Mr Bill Strang (Waimatuku RD, Riverton).

Co-operative Ventures and Ecumenical: Rev Robert Bruere (Takapau/Hawkes Bay Rural Ministry Unit), Dr Garth Cant (Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit/Methodist), Rev Alex Czerwonka (Whakatane: Anglican/Methodist), Mrs Jocelyn Czerwonka (Whakatane: Anglican/Methodist), Rev Alan Hawkesworth (Ruawai: Presbyterian/Methodist), Rev Rosemary Russell (CCANZ Fieldworker/Anglican).

Garth Cant

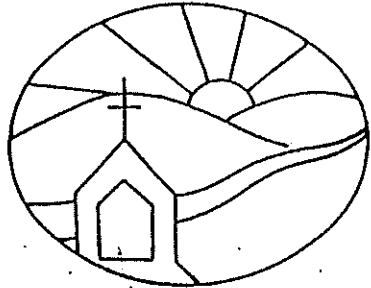
Preparing for Myrtleford

On phoning friends in Melbourne, I discovered that "Wangaratta" is said "Wang" as in "bang" but the "g" is hard. I was saying "Wang" as in Wanganui - my first lesson in preparing for Myrtleford is in pronunciation. I wonder is there is any catch for Kiwis in pronouncing "Myrtleford"?★ My second, third and fourth lessons will take place in the parish where each of the three congregations will meet in study groups to talk to me about aspects of rural life and church. They are also offering me articles in farming periodicals to read, plus local history materials. The earlier rural ministry conference reports and other writings in the series *Studies in Rural Change* have been most helpful. Another minister in a rural parish has lent me an assignment she wrote on retirement, titled "Leaving the Land". As a new rural minister, I'm grateful for this help.

Lois Clarke

★ (Perhaps for Kiwis who come from Southland! - Ed.)

'For the vision is for days yet to come'
(Daniel 10:14)



Book Review

The Country is Different by Nicholas Hawkes

Subtitled "Ministry and Hope in Rural Australia" this book also expresses our situation well. The author, a minister with an agricultural science background, understands well the economic and human effects of depopulation, rising costs, fickle markets, diversification, change in community identity, and lack of confidence. While recognising the challenges he is optimistic in outlook. Easy to read, this book is available through Epworth at \$21.50.

While not offering deep theological insights Hawkes analyses current rural issues and suggests ways for the church to be a formative influence in rural communities. He calls for a deeper awareness of the need for the church to consider effective structures that respond realistically and enthusiastically to the real needs of people in the country: to be with people in their pain, to take care of the environment, and not to give up hope. I commend this relevant and timely book to you.

Allan Paulin

Rural Congregations in Franklin County

Early in October 1995 representatives from 10 congregations met together to discuss challenges and opportunities in their Christian communities. We met at Waiuku, Pukekohe, and Tuakau, with populations of 4,430 for Waiuku, 15,000 for Pukekohe, and 2,200 for Tuakau, with a District population of 42,193 all told.

Representatives were from 4 parishes, which included 2 "smallish" urban congregations, 1 Co-operating, 1 Union, 1 Methodist, and 1 Presbyterian, with 8 country "community" congregations. The challenges given were for practical and spiritual caring in small scattered congregations, and care of children and youth in our respective areas. The opportunities were for us to Care, to Celebrate, and to Be Church.

At each venue, we discussed who we were, what were the good things, what were the challenges, and what we were doing about them. Some collective ideas and responses were:

- encourage Home-Settling ministry education
- group into Co-operative and Union Ventures
- build up teams of ministry within churches and communities - every member a minister
- Invite in skilled equipppers, trainers, enablers
- we all need to be tended, stretched, and nurtured
- we are Christ's agents in our age group and our community.

Audrey Bruce

Copies of the full report are available from Garth Cant, Rural Ministry Unit, 7 Owens Terrace, Christchurch 4.

Rural Field Placements for Ministry Students

For the first time last Summer a rural field placement was included among the ministry experiences offered to students at St John's College, Auckland. Sandy Neal spent four weeks at Takapau in the Central Hawkes Bay: "Diocesan aims were for me to experience and learn something of rural life, the issues facing rural communities, and how parish ministry interfaces with all of these." The experience included investigating rural support services, participating in worship in a number of centres, and a range of visits within the community. For Sandy it was "of immense value as well as enjoyable."

A Countryman's Evening

A Countryman's Evening in the Waitaki Parish aimed to bring together the Valley's rural communities, and in doing so recognise the diversity running across the rural scene.

Garth Cant resourced the planning group and the panel of Keith Hanning, a farming figure, John Chambers, a local doctor, and Burns Pollock, rural artist, provided openings into a fascinating evening.

There was good country fare on the tables (catered by Duntroon Playcentre) and a thoroughly enjoyed social hour that prevailed to a late homegoing: in all a keen edge to the gathering with high input and energy levels, in this intentional men's gathering, 70 strong in numbers.

Topics ranged from pioneering survival skills to the positives of rural community regained; from health concerns to underlying philosophies of competition versus co-operation as the best means of survival, returning thereby to the artist's historical theme.

Doug Grierson, who also brings us news of:

Ecumenical Rural Round-up: "Making the Connections"

*A Report-back from
the fourth Trans-Tasman
Rural Ministry Conference
(Myrtleford, Victoria)*

including the New Zealand launch of *Rural Liturgies Resource Book*, at KUROW, North Otago, Friday 17 to Saturday 18 May 1996. **Themes:** "Evangelism" with Dr Robyn McPhall, and "Education for Leadership in Rural Churches" with Dr Garth Cant. **Workshops:** various.

Accommodation: as required. **Registrations:** \$40, to be sent by May 8 to Allan Paulin. P O Box 1131, Dunedin.

Workshop on Community Ministry Available

A workshop inviting reflection on ministry in the community through daily life is available through the Presbyterian Church's Mission Resource Team. The workshop builds on a series of advertisements screened on TVNZ at the end of February highlighting the church's presence in the wider community through the lives of lay people. Anyone interested in using the workshop can contact Chris Nichol at 116 St Albans Street, Christchurch.

Understanding the Rural Church

In the lead up to Myrtleford 1996 we still have copies of *Rural Realities* by Julia Stuart. This is the report of the previous Australasian Rural Ministry Conference held at Waipawa in 1992. If you want to add depth to your insights into rural life you can also buy *Leaving the Land: Case studies of families who left Southland farms* by Richard Christie or *Farm Women in Piako County* by Margaret Begg.

Prices which include postage are \$12 for *Rural Realities* and \$8 each for *Leaving the Land* and *Farm Women*, or we can let you have the set of three for \$20. Make your cheque out to Rural Ministry Publications and send cheque and order to Rose Marriott, Rural Ministry Unit, Anglican Church House, P O Box 8471, Christchurch.

Television Programme Reflects on Rural Ministry

On Sunday, September 8, TVNZ will be screening a programme reflecting on the relationship between landscape and spirituality. Tentatively titled "Four Seasons", the programme will explore life in the rural community lying in the shadow of the Torlesse Range in central Canterbury. Producer Chris Nichol and programme participant Hugh Paterson plan to make a study guide available for people who want to use a video of the programme as an educational resource. Anyone interested can contact Chris or Hugh through the Rural Ministry Unit, P O Box 8471, Christchurch.



*May the eye of God be dwelling in you,
the foot of Christ in guidance with you,
the shower of the Spirit pouring on you,
richly and generously.*

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Many thanks to all contributors. News for the next newsletter - please send to the Editor.