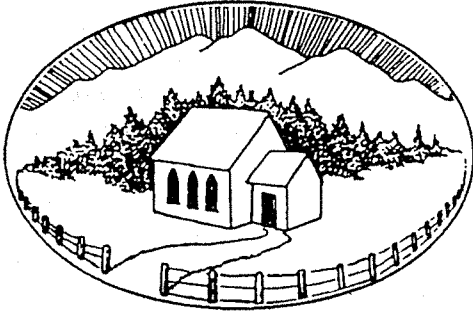


Rural Network News



No. 23

March 2003

DOG: "a kind of additional or subsidiary Deity designed to catch the overflow and surplus of the world's worship"

Original source unknown

Rural Network News aims to share ideas for good rural ministry, create a sense of belonging to a unique group and encourage one another.

Te kaitiakitanga, te manaakitanga, te kotahitanga.

Please share this newsletter with others you think may be interested. Feel free to make photocopies.

Responses to items always welcome.

Blowing in the Wind

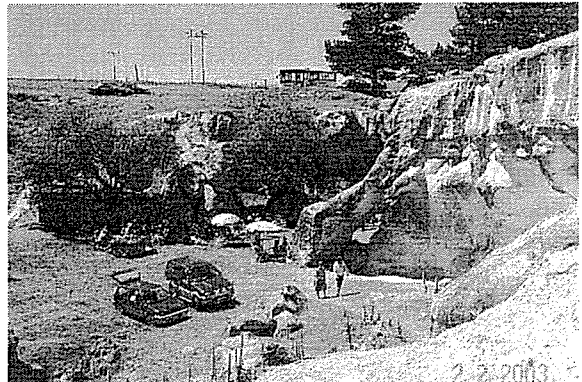
Sunday 2 February, 2003, dawned with not a cloud in the sky. There is no breeze to stir the leaves of the old elderberry tree growing out of the crack in a large limestone rock, which it has managed to lift about 100mm in the last 40 years. Charlie and Eunice are sorting out cable and speakers, for this is the day the Waitaki Parish in North Otago go to the country for the day.

Waitaki Presbyterian Parish was formed some years ago from two country parishes of Duntroon and Papakaio and one town parish in Oamaru – Eveline – a marriage that has worked very well for us, giving town and country folk a better understanding of each other.

Suddenly people begin to descend on the picnic and service site, which was set at the 'Aratini Fossil Site' on the farm of John and Margaret Hore, and is

part of the newly developed Vanished World Fossil Trail. The bus has arrived, people come down the steps loaded with lunch and folding chairs and rugs to sit on. The 4WD's ferry the less able through the farm paddocks down into the limestone gully, past cliffs and caves carved by the wind and water of past millennia.

Suddenly a hush falls as the hosts welcome folk to their farm, and give some history of how we come to be here in such a beautiful place. The Wilde sisters sing the first verse of *Blowin' in the Wind*, which is our theme for the day. *Blowin' in the Wind* – the wind that has sculptured the limestone into all sorts of shapes, the wind of the Holy Spirit that shapes our lives. We lift our voices and sing songs like "Let all the world in every corner sing", "All creatures of our God and King", "To God be the Glory" and "Blowin' in the Wind". We hear readings about Elijah and the wind, earthquake and fire; about the sound of wind as the Spirit moves on Pentecost day, and Joy Cowley's "Learning". Linda tells a lovely story about her 'frog phobia'. We watch spellbound as Rachel and her little daughter Genevieve dance to "The Wind Beneath My Wings", and above all we know God is here, as we pray and meditate on the things we hear and see.



People spread out as the sun lovers and the shade seekers find a place to have lunch, and the gully fills with the buzz of conversation and laughter. People walk and talk, some test their faith on a couple of abseiling venues that have been set up by some members of the local Tramping Club. Onlookers clap and cheer as we reach terra firma and breathe a sigh of relief. Others go walkabout to visit other fossil sites, of whales and dolphins that swam here twenty to thirty million years ago.

Too soon a hush falls over this small corner of God's creation, as people go off to their homes, maybe just a little more aware of their part in being "God's Wind", helping to change their part of the world to be more as God intended it to be. And maybe the words of the old song will be true for them – "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wing, the answer is blowin' in the wind."

John Hore, North Otago

Wairoa Hosts Graduation

As various crops were being harvested on the East Coast of the North Island in February a very important crop was celebrated at St Andrews Presbyterian-Methodist Church in Wairoa. People who had been involved in planting, watering, weeding, encouraging and discerning the growth of the crop gathered together to celebrate the combined achievement.

It was a Graduation Ceremony for two local people, Glenys Single and Maureen Caswell. Among those present were Rev Dr Robyn McPhail, the Chairperson of the Ecumenical Board of Theological Studies; the Very Rev Bruce Hansen, Director of Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies; Sue Haley, Academic Registrar of EIDTS; Rev Bill Bennett, Ministry Enabler in the Hawke's Bay-Eastland Regions of the Diocese of Waiapu; Rev Maheu Papau representing the faith community, and a small crowd of family, friends and well-wishers.

Some had come a distance, to see what had grown from the seeds they had sown some time ago. Others came to see the results of their support and encouragement as the graduates received their diplomas. Speakers acknowledged that those whose love surrounded them throughout their journey had undergirded the hard work undertaken by Glenys and Maureen. The fruit being harvested illustrated what could be achieved with commitment, and support from family, faith community and friends throughout the wider community.

Glenys received a Licentiate in Theology, and Maureen a Licentiate in Theology (Honours). In rural communities a good harvest is a sign of hope for the future. The needs of the hungry will be met, the community will be built up and burdens that weigh people down cleared away.

The gifts and talents of these women have been honed and refined to contribute even more towards the ongoing work of the church and the ministry of Christ to which they are both committed, a ministry, which began with these words.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

May the harvest so recently reaped bring great blessing to all those they minister to, and inspire others to explore the educational opportunities provided for those who live at a distance from training institutions.

Sandy Neal, Hastings

If you wish to know more regarding these opportunities please contact the Registrar, EIDTS, 0800 667 969 or visit www.eidts.ac.nz

easter@geraldine.com

This Easter the Geraldine Churches combine for a unique blend of music, insight and worship. Joining us in Geraldine will be Dr Chris Marshall and two Auckland based TEAR Fund musicians, Derek Lind and Mark Laurent. Local talent Lorina Harding will also take part.

Chris teaches New Testament in Auckland and is author of four books, including *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment* and *Crowned With Glory and Honor: Human Rights in the Biblical Tradition*. Chris is a volunteer restorative justice facilitator.

Derek, one of New Zealand's most sought after musicians, has toured the country extensively and has performed to enthusiastic audiences farther afield in England and Australia. Derek's music is in the tradition of singer/songwriter and he is an 'unpreachy' solo performer, playing skilful acoustic guitar. His desire is that his music confronts people as to their response to social issues, their personal relationships, and their faith.

Mark sings a mix of original material: rock, folk, blues and country. He plays guitar, mandolin and harmonica and aims to bring Jesus' message to life in a society that largely sees Jesus as irrelevant and boring.

Lorina also writes her own material and plays a variety of instruments and styles. Her music is popular locally and tracks from her album *Lucky Damn Woman* can be heard on New Zealand radio stations.

This Easter event has been planned so that out of towners can visit on Saturday and locals can be involved over the whole Easter period.

The weekend features a footwashing service at Mt Peel on Thursday April 17 and a procession through the town on Good Friday.

A Saturday morning seminar with Chris Marshall will be followed by a concert with Derek, Mark and Lorina on Saturday night at the Easy Way Café. Various services of worship will be taking place on Easter Sunday.

As we immerse ourselves in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection this Easter our prayer is that our hearts will be moved by wonder, our voices raised in worship, and our lives transformed in power, as our stories are transformed by the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Phone 03 693 8409 for more details.

Tom Innes, Geraldine

Don't worry that children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you.

Rural Church Forum in Kurow

Kurow is hosting a Rural Forum on Saturday 29 March 2003. If you are reading this ahead of this date, you're in the vicinity and would like to come, turn up at 9.30am at the Presbyterian Church Hall in Kurow, in the Waitaki Valley. Bring your own lunch; morning and afternoon tea will be provided, with afternoon tea concluding the event at 3pm.

The morning session will be a report from Judith Milmine and Robyn McPhail on the 2nd International Rural Church Ecumenical Association Conference in India, last November. They will use visuals, words and music to introduce particular issues of rural churches in India and consider ways we can strengthen and encourage one another by being part of an international network of rural Christians.

In the afternoon the session will focus on "New Neighbours" which will look at the changes in communities brought by change in land use (dairying being a widespread example). There will be input from a research as part of a Bachelor of Theology degree and from news from places where church and community are interacting well with newcomers. It will be a chance to identify concerns and possibilities.

In all it is intended that the day will be one of encouragement and raise the spirits of rural Christians working at the coal face of local mission.

Caring for Rural Families

A recent meeting of the Hawkes Bay Rural Ministry Unit featured discussion on effective rural pastoral care.

The group noted that from the second World War to the 1980s rural communities were relatively settled, stable and cohesive, with people knowing and supporting each other. They were regularly together at church, in homes, at sports or farm events. The parish minister was expected to be a visiting pastor, aiming to visit each family in the congregation yearly.

From the 80s to the present day several factors have changed this:

- The rural economy went through roller-coaster ride causing considerable demographic changes
- demographic changes also stemmed from land-use changes, e.g. forestry, vineyards, life-style blocks
- cohesion and stability were diminished, bringing a sense of vulnerability
- stipendiary clergy were withdrawn for financial reasons, losing the 'face' of a visiting church
- as beneficiaries, retirees and 'blockers' appeared alongside traditional farming families patterns of interaction between rural dwellers changed
- both parents working puts pressure on family time and limits time given to community

- people in need often resort to urban agencies for more anonymous professional support.

How, then, do churches develop viable practical pastoral care in this context? What constitutes pastoral care and pastoral visiting and what expectation do rural families have of being visited by "The Church"? Who should visit and how is this care different in theology or method from our rural caring day-to-day or in times of crisis? How do we approach visiting with due attention to Ethical Guidelines and the Privacy Act? And how can churches identify those who are gifted as community listeners and counsellors and offer training, support and a system of accountability?

Some possible models of pastoral care

In considering the range of current possibilities it was noted that all involve networking with other people, including professionals and community organisations.

1. Stipendiary parish minister/priest
2. Elders or a selected pastoral visiting team headed by an identifiable and authorised pastoral care coordinator
3. Paid and licensed part-time visitor
4. Baptismal catechists, marriage and funeral celebrants
5. Developing good relations with Rural support coordinators and Trusts
6. Common interest groups (farmers' discussion groups, local school activities, play centres, church-initiated home groups, etc.)
7. In times of crisis or disaster, having neighbouring parishes do blanket visits and provide material essentials (e.g. food, stock fodder, fences, etc.)
8. Mixing with farming people at work and recreational venues – e.g. sale-yards, dog trials, gymkhanas, hunts, A&P shows etc.
9. Emails or websites used as a communication tool may also be a means simply to keep in touch

Openness to God - a child writes...

Dear God,

Did you mean for giraffes to look like that or was it an accident?

Norma

New Opportunity in Local Ministry

People in Presbyterian and Co-operative Venture parishes may be interested to track down opportunities opened up by decisions at last year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

All the details, including work done since Assembly last year, are on the website www.pcanz.org.nz. Either follow from Home to Resources to MRT to Local Ministry or go direct to www.presbyterian.org.nz/resources/mrt/localministry/index

International Rural Church Ecumenical Association



In November 2002 an international rural ministry conference was held in Chennai, India, and was attended by around 60 people from 12 countries.

Included were Judith Milmine from North Otago and *RNN* editor, Robyn McPhail from Mid-Canterbury.

Also, at the conference, Robyn was entrusted with the task of being Chairperson for the International Rural Church Ecumenical Association for four years until the next conference. We, in Aotearoa New Zealand, are therefore closely involved in this international body. So what is IRCEA? What is it for? What interest has it to us?

How IRCEA Began

In 1972 an ecumenical centre was established in England at the home of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. Named the Arthur Rank Centre as the late Lord Rank gave money for it to be built, it became the focus for the rural work of all the churches of Great Britain and helped the churches understand their rural context much more clearly. Over the years many international links were formed and in 1993, to celebrate 21 years of the Centre, a small International Conference was held. At the end of that conference, the Centre was asked to arrange a future Conference. This occurred in 1998 in Durham with the theme "Rural Culture and Spirituality". About 100 people from many nations attended and, at the end of the Conference, the International Rural Church Ecumenical Association was established. The Arthur Rank Centre was asked to provide a secretariat for the new Association, in the person of Michael Cruchley, its Director at that time. Lloyd Vidler, a minister with the Uniting Church in Australia, was appointed the first Chairperson. Many people wanted to meet again, in about four years from that time, and it was hoped that it might be somewhere other than Europe or North America.

The development of links continued, through a Council for World Mission school in South Africa in 1999 and a meeting of overseas participants of the Northland Trans-Tasman Rural Ministry Conference in 2000. The Revd B D Prasada Rao was at each of these and through his efforts and encouragement the Church of South India became the host for the second conference in 2002.

Adapted from Conference Greetings by IRCEA Secretary, Michael Cruchley



IRCEA 2002: The Emblem

The emblem above was gifted to IRCEA by K M D Henry, Artist with the Church of South India, as the logo for the 2002 Conference.

As the artist says, it symbolically denotes:

1. Rural Indian women carrying their sons with their heads covered
2. Women and children represent the voices of the voiceless in India
3. They also look like Mary carrying her baby Jesus
4. In a closer look the women look like praying hands in the church
5. The dome shape represents church architecture with a cross in it
6. The symbolic human form of the cross represents Jesus on the cross
7. The same cross looks like the Holy Spirit descending upon those in the church
8. The cross also resembles the India map
9. The outer circle is the globe and the inner circle the oneness of the church (Ecumenism)
10. The church is the voice of / for the voiceless
11. The script in between the circles is yet another step towards the new order of the world
12. The whiteness around the church (in the colour version there is a rim of light around in inside church shape) is the new light that the 'Voices' aim to bring in the world.

IRCEA: Who, How and What For?



VISION

Being a voice for Rural Community worldwide

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- The Association affirms the central truths of the Christian Faith as expressed in the Bible and historic creeds.
- The Association believes the whole creation belongs to God – the land, the waters and all creatures. We believe that God seeks all creation to be cherished.
- The Association affirms that in Jesus Christ incarnate, God's love for all humanity is expressed. We believe that people in rural areas can be encouraged by the knowledge that Jesus

stands beside them in their struggles and is power for personal, social and economic transformation.

- As the whole creation groans for its fulfilment the Holy Spirit works to bring order out of chaos. We believe the Spirit inspires the church to cooperate in this mission.
- The Association acknowledges that there are different emphases within the various Christian denominations and recognizes that some denominations more than others are at ease in drawing on the insights from secular theory and practice.



OBJECTIVE and PURPOSES

As God's people we are committed:

- to sharing the faith, values and hope of the Kingdom of God in Rural Communities worldwide;
- to encouraging and promoting the Christian ministry and mission of local congregations through local, regional and national ecumenical gatherings of the Christian Church.

On a worldwide basis, in cooperation with other appropriate entities, to:

1. Facilitate the sharing of ideas, information and insights.
2. Offer mutual support and fellowship.
3. Represent the needs and concerns of rural communities, churches and institutions to both secular and ecclesial decision making bodies.
4. Encourage and initiate research, writing and the production of other resource materials relevant to rural life and ministry.
5. Arrange continuing programs for conferences and seminars.

STRUCTURE

1. A Leadership Group of between 5-10 persons composed of representatives from each continent or worldwide acknowledged geographical region will be formed, one of whom shall be the chairperson. It is anticipated that all persons nominated will have their nomination to those positions endorsed by the regional or national governance of their church.
2. The Leadership Group will encourage
 - (a) each member to develop an associate IRCEA group in their own country and
 - (b) seek to encourage other countries to develop associate IRCEA groups.

3. The Leadership Group will appoint a Secretary and seek to obtain *secretarial* support from a church organization of whichever country in which that person is resident.
4. The Leadership Group will communicate regularly using all forms of communication as appropriate. The establishment of an IRCEA Web Site linked to other rural ministry web sites may greatly assist communication. As finances permit the group will be expected to meet together, face to face, at least once between conferences or other major organized events (*e.g. Trans-Tasman Conferences*)
5. A major task of the Leadership Group will be to seek from Christian and other sources funding to enable the IRCEA to continue this ministry.
6. The IRCEA will seek to plan conference activities or meetings every four years.
7. The IRCEA in conference shall seek the Spirit's guidance in the selecting of ongoing leadership. *e.g.*, a Chairperson, a Secretary and the Leadership Group.

Adopted at the IRCEA meeting 18 November 2002

Web Link for RNN

Rural Network News can now be accessed through the web. Thanks to the work and willingness of John Roxborough at the Presbyterian School of Ministry in Dunedin, as variety of Rural Ministry material has found a place to sit and be available to any who wish to use it.

Go to: www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/RuralMinistry/ and scroll down to find the particular edition you seek.

The preacher is draped over the pulpit, fast asleep, snoring loudly.

In the pews, one parishioner is says to another, "That is the best sermon on peace I have ever heard!"

From RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton

Climate Change

Rural Network News has copies of a just-published resource on Climate Change, *Outlook Unsettled*. It is produced by the Churches' Agency on Social Issues (Methodist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, Quaker), compiled with the needs of church groups foremost in mind and the "hope it will help inform and encourage discussion, reflection – and action!"

Supplies are available for a donation - \$5 covers copying and postage for one or two copies. Contact "Churches Agency on Social Issues", P O Box 9049, Wellington - casi@pcanz.org.nz - or visit their website and download the study from there: www.socialissues.godzone.net.nz.

"Being religious means asking passionately the question of the meaning of our existence and being willing to receive answers, even if the answers hurt."

Paul Tillich (Saturday Evening Post, June 14, 1958)

A Korean Missionary in India

Chung Ho-Jin works at the Kasam Farm Institute, at Katpadi in South India. He is there to help the Institute develop life-farming methods for small farmers around the region, people who are otherwise succumbing to the fate of extreme poverty – starvation, indebtedness, suicide and violence – in a word, death. From 1986-1991 he was Professor of Old Testament in a Theological Seminary in Korea. His journey from there to Kasam is quite a story.

Ho-Jin enjoyed teaching, but he felt a call to go to the countryside, to go back to his own family's roots. He didn't want to go but, as he said; God persuaded him at last. For two and a half years, again in his words, "he preached, but the farmers didn't want to hear his words." He was trying to convert them to "life-farming" to farming that takes into account the whole situation, of land, people, social needs and viable economics. They didn't listen to his preaching so he became a farmer himself and became an expert in the methods of organic farming, not only on the ground, but also in relation to contemporary biological and horticultural science. Now the farmers knew he understood their situation, so they accepted him as their friend and listened to his words! By this time he was also teaching organic farming at the University.

They didn't listen to his preaching so he became a farmer himself...

The next call came from the Church of South India, seeking his assistance for one month a year. He got involved with the situation, in particular researching the needs of the dalits, the poorest people of India, and felt a strong call to stay. That was five years ago.

His dream for India is "to spread out the movement for planting trees for life." Forests have been removed and inappropriate farming practices have harmed the soil. Trees are needed to develop ground water for the soil and for drinking. There are good traditional Indian fruit trees that can be re-established and provide food and income as well as soil health. Also needed are toilets - to reduce pollution of waterways. Establishing supplies of clean water and reviving the Indian soil that has died is the major goal. It involves education for life.

You know you've created God in your own image when God hates exactly the same people that you do.

International Points for Prayer

Some excerpts from an e-mail prayer link of the International Rural Church Ecumenical Association

From Canada, after news of deaths from the cold in India and Bangladesh and churches helping by offering shelter for the homeless:

Here at least we expect cold weather and have homes and clothing to try and live in it. Street people and those with poor housing really suffer. Many churches have programs for the homeless to give them a meal and shelter. In some areas local churches rotate with Monday the United Church night, Tuesday the Roman Catholic etc. - done as an inter-church team project.

From Germany:

The Protestant Farmers Association of Wuerttemberg, hosted an international delegation of farmers and farm leaders from Canada, Honduras, Hong Kong, Thailand, India, Kenya and Tanzania en route to Geneva to demonstrate regarding the World Trade Organisation agriculture agreement. They met with German farmers to discuss "agriculture in the WTO - what will international liberalization of agriculture bring for the farmers all over the world?"

From South India:

Pray for a rural congregation - Arappakkam, near Vellore. It is a small village surrounded by fields, consisting of about 200 houses. 80 Christian families are worshipping in a small church. Recently, in spite of the Anti-conversion law, 5 families of higher caste were baptized, which boosted the witnessing life at Arappakkam. Do continue to pray for this church.

In the midst of the bush fire crisis in Australia:

Prayers for protection, a listening ear, balanced emotions on the ground, wisdom and the right words to say and to preach would be appreciated.

From Romania:

I would ask to pray for a Pentecostal pastor, who is working in one of the worst prisons in Romania. His name is Gabor Istvan. He has a very hard but useful job there.

From India:

The challenge to the Church universal is to discover and to rediscover the point of need, the throbbing heartbeat, bridges to the Gospel of God, each village, each community, each town. Each unit has its ethos. We have to discover and rediscover the meaning, the power, the glory of the Gospel of God in the context and then to present the Gospel

From USA:

We pray for God's justice and righteousness to prevail in the time ahead whatever it may hold though we don't know - God alone does. The tides can be held and the peace can come through ways we do not even imagine. We pray with all who join their voices in the Lord's prayer... Thy kingdom come...Thy will be done...On earth as it is in heaven...

Rural Conference in NSW

Water for Parched Earth: Refreshment for Life in Rural Communities

Dubbo Parklands is the venue for a Rural Ministry Conference to be held from 15 to 17 August 2003. Hosted by the Uniting Church in Australia New South Wales Rural Ministry Unit it offers a varied programme including:

Four different worship experiences

- Café Church
- Outdoor Eucharist
- e.Worship
- Dubbo City Jazz Service

Biblical/Theological reflection on the theme

Electives

- Worship as Mission
- e.Worship
- Resourcing lay ministry teams
- Church to the Community

New Zealanders interested in attending can contact the editor of *Rural Network News* for a copy of the registration form or make further enquires to Wendy White, Rural Mission and Evangelism, PO Box 1003, DUBBO NSW 2830, Ph: 61 2 6885 4217, Fax: 61 2 6884 5847, e-mail: bomrural@bigpond.net.au

Coping With Stress

Positive Stress – the kind you experience when you get married

Negative Stress - loss of a family member, divorce, a day when nothing goes right, machinery breakdowns, loss of a valuable animal, no help when it's needed

- stress increases the risk of natural defences being overwhelmed by it
- signs of stress: weight loss or gain, problems sleeping, agitated or greatly slowed-down behaviour, tiredness, inability to think clearly, feelings of worthlessness, thoughts of death, changes in routine or social withdrawal, increase in illness or accidents, decline in personal/farm/home appearance, dramatic change in children's behaviour, substance abuse, abuse or

neglect of family/animals, verbal and physical abuse, giving away treasured possessions

Pointers for coping with negative stress

- Live in the present, but learn from the past. Take time for yourself without feeling guilty about it. Do something enjoyable.
- Accept what you cannot change, and change what you can ... Talk to trusted friends, spiritual leaders or professional counsellors.
- Get regular exercise, proper diet and enough sleep.
- Build your network of support, - family, friends and community.

For people helping friends coping with stress

- Take threats of suicide seriously.
- Practise 'active' listening and 'reflect' listening by trying to listen more than respond - reflect on the feelings behind what is being said.
- Avoid giving advice, quick reassurance or placing blame. Don't interrupt, lecture or pretend to have all the answers.
- Remember everyone has the right to their own unique feelings, ideas and values; a person's feelings and values are never wrong.
- Don't assume the situation will take care of itself. Don't be sworn to secrecy, especially if a friend threatens to take their own life.
- Do not act shocked at what someone says, challenge statements or argue/debate moral issues.

collated by Joyce Sasse from notes by Diane Sasser, an agricultural and a family development specialist, on www.lsuagcenter.com

Openness to God - children write...

Dear God,
Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they each had their own rooms.

Larry

Dear God,
Thank you for the baby brother but what I asked for was a puppy. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up.

Joyce



Trans-Tasman 2004

Information has very recently come to us regarding the next Trans-Tasman Rural Ministry Conference. These Conferences have been held every four years since 1984, alternating between Australia and New Zealand.

Jan Trengrove of the South Australia Synod of the the Uniting Church in Australia advises us that the next conference will be held in Clare, South Australia, from September 27th - October 1st, 2004.

The Theme will be *Recapturing Passion For The Local Church*

Details will be available via a web site and from the Conference organisers in the next 4 - 5 months. Let the editor of this newsletter know if you would like to be on their contact list.

BOTTOM OF THE BARREL

This earnest Christian couple felt it important to own an equally earnest Christian pet. So, they went shopping.

At a kennel specializing in this particular breed, they found a dog they liked quite a lot. When they asked the dog to fetch the Bible, he did it in a flash. When they instructed him to look up Psalm 23, he complied equally fast, using his paws with dexterity. They were impressed, purchased the animal, and went home.

That night they had friends over. They were so proud of their new dog and his major skills; they called in the dog and showed off a little. The friends were impressed and asked whether the dog was able to do any of the usual dog tricks as well.

This stopped the couple cold, as they hadn't thought about "normal" tricks.

"Well," they said, "Let's try him out." Once more they called the dog and they clearly pronounced the command, "Heel!"

Quick as a wink, the dog jumped up, put his paw on the man's forehead, closed his eyes in concentration and bowed his head.

From RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton

Requesting from our Readers...

Rural Network News has two requests to make of our readers at this time in the life and development of the Canterbury Rural Ministry Unit's publication.

We are ready to receive more contributions to the cost of producing this newsletter three times a year. Would you like to send either \$5 or \$10 or more? If so, please use the enclosed slip or the cut-off piece at the bottom of this page and post your donation to (Cheques to "Diocese of Christchurch"):

Rural Ministry
Diocese of Christchurch
PO Box 4438
Christchurch.

We also seek your feedback on the content of the newsletter. What other stories are there to be told? What other issues? Who would you like to see contributing? Please contact the editor:

Robyn McPhail
9 Jackson Street
Methven 8353
chirmac@xtra.co.nz

For peace of the heart, resign from being the general manager of the universe.

Anthony de Mello



This occasional newsletter is printed and distributed by Anglican Diocese of Christchurch, PO Box 4438, Christchurch, ph 03 379 5950, fax 03 379 5954. Editor: Robyn McPhail, 9 Jackson Street, Methven 8353, ph/fax 03 302 8151, email: chirmac@xtra.co.nz Thanks to all contributors and to Garth Cant for editorial assistance. Contributions of news, views, insights on anything to do with the rural church, its ministry and gospel mission gratefully received.

TO: Rural Ministry, Diocese of Christchurch, PO Box 4438, Christchurch

Please find \$ _____ enclosed as a donation for *Rural Network News*

[N.B cheques to "Diocese of Christchurch"]

From _____ (name)
(address [optional])