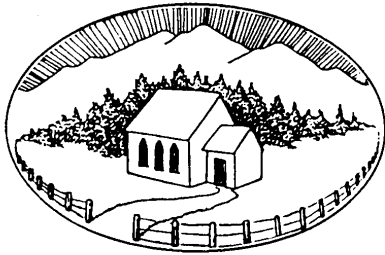


# Rural Network News



No. 37

July 2008

People who say that something is impossible should not interrupt those who are managing to get it done.

*source unknown*

Rural Network News aims to share ideas for ministry in neighbourhood and land-based communities.  
*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.*

## THE GIFT OF A DEACON

Over recent times many parts of the world wide church have been rediscovering the order of deacons. According to a New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa, deacons are called to “serve in the name of Christ, and so remind the whole Church that serving others is essential to all ministry.” (p.891) Since 2003 the Anglican Parish of Clevedon has experienced first hand just what this order has to offer, in and through the person of Reverend Colin Neal.

Coming from a business management background, with a passion for serving others, and particular gifts for working with children, youth, elderly and differently abled people, Colin has used his many gifts and skills to help the parish build on its service to the community.

The Parish has a long history of service which includes ‘Coffee’n’Kids’, After School Care, Fireside Bridge Club, a drop-in-centre, and a

games group to name a few. Upon his arrival Colin spent time listening to the local congregations and also using demographic information to explore what other needs the parish might address; then setting short, medium and long term goals.

Since then he has helped the parish build on these important ministries adding School Holiday Programmes, Food Bank, Seasons Programme (grief and loss support for children), and Drug Proof Your Kids. The monthly Café Service held in the parish hall from 5:30pm to 7pm has proven to be a great success with young families who don’t normally attend church, and his monthly Men’s Breakfast has become a popular time for the men-folk to enjoy a guest speaker and then sort out sports and world issues over their bacon and eggs.

One of Colin’s many loves is gardening. Living in a multi-centred rural parish provides him with a surfeit of opportunities, caring for gardens, grounds and three historic cemeteries. With the support of a small group of parishioners Colin hosts local Community Worker Teams each week, thereby providing opportunities not only to keep grounds and buildings beautifully presented, but also for life-giving table fellowship which is so much a part of Christian ministry.

Along with these many activities, his participation in worship and also with pastoral services, one of Colin’s major contributions to the life of the parish has been the funding he has sourced for many of these community services. Colin’s presence has enabled the parish to play an ever more active part in caring for our local communities. Deacons truly are a gift!

Sandy Neal, Clevedon, South Auckland

The church treasurer was ecstatic.

“Look at this,” she yelled. “We just got a cheque here for \$200 thousand.”

“Who is it from?” asked the minister.

“Whoops. Wait a minute,” said the treasurer, taking another look at the cheque. “It says, ‘You will notice that I have not signed the cheque, since I wish to remain anonymous.’”

From RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton. There’s no charge to subscribe to RUMORS. Send an email message to [rums@joinhands.com](mailto:rums@joinhands.com) with SUBSCRIBE in the subject-line

## **TRANS-TASMAN RURAL MINISTRY FORUM 2008**

Two friends (one lay, one clergy) attended the Forum in Clare four years ago and were bubbling on their return, so when a web-link appeared in the Methodist eMessenger I eagerly navigated my way to the info about this year's meeting in Nelson/Marlborough. The venue sounded great, the topics were very appealing to a part-time minister in a small rural parish and the parish gave the all-clear, so I decided I could do this! Monday 7 April saw me on the Interislander on my way to Picton.

From the moment of my arrival there, the Forum was all that my friends had let me to expect – and more! A friendly face with a TTRC sign (thanks, Graham) was waiting to transport me and two Aussies through to Blenheim – complete with commentary and a brief tour through a picturesque rural church on the way. A warm welcome and food at Wesley Centre set the pattern for the remainder of the week – we were extremely well-fed and watered at what seemed like two-hourly intervals! Time to meet others and learn our theme song, “Christ with us”, for our waiata, before a short drive to Omaka Marae, where we were welcomed on in a traditional powhiri.

Omaka Marae was to be our home for the first two nights. Communal sleeping was a new experience even for many of the Kiwis, let alone the majority of the Aussies, and I was impressed by everyone's cheerful adaptability – and will not be drawn into any comments about which contingent contributed the most impressive snores – except to say that, as with any sporting event between the two countries, the competition was strong.

From beginning to end, the conference was extremely well planned and executed. On Day 2 we set off in buses to visit either the Havelock or Awatere areas – both routes looking at the changing patterns of rural life in the area, especially in relation to land use, alternative commercial ventures, and the impact of change on the rural churches. The down-side was having to choose between the two trips!

Day 3, after the tidy-up at the Marae, we were again into a bus, to travel to St Arnaud on Lake Rotoiti, where we learned more about that area and

the modern community-built ecumenical church overlooking the lake. From there we travelled to Teapot Valley and settled into our bunkrooms at the Christian Camp – our home for the remainder of the conference. The focus for these two days was the workshops – once again we had to choose – three out of twelve! The three I chose (Developing Sustainable Models of Rural Ministry, Evangelism in the Rural Setting and Revitalizing Dry Bones) were all well-prepared, interesting and helpful – and I heard similar comments about the other workshops.

As well as the workshop presenters, we had several other speakers who informed, challenged, provoked and intrigued us on a variety of topics linked to the rural scene.

To all this add Father Phil's sensitive and thought-provoking devotions each morning, the bliss of singing well-chosen and competently-led songs surrounded by more than 70 others (including those glorious male voices), and adequate “down-time” in which to walk, relax, chat with others and compare the challenges we face in rural ministry and the response to those challenges. It was an unforgettable experience, the organisers and all concerned are to be heartily congratulated – and TTRF 2012 in Queensland, watch out – here I come!!

Margaret Hall, Carterton, Wairarapa

### **A VIEW FROM AMONG THE ORGANISING TEAM**

It is amazing what you will agree to four years out from a project. At the end of the Clare Trans Tasman Rural Conference Garth Cant asked if I thought the Top of the South Island would like to host the next New Zealand event suggesting that it could be a moving event from Marlborough to Nelson. On returning home having talked to one or two people we begin working towards the 2008 conference.

A year and a half went with little happening until we took the plunge and tried to form a group to plan the event. We were very keen to make it an ecumenically planned event, however it was rather difficult to get people to commit to being part of the organising group. The Anglican Diocese came on board with the promise of secretarial and

administration help and this helped tremendously in the advertising and co ordination of information.

Our first meetings were a collective of people from across the Top of the South. To help make sure we did not miss things we widened the group by emailing minutes of meetings to people that had been involved in past events. Early on it was decided the three principal areas should organise the events in their areas. This split the work load and the responsibility. Having heard that in the past organisers found it difficult planning with no definite numbers to plan we planned and budgeted on three model scenarios 80, 100 and 120 people which helped us to be flexible as the registrations came in.

A major task was, how best to let people know of the event. We received a quote for a web page design of \$3000 so we learnt how to create our own. This also meant we could tweak it as more information came to hand. Other ways of getting the information out to people was through denominational mailings, ICRA and other email listings. To make communication easier, cost effective and more immediate we purposely tried to do as much communication as possible via email and on the whole this worked well.

With registrations rolling in we collected all the data on to a database so the information could be easily analysed and correlated to each area of the conference. As we started the week of the conference there much to do with people and gear to be organised. It was a thrill to see how many parts began to dovetail together as each part of the organising groups efforts were combined to make the conference as a whole.

Now all that is to be said is well done team you created a conference that left many people blessed and challenged to continue developing rural ministry. We look forward to experiencing what the Australians organise in four years time.

Martin Harrison, Brightwater, Nelson

## Prayer from the Trans-Tasman Closing Service

Creator God, God of surf and creek,  
of bush and tussock,  
of mountain plain and valley,  
we come seeking your presence

in our worship.

We have seen your presence  
in your natural world  
and in the creativity of your people,  
yet we often still take you for granted and  
fail to fully appreciate and acknowledge you.

EVER LIVING GOD WE THANK YOU THAT  
DESPITE OUR HALF-HEARTEDNESS,  
OUR IGNORANCE, OUR LACK OF JUSTICE  
YOU STILL PERSEVERE WITH US.

You come as a mountain –  
like Tapuaenuku or Kosiusko –  
a sign to help us in our search for identity.

YOU COME AS A RIVER – LIKE MURRAY  
OR WAIRAU – A SIGN OF YOUR POWER  
FLOWING INTO OUR LIVES

You come as a tree of the forest –  
like beech or gum –  
majestic and strong, filling us with awe;  
allowing us to shelter under your branches.

YOU COME AS THE BIRDS –  
LIKE KOOKABURA AND BELLBIRD –  
SINGING THE SONG OF LIFE  
AND FAITH TO US,  
CALLING US INTO YOUR PRESENCE.

You come as a rushing wind –  
like the nor'wester –  
to blow away old habits and past mistakes  
YOU COME AS LAND – LIKE AOTEAROA-NZ  
OR AUSTRALIA – GIVING US A HOME,  
A PLACE WHERE WE MAY LIVE

In the church – your whare karakia –  
you surround us with your presence,  
empower us to be your people,  
and entrust us to care for your creation

WE THANK YOU  
THAT IN THE COURSE OF TIME  
YOU SENT JESUS TO LIVE  
AS ONE OF US THAT THROUGH HIM  
THE POOR MIGHT FIND RELEASE,  
THE OPPRESSED LIBERTY,  
THE SORROWFUL JOY,  
AND THE SICK HEALING AND WHOLENESS.

SO WITH ALL THE LIVING  
AND ALL WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US,  
WE PRAISE YOUR HOLY NAME AND  
COMMIT OURSELVES TO YOUR WAYS.  
AMEN.

## HOUSE CHURCH MISSION

*Late in 2007 Bruce Fraser, Mission Advisor for the Presbyterian Church in Otago and Southland visited the Cariboo Church in Canada. David Webber made a valuable contribution to the IRCA Conference in Canada in July 2007 and Chris Bedford reported enthusiastically in the September edition of RNN.*

Cariboo Church on the Cariboo-Chilcotin plateau covers one fifth of British Columbia (~80,000km<sup>2</sup>). Between the coastal mountains in the west and the Rockies in the east it sits at about 900m above sea level and 500km by road north-west of Vancouver. Staff travel 2,500km a week to service the area.

The team is: David and Linda Webber along with Charles McNeil and his wife Shannon Finley, all at Lac La Hache, about an hour south of Williams Lake, the principal town of the Cariboo, and John Wyminga and Shannon Bell-Wyminga based in Nazko, about three hours north from Williams Lake. The team also includes the elders of the parish.

Parish life is based on a house church model

Parish life is based on a house church model, 15 house churches in all and being in the parish for only three days I visited just three of them. The parish is so vast in size that it is not possible to fully appreciate the work being done after such a short visit and my thoughts need to be read in that context.

I was deeply impressed and humbled by what I saw and the commitment of those serving the Lord in the Cariboo.

Go to [www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca](http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca) for parish vision and history, and a map.

### HOUSE CHURCHES

Besides meeting in homes, there are some 'chapel' meetings in church buildings, plus with Bible Study groups, outreach to communities and schools. Each house group has its own character. People are drawn from various places to the house churches. While some are Presbyterian, it is being a Christian witness in the community that is the focus. Therefore the work is interdenominational and ecumenical. People come from various church and no church backgrounds while others have come because they have found something to which

they relate better than the more traditional expressions of church.

The mission focus is on *being church where no other church will go*. That is why much of the parish is in remote places which otherwise would have no Christian witness in the community.

### PUNCHAW HOUSE CHURCH

The house church at Punchaw meets in a rancher's home. This ranch, a 50 cow place, is owned and farmed by an elderly couple Anne and Michael. Michael suffers from Parkinson's and early stages of dementia.

Because of sickness and snow other members of this house church were not able to attend so it was John Wyminga, elder Ginny Alexander, myself and our hosts. We sat about the dining room table. Because it was Advent and this group meets bi-weekly we started by lighting two of the Advent candles. We sang Christmas songs to guitar and keyboard, Scripture was read, prayers were shared.

John had prepared a teaching for the evening but didn't use it, instead inviting discussion on the Scripture passages. In the end Anne simply needed to talk through the pain of their situation on the ranch (more about that later) and health issues facing other members of the community.

a simplicity and honesty, dealing with real people and real needs

In this simple service in a rancher's home there was more reality, more sense of the presence of God, than I have experienced in many other places. There was a simplicity and honesty, dealing with real people and real needs. The whole experience had an authenticity and naturalness that I have not experienced for a long time. I was impressed. The evening finished with supper and then the drive back through the snow to Nazko.

### MCLEESE LAKE

McLeese Lake house church was a very different experience from Punchaw. There were more people to start with – eight adults and 14 young people and children. The evening started with a 'choir practice' for a community Christmas event that was coming up.

Again Advent candles were lit, Scripture was read, Christmas songs were sung led by a music group, prayers were shared and David Webber, who led

this group, taught from the Scripture passages. David gave an opportunity for people to reflect on the message and the readings.

People were asked to share concerns for prayer – some were given and it was interesting to note the concern here as well for the ranchers.

### **SHERIDAN LAKE HOUSE CHURCH**

This again involved over an hour's driving, this time with David Webber, to reach the ranch house where the meeting was being held. Twelve adults were present with the same material as the previous night and David leading the evening.

The 'feel' of this service was much more like the Punchaw experience but with larger numbers. David drew them out well in discussion following his teaching and there was good participation in the time of intercessory prayer. Again there is the real concern and pain for the plight of the ranching families.

### **NAZKO**

The house church at Nazko worships in a way that is related to First Nations culture, including the use of traditional instruments and language. The language is used in aspects of the house church for singing and Scripture reading. I was disappointed to miss the house church by one night.

Jon travels to a more remote First Nations village Kluskus to conduct a house church with them. This used to involve a float plane trip once a month, now there is a road. Before this road, or the float plane, the trip took between four to six hours along an old wagon trail, but now the new road has reduced the travel time to an hour and a half for the 60km. They are pleased to have the road!

### **PLANTING NEW HOUSE CHURCHES**

David said there was no strategic plan for planting new house churches. He used to look at communities to see where a good place would be to plant a house church. This strategy rarely worked. When a group asked for a house church in their community, even though that was not a place David would have considered, it worked.

It is seen as letting God call the shots

It is seen as letting God call the shots. David told me, "I've really, always had the attitude...let's find out what God does, rather than saying this is what we should do.....so I guess if somebody was to

criticise at least my input into this ministry over the years it would be that I haven't been intentional enough; and sometimes I think that God would criticise me the other way and say I've been too intentional, (so) back off!"

From my conversations with members of the team I would say this is something held in common by them. To me it works and it is in line with the ministry of Jesus who said that he only did what the Father showed him to do. I wonder what our place would look like working on that same principle?

### **"A HOUSE CHURCH MISSION REACHING OUT WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO PEOPLE IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE TRADITIONAL CHURCH"<sup>1</sup>**

I saw just a little of the true scope of the work, but what I did observe is a group of missionaries who are deeply committed to what they have been called to, work very hard in often difficult circumstances, and have a heart that the people in the Cariboo should have every opportunity to know the grace of God as seen in Jesus Christ.

The Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland are planning to host David and Linda Webber to New Zealand next year to speak at a rural conference in the Otago Southland region.

The Webbers would be available for other regional events in New Zealand before returning to Canada.

No firm date has yet been set but it could be the middle of next year. If you are interested in hosting them at a gathering in your region, please contact me at [synod.mission@xtra.co.nz](mailto:synod.mission@xtra.co.nz)

The visiting minister was trying to have a conversation with a child, while its mother was in the kitchen preparing the tea and cookies that would add more pounds to the minister's already portly posterior.

"What does your mother do for you when you've been a good girl?" the minister asked.

"I get to stay home from church," said the child.

From RUMORS email newsletter © Ralph Milton.

<sup>1</sup> [www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca](http://www.cariboopresbyterianchurch.bc.ca)

## LET'S SHARE OUR TREASURE

This is Robyn's plea that we take deliberate steps to share our Bible's treasure with our communities. It is a plea particularly to those of us who are part of rural or edge-of-rural churches, where the local economy has been reliant on land (or sea) and where viability and sustainability are growing concerns (pun intended). Livelihood for family farmers (and fishers), the viability of local communities, soil and water use, and sustainable fish stocks are increasingly in question. And now food justice and supply is taking centre stage as a global concern. We need to share our biblical book of books, which is full of rural stories and sustainable wisdom.

Assumptions are made about the Bible have fenced it off and effectively shut people out from hearing its life-giving voices. Part of the Bible's credibility problem has been that it has been interpreted predominantly with one voice, and that this voice, in the words of one Chinese writer, "not only claims to provide the answer but defines the question too!"<sup>2</sup> A rich mix of narratives and traditions has been drawn under one all-encompassing meta-narrative, namely, Christian salvation. "A thin-sliced understanding" is how Kwok describes what has driven this meta-narrative. Yet, in the way of imperialism, this Western world-view has presented it as universal truth. It is not that this perspective is wrong – far from it. It is just that, as a solo voice and excluding others, it has put restrictions on opportunities for the Bible's rich mix to speak to different people, in different times and places.

The Bible's relevance has been doubted, because the voices that might speak to our variety of concerns have not been allowed to come to light. In fact the Bible contains the very kind of confusion and uncertainty, conflict and ambiguity that are a fact of life for us. A 'one track' approach to biblical interpretation has hidden this away and has blinkered us to the underlying 'ruralness' in the Bible's texts.

Many people have rejected the Bible's answers in the manner they have been promoted – or have

simply not been interested in them – because their own questions prove hard to relate to the key question on offer: 'are you saved?' It has not been a straightforward step from pressing practical problems to the usual matters under discussion in church circles. I would venture to suggest that a form of trickle-down theory has been at work, namely, that if the issue of personal sinfulness is sorted, other aspects of life will come right too. But when, for example, one is looking for clues for how to farm faithfully, in terms of integrity in economics, ethics and land care, the need for practical answers is immediate. Self-employed owner-operators on the land face a confusion of decisions as they try to hold together finances, family and looking after the land. There is a 'poverty of spirit' that thirsts for direction and purpose here and now and does not have time to wait. But this poverty of spirit *need* not wait. We have a treasure at hand that can help us look at central issues of our viability and the sustainability of rural life into the future.

A word of caution however. To engage with the Bible with a view to gaining insights to practical issues of life and livelihood, we must be ready for surprises. We also need to be willing to speak of 'perhaps' and 'maybe' as we debate our way through to hearing God's word for our context. If we are accustomed to clear pronouncements about what a particular text means, it may be an uncomfortable experience to start a process of conversation with a text. Not having the security of somebody taking charge of where we are going may be disconcerting. We will need to trust the Spirit. But there will more chance of it being God's word that we hear – if we put ourselves and our situation into dialogue with the Bible text we are reading and let the process produce the results.

Walter Brueggeman provides substantial grounds for trusting a 'conversation' approach to the Bible. He quotes Jewish critic George Steiner who writes: "It is the Hebraic intuition that God is capable of all speech acts except that of monologue, which has generated our acts of reply, of questioning, and counter-creation."<sup>3</sup> "Dialogue," says Brueggeman, "...is not merely a strategy, but it is a practice that is congruent with our deepest nature, made as we

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<sup>2</sup> Kwok Pui Lan, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World", in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, R.S. Sugirtharajah ed., SPCK, London: 1991, pp.302-3

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<sup>3</sup> George Steiner, *Real Presences*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1989, p.225

are in the image of a dialogic God.”<sup>4</sup> Hearing the word of God is always a relational matter; and knowing God is a matter of relationship, as Jesus tells us again and again.

This dialogical approach is what I urge us, as church, to make available to ourselves and the people we live among, troubled as we are by what is happening around us and not sure how to move forward faithfully. I imagine conversations happening between text and context. I imagine life-giving conversations as life and livelihood issues meet biblical narratives, and new options break the closure of past and present. I imagine conversations in which texts of faith help us identify and challenge the death-dealing trends and forces that dominate our contemporary context. The purpose of this is, in practical terms, sustainable living. In spiritual terms, it is life in all its fullness, living in the perspective of eternity.

The majority of our rural neighbours have rejected the Bible for not helping them, or they have ignored it because it seems to be about something they cannot relate to. It has been hidden from them that this book of many books has an authority that arises, not from ‘stand alone’ infallibility, but from its faithfulness to life’s confusion, open-endedness and mystery. So long as people remain in the dark about its many voices and stories, they will be denied the opportunity to explore a treasure trove of stories to interweave with their own stories. What we could be doing together is “theology that is truly meaningful, rather than an excess of metaphorical afterthought..., deeply engaged in the problems that effectively determine our lives.”<sup>5</sup>

To engage with the Bible we must be living, active subjects, not passive receptacles, and that means we bring the perspectives and assumptions, the cultures and histories of our context. These affect how we read and how the biblical text reads us. If God speaks through this engagement, it is in the conversation that happens as we and the text ‘talk together’. We interweave our story in a retelling of the textual narrative, thereby bringing it “closer to

where we are, so that the Bible can surface among us”<sup>6</sup>.

If biblical interpretation were a singular process it would have been a closed book centuries ago. Indeed the narratives and strands of teaching that both Hebrew and Christian scripture contain would not have made it into written form if they were not already speaking to people in their varied contexts of place and time. “Reading the Bible ... is rather like pulling up a chair at a feast that has been under way for some time.”<sup>7</sup>

So let’s open up this feast to all our friends around us, to all who care about how we treat people and the land and sea we work with. Making Jesus Christ known is one way of expressing our mission in being church. The invitation to join in conversation with Christian Scripture is an invitation to people to meet a person who knew first-hand the suffering and challenges, as well as the joys and beauty, of living with the land – Jesus of Nazareth himself.

Jesus’ context was rural; he lived on the margins of a society whose powers-that-be took his life. And his primary circle of concern was the *anawim*. These ‘people of the land’ were getting poorer and poorer under a regime that was at the same time claiming to bring peace and prosperity to its extensive territory. Peace through the threat of violence, prosperity through an economic system of winners and losers – peace that is no peace, prosperity for some on top of poverty for many.

This was a society that had major issues about food supply and food justice. For Jesus, food was a constant theme and a recurring image of the kingdom of God. Here again, the Bible’s voices are speaking to our context.

Robyn McPhail, Kaeo/Kerikeri, Northland

**God is present in the force that  
makes us restless. Paul Tillich**

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Brueggeman, *Mandate to Difference: An Invitation to the Contemporary Church*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville and London: 2007, p.73

<sup>5</sup> Phillip Goodchild, “Debt, Epistemology and Ecotheology,” *Ecotheology* 9.2 (2004) p.173.

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<sup>6</sup> Jione Havea, “Is there a home for the Bible in the Postmodern World?” *Ecumenical Studies*, Vol 42 No. 4 Fall 2007, p.558.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Chilton Callaway, “Exegesis as Banquet: Reading Jeremiah with the Rabbis”, in *A Gift of God in Due Season: Essays on Scripture and Community in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Richard D. Weis and David M. Carr, p.220

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The initial indication is that the next International Rural Church Association Conference will take place in Frankfurt, Germany in August 2010. Secretary Garry Hardingham, who lives in Cloncurry, Queensland, will be join the Chairperson Lothar Schullerus, who lives in Switzerland, in visiting the venue and talking through the proposal in September this year. Following that they will consult with regional representatives and a decision will be made.

The next Oberammagau Passion Play is scheduled to take place from May to September in 2010 which also might be an enticement to Europe.

Two things we need to be considering in New Zealand are:

- Searching out monies for a fund to sponsor participants from the Pacific and for tangata whenua representatives from New Zealand
- Considering who might be keen and able to attend.

If you would like to receive email Prayer/News from IRCA, contact [chirmac@xtra.co.nz](mailto:chirmac@xtra.co.nz)

## NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

The edition of *Ruminations*, the journal of the NSW Uniting Church's Rural Ministry Unit is now available.

Email [chirmac@xtra.co.nz](mailto:chirmac@xtra.co.nz) for electronic file or subscribe for the year (March edition included) for \$15. Cheque to "Kaeo-Kerikeri Union Church". Post to Robyn McPhail, 17 Campbell Lane, Kerikeri 0230.

Rural Network News Archive  
New Location  
[www.presbyterian.org.nz/4766.0.html](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/4766.0.html)

### Other Websites of Note

[www.irca.is](http://www.irca.is)  
[www.canadianruralchurch.net](http://www.canadianruralchurch.net)  
[www.earth-ministry.com](http://www.earth-ministry.com)  
[www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk)  
[www.ruralministry.com](http://www.ruralministry.com)

## GREEN FATIGUE

'Green Fatigue' refers to a backlash against going green, a weariness imposed by the barrage of urgings to save the planet, conserve energy and to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Though support for the conservation cause remains strong according to surveys, people with green fatigue question whether new, purportedly 'greener' products are all they're cracked up to be, and whether individual efforts to help save the planet can really make a difference.

One of the things that colours their scepticism is 'green washing', the practice by some companies of falsely labelling products as greener than they are as a way to gain market share. Green as a gimmick, in other words.

I pondered what farmers, the original and perennial recyclers and protectors of the environment, would make of a green fatigue. My guess is that they will never grow weary of recycling because it's part of their work ethic, economics and livelihood. Such things as using manure as fertilizer, refurbishing equipment and recycling the old for new purposes are no more than common sense and perhaps even necessity. Ever reuse twine? Nails? Wire? Wood? Buckets? Have you conserved soil? Sequestered carbon? Made do with stuff on hand instead of making a trip to town? Bought something at a farm auction or stored stuff that might one day be useful? ...

These folks are seldom given full credit for the work they do in feeding the planet, conserving the soil and caring for land and animals.

Notes by Joyce Sasse, Pincher Creek, Canada



*This occasional newsletter is printed and distributed by Anglican Diocese of Christchurch, PO Box 4438, Christchurch, ph 03 379 5950, fax 03 379 5954.*

*Contributions of news, views, insights on anything to do with the rural church and its gospel mission gratefully received.*

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