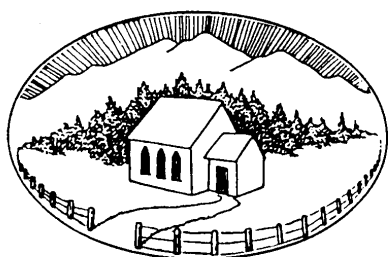


Rural Network News



No. 45

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I'm religious not because I'm ignorant. I'm religious because I'm in awe.

Howard Smith, 20th century scientist

Te kaitiakitanga, te manaakitanga, te whakawhanaungatanga. Sharing ideas for ministry in neighbourhood and land-based communities.

Free to copy and share.

Responses to items always welcome.

RESILIENCE: BUILDING ROBUST COMMUNITIES

IRCA-OCEANIA

Trans-Tasman 2-6 July 2012

Since the 2008 Trans-Tasman in Marlborough/Nelson, Aussies and Kiwis have had some tough years.

In New Zealand we have experienced floods, a mine disaster, earthquakes, the Rena shipwreck, and more floods.

For our Australian mates, a protracted drought was broken by extreme flooding. Then there were the bush fires and more floods. And, when Australia does floods, they take weeks to move through all the communities between headwaters and the sea.

In addition, changes in land use are pushing rural communities beyond recognition. The boom in mining in Australia is a source of jobs for many on both sides of the ditch. The small town of Kaeo in Northland reckons it has its own outpost in Western Australia. But at what price to community life?

We feel it at the New Zealand end as our younger workers head away from country communities and finally get the job that will bring in the putea (money). For rural communities in Australia, the mining that has come to “rescue” them economically, is cutting into the fabric that holds them together.

Herberton, Atherton Tablelands, Far North Queensland, is the venue for the 8th quadrennial Trans-Tasman Rural Conference. Herberton is an hour and 45 minutes south-west of Cairns, down the A1 and inland by route 52. Conference organisers have advised that transport will be provided free of charge for conference participants from Cairns to Herberton, if required.

The Conference begins with the evening meal at 6pm on Monday 2

July and ends with lunch at 12.30pm on Friday 6 July.

The draft programme sets aside Tuesday for sharing stories and input from a keynote speaker, the Rev Stephen Robinson on Ministry in Disaster Settings.

There are two Field Trips on Wednesday and Thursday, with half going to each place, each day. Trip 1 goes to Millaa Millaa, Malanda, and Atherton and looks at how the community has dealt with two severe cyclones and restructuring the dairy industry. Trip 2 goes to Atherton, Mareeba, and Dimbulah and considers innovative transformation and the transition from tobacco.



On three mornings the working day begins with Bible Study, led by the Rev Catherine Christie, Chairperson of IRCA. Catherine is a minister of the United Church of Canada, currently working with the Presbyterian Church in South Korea. She has many years of experience as a

rural minister and understands the challenges we face in being faithful in tough places.

There is free time on Wednesday evening and on Thursday evening the Rev Graeme Gardiner will speak on the topic of Resilience.

Friday includes time for conversations with keynote speakers and “sharing the journey” – a chance to help each other gather insights and action plans for use at home.

On the regular schedule is prayer before breakfast and at the close of day and, of course, lunch, dinner, and “smoko”. The Trans-Tasman is always an opportunity to share wisdom gained through the situations we have been facing along with our continuing concerns. It is a chance to be together in solidarity and in prayer.

The cost is AUD400 (around NZD515) for accommodation, coach trips, meals, all linen, setting up and cleaning etc. Check for flights through Gold Coast for good deals.

<http://www.irca.net.nz/oceania.html> goes to the home page for IRCA-Oceania, with links for information, agenda, and registration. Or go to irca.net.nz and click on Trans-Tasman link under “Latest IRCA news”.

I wake up in the morning and don't know whether to save the world or savour it, and this makes it hard to plan my day. E.B. White

* Don't let your worries get the best of you. Remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

* Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers.

* When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.

* Quit griping about your church. If it was perfect, you couldn't belong.

* We're called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

WILL YOU RIDE, RIDE, RIDE, WITH THE KING OF KINGS

Not so long ago I went hunting, on-line, for stories about the hymn writer Valerie Collison.

What did I find? Not Valerie Collison, but the liturgy for the “Service of Celebration of Ministry with the Waihao Cooperating Parish in South Canterbury.” (Valerie’s hymn was part of it.)

The Church Leaders were there: the Anglican Bishop, the Presbyterian Moderator, and the JRC. They came to commission and ordain the Local Shared Ministry Team.

The traditions of two parent churches were blended together in local shared ministry: Deacons and Priests; Elders and Ministers.

Helen Scott and Jan Penno share in the Ministry of Pastoral Care: one licensed and one commissioned.

Frances Young is commissioned to the Ministry of Christian Education; Janet Williams is ordained Priest; Bill Penno and Alistair Young are ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

An ordinary yet diverse group, skills discerned by congregation and parent churches, called to be the Local Shared Ministry Team. Their task is to enable the congregation of the baptised to be Christ within the Morven-Waihao community.

More recently we went back to Douglas Settlement, tucked in the hills beyond Waimate and Waihao Downs, to celebrate the centenary of that farming community which was subdivided, balloted, and settled in 1912. Twenty residents now, but 120 gathered for a day of celebrations.

No church, no school, no hall, not even a sports field, so we gathered at Adam’s woolshed. And the Waihao Ministry team was there to lead us in worship and celebration.

Frances Young led the service: Alistair Young preached the centennial sermon. Both came out of that small rural community. Both helped us travel back into 100 years of school and settlement, and then travel forward into the next 100 years.

“Living our lives for God”, said Alistair, “can be a great adventure.”

Garth Cant, Christchurch

BABY BOOMER ABSENCE FROM PEWS

The first baby boomers – the generation born between 1946 and 1964 – will reach 65 years in 2011. The numbers turning 65 in the current year in New Zealand are expected to be 18 percent higher than in the preceding 12-month period.

The members of this major ‘generation’ who have launched the more extravagant consumer era are conspicuously absent from the pews of our Protestant Churches.

A report from the Office for Senior Citizens (2011) published by the Ministry of Social Development (www.msd.govt.nz), ‘The Business of Ageing’, summarises some of the differences in culture.

Perhaps the single most important change can be seen is a spectacular increase in average life expectancy. Since World War II this has risen from 65 years to 80 years. Furthermore the state of health in old age, both physical and mental, is markedly improved, assisted by major advances in household incomes, medicine and patient care.

In New Zealand, the urban based population has also increased by a factor ten times that of postwar rural settlement and so there are relatively fewer faces in the countryside. This has provided church authorities with an additional challenge to the marked

reduction in age ratio seen Sunday by Sunday in the pews. As a result many little country churches have been recycled as delightful restaurants and centres of craftsmanship.

Jolyon Manning and his wife Dr Enny Manning have now formally gifted their 50-year parkland creation, Jolendale, to a community charitable trust for long term care and safe-keeping. This is their “contribution to the reversal of the ‘tragedy of the commons’.

In these two articles Jolyon offers food for thought on our changing context from the perspective of his lifetime of work and reflection. Thank you, Jolyon, for your continuing support of this publication and for not letting the years dampen your challenge to the Church.

The city has been described as a marketplace of ideas and face to face encounter. 87 percent of all New Zealand residents live in our cities and towns. Certainly there are factors of economic benefit arising from closer settlement. Mega-cities are much in the news these days, a long list of cities worldwide even bigger than our own Auckland ‘supercity’, where further in-migration is predicted to continue apace. According to the World Bank report ‘Reshaping Economic Geography’ (2009) countries both rich and poor will optimize well-being by concentrating growth even more in the big cities.

But there has been a rising appreciation of wilderness values.

Little wonder then that the wealthy city dwellers in our midst, when approaching the end of their principal life chapter of full-time paid employment, seek a special ‘place in the sun’ amongst magnificent landscapes, such as the Central Otago lakes district. Wanaka today is the fastest growing rural township in New Zealand and could claim the title of ‘capital’ of lifestyle settlement.

A decline in interest by postwar baby boomers in lifetime community-centred commitments is one of the unprecedented changes in the cultural preference of this age group. Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, pointed to major changes taking place in his memorable BBC Reith Lecture series (1990) titled, ‘the persistence of faith in a secular society’. He spoke of observations in the UK and USA, but New Zealand is perhaps the most secularized country in the world. Dr Sacks’ presentation on the status of the family is most instructive. It is really worth reading (and downloading) on the computer.¹

For most individuals and family circles, life today is more episodic. In a series of diverse and temporary vocation chapters we encounter a wilderness of choice, or over-choice. In these circumstances we need to strengthen our anchorages and close

¹http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/rmhttp/radio4/transcripts/1990_reith3.pdf

relationships. The art of the long view comes more naturally perhaps to tree growers than to those who enjoy a variety of short term experiences and bountiful change in environment.

We all need to re-examine our life cycle journeys in the light of postwar changes flooding in all around us. The 1990 Reith lectures were helpful in particular in reminding us of the very special nature of the traditional family nest, a matter which is worrying the politicians and others today as they endeavour to mend social instability. Dr Sachs observed rather astutely that in a technological society age loses the authority of wisdom.

The parables of Jesus Christ and the Gospel message carried by our churches are still relevant

The parables of Jesus Christ and the Gospel message carried by our churches are still relevant. To convey this however we need to understand the changed and changing situation. The fundamental changes of the postwar years combine now with the ageing of the baby boomers who frequently come from a lifetime of neglected faith anchorage. We also need to take account of the ideas and prophecies of community leaders and others beyond the church. Over the years countless people have enriched our understanding of social and cultural obligation and heritage, and we need to listen to their wisdom.

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND WILDERNESS VALUES

The Sabbath and Jubilee Year feature prominently in the biblical stories: time for personal refreshment, new energy and vision; commitment to good stewardship of timeless assets of landscape and priceless but vulnerable forms of life with which we share Planet Earth.

our working lives often take the form of a series of distinctive but separate episodes

Today we live longer, with better health. There is more room for flexibility in our working lives and they often take the form of a series of distinctive but separate episodes. The typical paid 'working life' at the end of World War II usually embraced the one vocation, often following an inter-generational family pattern. It stretched from about age 15 to age 60 with a few years of free choice 'retirement'. Today the formal lifetime may extend from age 20 (following tertiary education) to age 65 with informal 'retirement' activity of 15/25 years.

It has been a traditional academic practice to take periodic 'sabbatical leave' at about 7-year intervals, a custom often adopted by 'uniform branch' members of the Protestant Churches. Whilst the accent has hitherto been placed on continuing education and travel abroad there are

other useful aspects that might be profitably explored in a move to a more broadly based sabbatical leave.

Professor Charles Handy (*The Empty Raincoat*, 1994) has drawn attention to the well known 'sigmoid curve' which highlights episodic change in a person's life. With more frequent changes in vocation and residential location, the whole question of succession planning has become even more important in the lives of ordinary people (and for governing authorities with 3/5 year electoral processes). Professor Handy has emphasized the need to plan in advance the approaching changes in vocation and choices of residential location.

Churches have a lengthy tradition of periodical 'retreats' taken for spiritual refreshment. Places rich in wilderness values are often favoured for such 'time out'. However the expanding close settlement of urban centres has made regular access to places of a more peaceful atmosphere more difficult for many, this in spite of much enhanced vehicles of mobility.

In a society of increased income inequality, this reduction in access has led to a new chapter in settlement practices – conspicuous 'lifestyle' settlements. For example, second home 'mansions' rather than more simple holiday 'cribs/baches' now dominate the lakeside and seafront.

‘neighbourwoods’... semi-natural landscapes ... to be enjoyed by nearby residents

One way of making the ‘wilderness’ more accessible is to purposefully plan what Danish forestry planners title ‘neighbourwoods’: semi-natural landscapes, places of trees and wild flowers to be enjoyed by nearby residents; places that add much needed biodiversity with a higher regard given to local bird and insect populations.

In 1989 the eminent Anglican zoologist, Professor John Morton, based in Auckland, presented under the authority of the General Synod of the (Anglican) Church of the Province of New Zealand, a practical and well informed handbook titled *Christ, Creation and the Environment*. This has been largely ignored in the life of the Anglican Communion in our parts. In contrast is the very prominent increase in support of dialogue on conservation and sustainability and their practice in our communities, especially among our young people.

A key mantra of the ‘Ecology Action’ group of some years back was ‘think globally but act locally’. Here in Alexandra, Central Otago, the Manning family have for the past 53 years been doing just that with the creation of Jolendale Park. It is now permanently protected by QEII National Trust for Open Space

covenant (2004). Gifted to a special purpose charitable trust for long term care as a ‘neighbourwood’ for an urban settlement, it is the only registered semi-arid woodland reserve in New Zealand.²



This we think is consistent with the biblical Jubilee Year tradition of transfer of temporary land tenancy care for the benefit of generations yet to be born.

The allocation of several sabbatical or ‘gap’ years during the important family rearing period – the earliest 20/25 years of married life – would provide dedicated space for quality time as between parents and young family members, some time for personal involvement in voluntary community service, as well as an opportunity to further educational insight and travel, and a time for understanding the changes that are taking place in employees and employers alike. Since most folk now enjoy longer working lives funding

² http://www.openspace.org.nz/Site/Places_to_visit/South_Island_public/Jolendale_Park.aspx

could take the form of reverse superannuation.

Nearly 60 years' personal and family connections with the St Martin Island Community Inc. on the Otago Harbour have helped to shape the insights shared above.

Readers are most warmly welcome to visit our home at Jolendale Park, which is open daily year round, and we could perhaps discuss some of the above ideas together.

Tending the flames rather than worshipping the ashes

Jolyon Manning, Alexandra
jolenda@ihug.co.nz

PAEROA, THE BEST TOWN IN NEW ZEALAND, CELEBRATES

Recently the people of Paeroa celebrated their being awarded the Mitre 10 New Zealand community of the year for 2012 with a street parade. The town promoter reporting on the award said, "topping the community groups' list would have to be the Paeroa Community Support Trust. It has so many programmes designed to meet the needs of the community; members touch every sector of our community in a supporting and caring way."

The trust was formed sixteen years ago by the Paeroa Cooperating Church parishioners so that they could better reach out to people in a loving and caring way.

The Trust had six vehicles in the parade - the Out of School Music group two; Paeroa Neighbours, the local food bank; the community bus, with wheel chair access, used to take people shopping, and people in wheelchairs to medical appointments; volunteer drivers who give door to door service for people with hospital appointments; and a vehicle advertising the many activities of the Trust Music and Movement, Toy library, budgeting services, Soup and Roll lunches, disco for special people; the Oscar programmes which provide before school, after school, and holiday programmes for children, had one each.



The Church and the Trust have the same office with the minister's office off it. Three women job share in the office which is open 8:30am till 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

It is a busy office with people from many walks of life visiting it. They are all warmly welcomed, and there is always a willing ear for those who need it.

Janice Purdie, Paeroa

RUAHINE MISSIONAL MINISTRY

“Ruahine Anglicans” is an initiative in the Diocese of Waiapu to develop missional ministry among the seven parishes of the region that stretches along Highway 2 from Woodville in the south to Waipawa in the north and out to the east coast.

Two of these parishes were relatively healthy vicar-led parishes, five relatively healthy local-shared ministry parishes and the new model follows the principles of the ministry of all the baptised. Neither financial nor staffing concerns drove this initiative, rather a desire to get out from behind the four walls of our churches and get our feet more under the tables of our communities, to be where God is already engaged in doing wonderful things and work alongside.

Stipended staff have increased from two to three: a regional missionary, a regional convenor and a half-time regional pastor. They are called to be coaches and trainers, enablers and teachers.

The team, Rev Heather Flavell (Otane), Rev Craig Smith, (Waipukurau), and Canon Tim Delaney (Dannevirke), offer this vision for the missional journey:

This early stage in our new positions has featured constant communication by phone, email and rather long weekly meetings that fortunately include coffee and food! Mapping the missional journey is hard work but very exciting as we seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Some visions for the future are beginning to emerge.

Fresh expressions of Church

Our seven parishes are largely rural, supported by the service towns of Woodville, Dannevirke, Waipukurau and Waipawa and a number of smaller centres.

Many families living in the rural areas no longer have the same sense of community that existed in their parents and grandparents time. A large number of people travel daily out of the area to nearby towns and cities to work. Travelling to the nearest church for Sunday worship is no longer an attractive weekend priority. However, we believe that God is out there in in our rural areas and that joining together as community is important. We intend to engage with our diverse rural communities by taking church to them.

There is enthusiasm in Ongaonga for an animal blessing service: a local observed that the small local church would be ideal as it has secure fences and gates so that reluctant animals could not escape the blessing! Woolshed services are also being planned. Brunch @ the Buzz has been a fixture in Dannevirke for a year or two, and may serve as a model for other services. Craig brings with him some wonderfully imaginative ideas that he has experience in initiating: “Pints of View”, some very engaging annual memorial service liturgies, etc.

Emerging Social Issues

Some young people in the area use risk-taking behaviour to relieve emotional pain, boredom or out of bravado. This behaviour includes vandalism, abuse of drugs and alcohol, theft, 'boy racing'. There is also serious social isolation of some families, especially sole parents who are often attracted to the area by the lower cost of rental housing than in the cities.

We have had an initial meeting with Waiapu Anglican Social Services in Waipukurau and will offer our support by encouraging others to become involved in ventures such as the community garden and the breakfast club for local primary school children. All three of us continue to be involved in our communities: the local police, health services, St Johns Ambulance, service and sports clubs. God is already out there walking alongside the lonely and isolated, the desperate and despairing. We need to continue to support, encourage and listen to all those within our church communities and those on the margins who are led by the spirit into missional ministry in the area.

Examples would be Rev. Craig's barbeque for the local roadworkers and a parishioner's collecting of unsold magazines from the local supermarket and service station and distribution to the nearby resthomes,

and plans to build on the story-telling ministry that was developed by the Anglican community at Dannevirke's Spring Festival a few months ago.

Pastoral Care in the Wider Community

Planning has begun for the support and training of pastoral care teams throughout Ruahine. Later in the year, training will also begin for bereavement support group leaders. This six week programme for the recently bereaved supports people in their work of grief and encourages them to continue to support each other when the course is completed.

In Dannevirke, neighbourhood and common interest home groups are about to begin and leaders have been trained. We are confident that these groups will spread out from these beginnings to the whole of Ruahine.

A Lenten study is being used throughout the area on a baptismal theme with a strong emphasis on symbols and is linked to the Sunday lectionary readings. As wide a group of people as possible are being encouraged to participate; not just regular churchgoers.

Missional ministry has begun in Ruahine.

We believe that with careful nurture and prayer it will continue to grow like the mustard seed.

From *Waiapu News* February 2012

CELEBRATIONS AT ST ANDREW'S, STEWART ISLAND

St Andrew's Stewart Island has celebrated the completion of a four year comprehensive heritage buildings restoration plan which has included the 1900 church, 1909 hall, bell tower and garden.

The Church Hall, rarely open to the public, was erected in 1909 at "The Neck". In 1933 it was transported to Halfmoon Bay. In 1990, the Governor General, Sir Paul Reeves re-consecrated this simple little building.



St Andrew's is always open, but the hall is not often open. So, on Saturday October 22 and Sunday October 23, from 10am to 4pm, the parish held an open day for people to see the result of the hard work by the small but energetic St Andrew's community to refurbish the church and hall.

A well-attended service of Holy Communion was held on Sunday October 23, at 10.30am.

A huge amount of wonderful work has been carried out by the small but very active and committed congregation.

The church hall started life on The Neck in 1909 as a community church. It was shifted to a site opposite the community centre in Oban in 1933 and served as the Anglican Sunday School until 1990 when it was again moved, to its present location next to the church. The kitchen, washroom and toilet were added at this stage.

The present renovations were begun in August 2010 with the end wall being replaced, the rimu floor sanded and coated with polyurethane, the kitchen and washroom painted and new vinyl flooring laid, and the interior walls and doors refurbished, among many other jobs.

The parish is also host to two historically significant bells, the Bremen and the Teoni Topi Patuke of Ruapeke bells. The bell tower was water-blasted and re-stained and steel bolts and fittings replaced with brass, the supports upgraded and new plantings made.

St Andrew's Church was built in 1900 and is the village's oldest church. It has been upgraded and refurbished many times in its history, but in 2010 rot was discovered in the west wall, which required rebuilding. The entire exterior was repainted as were the interior window sills and some of the

pews were stripped off years of dark shellac – the church looks stunning.

Vestry members also arrange a November Children's Flower Show in the Church Hall. This Biennial event, now held for over 60 years, is fully supported by the local school and playcentre. Proceeds go to the school.

For more information, contact the Rev'd Airdry Dyson-Leask and John Leask on 03 2191023 or Iris Tait, (Warden) 03 2191151 for those who wish to meet members of the church when visiting the island.

Adapted from *Murikihu Tales*
<http://southlandanglicans.wordpress.com>

RNN FROM THE WEB

Every edition of *Rural Network News* is uploaded on the web and can be easily accessed there.

www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/rural-ministry

If you would prefer to download your own copy and save on the expense of copying and posting, send an email to robyn@chirmac.co.nz and you will be added to an email list and advised when each new edition is published.

The newsletter is uploaded as a pdf file and can be printed, using your printer menu, as a A5 booklet or A4 for larger print.

HOW ARE YOU USING THE WEB?

Rural Network News would like to run an item looking at the ways rural churches are using the internet to advertise activities, interact with members and potential members, and raise their profile within the wider community. *Murikihu Tales* is one example. What others are out there?

What sites are you using to help your church and its week by week life?

Please get in touch with the editor if you have news to share.

How does the seed give thanks? It flowers. You take what you have, who you are, and you respond to the gift with a course of action that aligns with it. You do what is in your nature.

Patrice Vecchione



This occasional newsletter is printed by Anglican Diocese of Waiapu and distributed by a Hawke's Bay team.

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

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