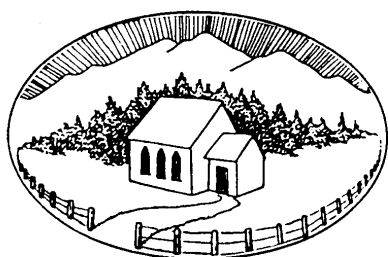


Rural Network News



No. 48 March 2014

All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th century

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

Free to copy and share.
Responses to items always welcome.

IRCA CONFERENCE 2014



Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa
28 July – 2 August 2014

The fifth quadrennial conference of the International Rural Churches Association is drawing closer. The church in Africa is essentially rural, so IRCA is very pleased to have found a gathering place on that great continent, a continent of growing faith amidst life's biggest challenges.

“Holding onto Hope” is the theme of the conference, and the time together in Malawi will be an opportunity to do that: to give and receive support and encouragement and share stories of transformation for rural ministry in every context around the world.

More participants are needed to make this conference work well. The more from countries like New Zealand, paying standard registration, the more will be able to come from African countries and other countries around the world with GDP much less than ours. Fees for the conference are indexed to GDP for countries other than those often called “western”.

The conference schedule begins on Monday 28 July with the evening meal and a formal opening with worship, speaker on the theme, and a welcoming reception.

During the week there will be Bible studies (with our own Christina Morunga one of the leaders), keynote speakers from different parts of the world, regional reports, and time for talking together in small groups. One day will be taken up in a field trip to

Lake Malawi and the rural community of Salima.

Inclusive of accommodation and meals, the conference costs USD300. Payment can be made easily on-line. For information and registration go to www.irca.net.nz and click on one of the links at the right.

PRE-CONFERENCE

21 July - 28 July, 2014

IRCA Pre-Conference Experience is a chance to spend time together and get a feel for the land and its people.

Participants in IRCA 2014 have the choice to visit, prior to the conference and at their own additional expense, Mzuzu in the north of Malawi. Good affordable accommodation is set aside for us, and a bus service runs daily between Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

Mzuzu is the home of the Rev Copeland Nkhata, who attended the IRCA 2010 in Germany. Of particular interest in visiting Copeland and his church fellowship is their mission project "Oasis of Hope". Also there will be ample opportunity to explore Mzuzu and the surrounding area. Email robyn@chirmac.co.nz for more details.

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

Paulo Freire

FRESHWATER QUALITY IS ALL ABOUT LAND USE

Picking up from last edition's opening article, this abridged briefing from the Public Issues Network of the Methodist Church looks at policy on freshwater management.

KEY ISSUES IN ESSENCE

Have you ever seen a beetle on a pine tree?

This question, curiously enough, is about the ecology of fresh water and fish. Posed by a Kaitiaki in the Turangi area when considering the significance of trees alongside rivers for fish and the waterways, trout were the focus. Trout feed on beetles which live on indigenous trees and shrubs, and not on pine.

Macro-invertebrates are really important in a river ecosystems. If you've got good numbers of stonefly and mayfly nymphs, you've probably got good water quality.

Caring for river ecosystems and the health of water must, therefore, take account of how land is managed and used, and fish habitats and pollution (e.g. too much nitrogen and phosphorous), and of insect, bird, and plant life. The presence or absence of fish such as tuna (eel) and whitebait are indicators of river health. Bird life and trees which give shade to water all support healthy rivers. Similarly plants in rivers, and the presence of

slime, algae and bacterial cover are tell-tale signs of degradation.

The clarity and volume of water indicate whether rivers are degraded from nitrogen, overloaded with sediment (possibly from deforestation), or whether too much water is being taken for irrigation for agriculture and dairy farming.

Key issues in NZ include lack of overarching policy, over-allocation of water, inadequate regard for iwi interests in water, and divergent views and conflicts over water values.¹

STANDARDS FOR FRESHWATER – ARE THEY TOO LOW?

Standards for water quality and water use will bring consistency to water management and give guidance to communities and Councils to make decisions about water at local levels.

Two compulsory values are to be ecosystem health and human health. Should there be others such as maintaining life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, and indigenous species of fresh water?

WHO IS AT DECISION-MAKING TABLES?

The welcome emphasis on collaboration also brings questions of

¹See the Freshwater discussion document at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/water/proposed-amendments-nps-freshwater-management/index.html>
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Report at <http://www.pce.parliament.nz/assets/Uploads/PCE-Water-quality-land-use-web-ammended.pdf>

how representation is to be managed for the many interests in water. Given the varied interests which include iwi, farmers, recreation, fishing, development, conservation and spiritual care for water, this process will need careful management.

Does collaboration mean consultation or decision-making? And who gets to be at the decision making tables? It was clear at the consultation, that iwi want to be in decision-making positions.

IWI AND FRESHWATER STANDARDS

Many Treaty settlements have strong provisions for freshwater management with legislation that takes precedence over National Policy. Some iwi, such as Tainui, have set very high standards for water quality, defined as bringing water to a drinkable quality – a much higher standard than proposed in the National Policy on Freshwater.

Earlier Treaty settlements did not include provisions for freshwater in legislation, so there is a whole range of iwi positions to be considered and included in freshwater interests.

How are anomalies such as the different status of legislation and different standards for water to be reconciled?

LAND MANAGEMENT

The National Policy discussion is being led by the Ministries for Environment and for Primary

Industries. This implicitly recognizes the impact of land use on rivers, both from dairying and more broadly from agriculture, with irrigation as a major issue of extraction and levels of water flow for the health of river ecosystems. However, there seems to be inadequate attention to land management in the discussion document.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment came straight to the point that land management is the priority issue for freshwater management.² Here the impact of nitrogen (mostly cow urine) and phosphorous (from erosion and sediment) are the main effects of land use on water. Industrial waste and sewage, although better managed now than in the past, continue to be allowed to be poured into our rivers.

The key message of this report is that dairying is expanding and intensifying and, in spite of measures to manage nitrogen from effluent, the amount of nitrogen in freshwater will continue to rise with corresponding degradation of water.

Decisions about land use are the responsibility of District Councils. Therefore there needs to be coherence between water management and land use decisions.

² November 2013 report 'Water Quality in New Zealand: Land use and nutrient pollution'

We must also consider urban water quality issues, like storm water management and improved urban design to achieve integration of water standards in urban settings. Emphasis needs to be given to constructed wetlands, which can be used or created for cleaning stormwater. Greenfield designs, like swales, are a technique for rainwater harvesting.

LAND AND WATER FORUM

The Land and Water Forum achieved a remarkable consensus for water policy by bringing together people from all sectors of water interests: iwi, Federated Farmers, conservation groups, local and central government. Their purpose was to find agreement on ways forward for water management. These included:

- A National Water Policy Statement.
- Collaborative process for local management and for achieving objectives for waterways, including how much water can be taken and what can be discharged.
- Improved clarity about iwi interests and about rights and obligations in access to the use of water.
- Management of urban and rural waters that is dynamic and responsive to changing conditions, and accountable to the National Policy Statement.

NATIONAL FRESHWATER POLICY STATEMENT

Themes of the Statement:

- Water should be managed in a sustainable and integrated way with the purpose of maximizing environmental economic, social, cultural benefits to New Zealanders now and in the future.
- Councils will have responsibility for implementing national water standards, for land use decisions under the RMA.
- There are provisions for collaboration.
- Some of the technical measures are harder to understand e.g. periphyton (slime) guidelines for nutrients and benthic cyanobacteria for health.

Along with scientific indicators, water quality can be assessed by whether water is clear, safe for swimming, and for drinking.

WHAT IS MISSING?

The new guidelines for water quality now include ecosystem health, but some items are missing, such as water clarity and water temperature.

Estuaries are not included in the considerations for water management yet the water flows from rivers into estuaries and to the sea have a big effect on coastal waters.

Land use impacts from dairying and urban contamination are not given due attention.

Time frames for improving water quality are missing: is a requirement to 'maintain or improve' water quality adequate, given the trajectory of continuing water degradation?

DISCUSSION AND ACTION POINTS:

- What are some signs of the health or degradation of your rivers?
 - Is the water clear?
 - What plants are growing?
 - Is the water shaded?
 - Can you swim safely?
 - Is sewage is being discharged?
- What land use affects rivers in your area?
- Do you have church members who know about local issues and priorities for water including local hapū and iwi plans for water management.
- What are our values in water?

Public Issues Network, MCNZ, abridged http://www.methodist.org.nz/public_questions_network/index

Your comments please. If there are lots of comments in response the editor will be encouraged to be speedier than she has been in producing the next edition of *Rural Network News*. Send your thoughts to robyn@chirmac.co.nz.

PUBLICATION REVIEWS

Rural Theology – An International Journal

Those keen to further explore issues surrounding rural ministry, and rural theology in particular, will find this journal a very useful tool. It has been published twice yearly for the past 11 years. The senior editor is the Rev'd Canon Professor Leslie Francis, based at Warwick University, England.

In its early days it was mainly a UK oriented journal but is now being promoted as international, ecumenical and inter-disciplinary. So rural theology as an academic and pastoral discipline implies that the subject invites study at some depth. The latest issue includes case studies of some Catholic parishes in rural Australia, Newfoundland, Wales and Gosford, Cumbria, as well as other articles and reviews.

You can access the journal website at www.maneypublishing.com/journals/rut. If you wish to register an account, go to <http://essential.metapress.com>. These sites provide costs to link up and subscribe.

Hopefully there will be an article on ministry developments in the Anglican church among seven parishes in Southern Hawke's Bay, known as the Ruahine Mission.

Bill Bennett, Hawkes Bay

The Shepherd's Call – Te Karanga o te Hēpara

Bill Bennett's previous book of prayers *Listen to the Shepherd – Whakarongo ki ngā Kupu* is now out of print and Bill has very kindly gone a step further than a simple reprint. Revised and expanded, this new book brings us old favourites, updates for changing times, and some new gems.

Preparing for church services or community events I have often found myself reaching for *Listen to the Shepherd*, or Bill's second book *Seasons of the Land*. In the past having had to adapt urban based texts and ideas to our rural context, it has been so good to work with something already rooted in the rural context. I think it can be easier to adapt rural to urban than the other way round when the task is prayer and drawing ourselves into deeper relationship. The rural context is already about relationship – with community, with land, and often quite naturally the sense of something more and greater. Bill's prayers can help urban spirituality too.

Regarding the use of prayer beyond the usual church context, Bill comments:

Kiwis will usually admit to being a fairly non-religious, non-churchgoing people, but it is surprising and reassuring that we still wish to acknowledge the Divine in our midst. The West Coast Pike

River mine disaster of 2010 and the Christchurch earthquake tragedy of 2011 have shown that communities still depend on the great liturgical traditions of our churches to help us come to terms with the hard things of life, things that often baffle us and confuse us as communities and as a nation. The language of faith and hope and love help us work our way through life's ups and downs.

Bill encourages us to adapt his prayers and modify them in our own terms. He is modelling through his work something he would like each of us to find we have the gifts to do.

With the Holy Spirit we can surely give voice to the issues of people and land where we live.

The book can be ordered from Bill bwbenett@nowmail.co.nz \$25+p&p.

Robyn McPhail, Northland

Tried and True Resources for All Age Worship

Rosie Staite has been an Enabler for a number of parishes in South Canterbury. She has a flair for creating worship, and encouraging lay ministry teams to create worship.

In October last, Rosie published *Tried and True Resources for ALL AGE WORSHIP*, drawing on the material she has used with her congregations. It has over 200 pages of practical ideas for services for special seasons of the church year and special themes; ideas for

leading prayers; and includes photographs.

Rosaline Brown, from the Ellesmere Anglican Parish – congregations at Leeston, Southbridge, Sedgemere, Irwell, Brookside, and Dunsandel – received a copy as they were planning Christmas services. Rosaline reports on the Parish service at Sedgemere:

We are a small rural congregation in a small town/rural Canterbury parish. Until recently we had an annual Christmas Eve service with the Nativity play as the main feature. On the Sunday before Christmas, a traditional Parish Eucharist was held in our church at Sedgemere. The Christmas play 'At the beginning' from *Tried and True Resources*, page 64, filled the preaching slot.

The roles of the four speaking characters were filled by four teenage girls, suitably dressed for their parts. They did an excellent job. The non-speaking roles were assigned to children whom we dressed at the back of the church. We included all the children who came, without rehearsal. It worked well as most of the children had had some experience. The congregation sang the suggested songs, at the appointed times, using the Parish Carol Book.

Rosie's resource was excellent. We did it with a minimum of effort at a busy time of the year. It helped that we have had experience and have

dressing up clothes available. We received positive comments from the Vicar and from the congregation.

I would be keen to use more material from this book in 2014. Services that catch our eye are the several services for Easter, a service for “tough times and tough choices”, and “learning the good news with the five stepping stones of faith”. Appendix 7 is a great pointer to other resources – the one on “websites to know about for church and home” opens up all sorts of other materials.

Rosie’s book is aptly titled. It is user friendly, “tried and true”, and it certainly worked well for us in Ellesmere.

This book is available for \$30 plus \$7 p&p from Rosie Staite rosie_staite@xtra.co.nz, 35 Mountain View Road, Glenwood, Timaru 7910 or from Epworth Books sales@epworthbooks.org.nz (their Book of the Month in February)

TRANS-TASMAN REPORT

The report of the 2012 Atherton Rural Ministry Conference is now available in its final form, and can be accessed from the IRCA-Oceania page of the IRCA website.

Hard-copy available from Garth Cant gandecant@xtra.co.nz or 7 Owens Terrace, Christchurch 8041. \$40 per copy plus \$5 p&p.

OUT OF THE ARC

The Arthur Rank Centre in England produces a regular e-newsletter *Out of the ARC*. A recent [special edition](#) focussed on support for those affected by flooding.

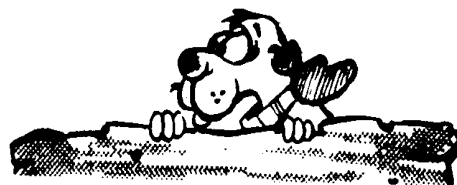
<http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk> gives links to the newsletter editions and, at the top right, the button to sign up for future editions.

FACEBOOK

Whether you have a Facebook account or not, you can access international news about rural churches from IRCA's Facebook page [facebook.com/IRCA.News](https://www.facebook.com/IRCA.News)

Faith walks simply, childlike, between the darkness of human life and the hope of what is to come.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, 20th century



This occasional and rather intermittent 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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