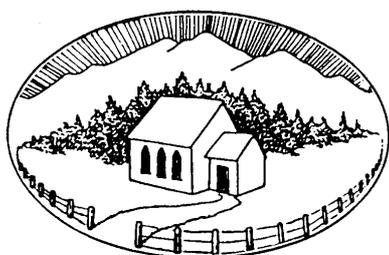


# Rural Network News



No. 44

November 2011

There are really only two kinds of prayer: help me, help me, help me, and thank you, thank you, thank you.

Anne Lamott

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

*Te manaakitanga, te kaitiakitanga, te kotahitanga.*

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

*Responses to items always welcome.*

## PSA AND PASTORAL CARE

Te Puke is at the heart of the kiwi fruit Psa crisis and vicar Brian Hamilton reports that the crisis is deepening. As spring rolls on the virulent strain is attacking with speed and aggression, and more and more orchards are being discovered with it.

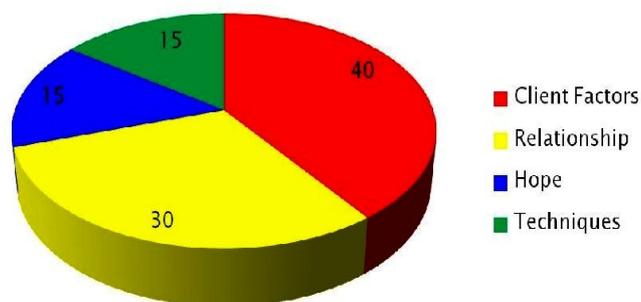
A training evening was held recently in Te Puke to help volunteer couples from all the local churches become better listeners and be available to help those struggling. A

trained counsellor was engaged for the purpose and led the group through key points of crisis care.

Some of the facts of the situation were shared along with information about stress – the normal patterns and the range of symptoms, cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioural. Also outlined was the nature of grief, as a natural response to loss and a journey that can be a healthy correcting process.

This diagram shows the importance of the situation for the person under stress and also their relationships: 40% client factors;

Things That Influence Change



30% relationship; 15% hope; 15% techniques. The counsellor's advice was to remember the most important thing for those taking on crisis care – the relationship. To quote:

Research says that how communication occurs is about 10% words, 30% tone, and 60% body language. Use a caring tone, use eye contact, don't rush the conversation, stay attentive, be affirming, validate the persons experience. Before you start check your attitudes. Are you ready:

- to take a genuine interest in what the person has to say?
- to devote your full attention to the person?

In depth advice was given under the headings: encourage the person to talk; ask open-ended questions; clarify what you are hearing; summarise and reflect; look for non-verbal cues; check that you have got non-verbal communications right; be non-judging; be strength and value based; keep calm and hopeful; and empower.

It is important to help connect people to support networks, and encourage some plan of action to take away from the conversation. And to be aware of the risk of depression and self-harm, including the risk factors for suicide.

### where does God fit in?

Then there was the question: “where does God fit in?” Here's some wise advice:

- It is important not to impose your own thinking about God on the person in crisis. Be ‘God with skin on’ and let God minister through your care and compassion.

### Listen... Be okay with uncertainty... If asked, do not be afraid to state your understanding

- Listen to how the person views God. A good question might be “Where is God for you at this point in time?”
- Be okay with uncertainty around understanding the things of God so that they too can be okay with uncertainty. Allow God to have different plans and purposes for each person’s life and be curious about what they may be.
- If asked, do not be afraid to state your understanding of God’s love, care, compassion and desire that we

may experience life to the full.

- If a person seems far from what or where you imagine God would want them to be, don’t be threatened by this – God certainly isn’t. If you reflect God's love, allowing a person to wander through the mud of life, if you ask questions about the effects of choices, and have conversations about hopes, values, beliefs, etc, the road is likely to lead to God.
- Prayer needs to be handled carefully. It has the danger of silencing and/or placing a barrier between the person and ongoing support. Prayers can be prescriptive and not allow for God to work uniquely in each person’s life.

### prayer accesses a powerful and loving God

- Often a person who is struggling will find it difficult to pray so it is important that they don’t feel pressured to pray. Having said that, we know that prayer accesses a powerful and loving God and if approached sensitively can be very helpful and uplifting.
- When praying, ensure there is no judgment or connotations of fault, blame, or inadequacy. Avoid Christian, Church or Religious jargon.
- Don’t make prayers too long or you may lose them. They may feel unimportant and that your conversation and relationship with God is all that matters to you.

- Leave a pause at the end of your prayer so that they can participate if they wish. Don't make the pause so long that they feel pressured.

Connections are being made with other regions to share resources in readiness for discovery of Psa. Comments made in the eastern Bay of Plenty match those in the Kerikeri district: it is probably here already and just a matter of time. But it is also noted that it is counter-productive to jump in too soon with offers of crisis care.

Where there is pain, it is time to organise caring support. Where the possibility exists, the best thing is to be alert and ready to learn from experience in the Bay.

### **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](http://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](mailto:robyn@chirmac.co.nz) and you will be added to an email list and advised when each new edition is published.

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

### **RURAL PARISHES – DYING, SURVIVING, THRIVING**

Maniototo minister Stephanie Wells shares discoveries and reflections from a study leave project she undertook this year.

Not so long ago, the expectation was that each congregation could expect to be served by a (usually sole-charge) Reverend,

who would be trained in a seminary or theological hall. However, this comfortable myth has been breaking down for sometime. As congregations got smaller they started amalgamating with their neighbours, not always happily. They shed surplus employees and buildings and gave sacrificially, but soon rural places found it hard to attract someone – anyone! Clergy cited difficulties with their spouse's employment opportunities and their children's schooling, sporting and cultural options, the loneliness of ministering in far-flung places, the tyranny of distance, and the cost of living outside of urban areas.

many congregations have come up with innovative and exciting alternatives

And so rural congregations soon found they had no option but to investigate how to continue ministry in their area without the long-established expectation that the resident clergy would be there to lead and provide most of the labour. Recently I was able to spend seven weeks focusing on how rural ministry continues beyond this traditional model. Despite all prophecies of doom my research shows that actually many congregations have come up with innovative and exciting alternatives.

The report produced does concentrate mainly on Presbyterian congregations in New Zealand although a number were combined with Methodists and Anglicans. And I also visited Uniting Church congregations in South Australia. My reading covered a much wider range where I discovered common themes across nation and denomination were the lack of traditional clergy people, especially those willing to go into rural areas, and the lack of money in dwindling congregations to support the expense of such a trained

person full-time. Such a wide pool of information also meant that most terminology had multiple meanings. So to aid comprehension I started to use 'congregation' rather than church or parish to define a particular faith community, along with other tools like using multiple labels.

**Most ....see it as just that – a threat**

My key finding was that most congregations when faced with the threat of losing what they have had, see it as just that – a threat. But actually it truly is an opportunity to do something much more exciting.

The main problem is that most think they only have one or two options for survival. I found twelve main ones with any number of variations within those categories. My hope is that, by collecting these suggestions together, congregations will have a much wider range of choices to consider.

**some are actually thriving in the new place they have found themselves in**

In canvassing for information I also noted that all congregations are faced with monumental change and while some are just surviving, some are actually thriving in the new place they have found themselves in. And even the dying congregations are seeing that they can choose the manner of their death. Not for them the going out with a whimper; some choose to give away their resources to local organisations to insure that faceless regional church authorities don't get them. Others take the time to visit multiple local congregations to make sure each one of their members has a church family they are comfortable to belong to when their own congregation disbands. And

many make sure they have a great celebration at the closing to remember and honour all that has gone before.

**the simplification of what it means to be a community of faith**

One interesting development for rural parishes is the simplification of what it means to be a community of faith. As less people are available, congregations are having to prioritise. Acts 2:42 has been used by the Cariboo Parish in British Columbia, Canada to support confining their house groups to prayer, bible teaching, communion, and fellowship. Dave Mullan of the Bay of Islands Parish suggests restricting church commitments to two hours on Sunday where worship and fellowship is combined with all church business. Both ideas are worth all parishes considering and coming to their own lists of priorities which fit their context.

**how often a perceived lack of leadership is only a lack of opportunity for others to shine**

It was fascinating to observe how much untapped talent there is still in congregations, and how often a perceived lack of leadership is only a lack of opportunity for others to shine. I heard many stories of congregations worrying about not having someone to organize this or that, only to find the most unlikely people soon stepped up and took over. The truth is, nobody wants to take over dear old 'Auntie Flo's' role as organist/flower arranger/newsletter producer/ etc., because she might be offended. Meanwhile 'Auntie Flo' is wondering how long she can keep going until someone offers to take over. Some congregations found they had to wait a while for someone but they now see it

was an exercise in building their faith. Others found that it gave them the space to realise that it was time for that part of their church life to end. This chance to ask what is valuable, what is timely, what is of God, becomes a gift rather than a curse.

If the jargon is stripped away following Jesus is really simple, we're told a child can do it.

I also discovered how often we underestimate our congregations. Over the years, too many have sat in the pews and soaked in the Word, and only got wrinkly. But when the 'expert' is not there we find that every person has something to offer to group. If the jargon is stripped away following Jesus is really simple, we're told a child can do it. So the bible teaching can suddenly become very practical and have applications to daily life because the person leading this Sunday is a practical bloke who has worked out how these words work in his own down-to-earth world.

The growth of Local Ministry Teams and other group-led church leadership initiatives has shown the strength of the people. However, some are finding that this too has only been a stop-gap measure and they need to consider what happens next. Some groups have also suffered from a lack of training and over-sight, as well as poor understanding of their role from both other members of their congregation and parts of their denomination.

Some church authorities try to provide assistance to vulnerable parishes in the form of regionally funded advisors, ministry enablers, etc. But sometimes the problem is not finding the money but the person. Training is required, the person must be suited to the role, and all too often there are just not enough available. In

addition many 'professional church people' cannot risk the instability of short term contracts, or frequent moves due to their personal circumstances.

On the other hand it was concerning how often congregations searching for new ways of ministry that fitted their changing context were hampered by expectations of their various denominational hierarchies. One example was the difficulty struggling congregations had with changing to something like a faith community or house church. There seems to be much more space for a beginning ministry with its lack of structure and commitment to denominational bodies than there is to those going out the other end. Such structural or institutional barriers can be very frustrating and can lead to congregations hiding or ignoring their church authorities.

Despite frustrations, the developments to be seen in congregations in finding alternatives to the traditional 'one congregation one clergyperson' model are exciting. With few templates and fewer role models rural congregations in particular are carving out new directions and coming to fresh understandings of what makes them a community of faith. I suspect their experiments will lead us to an entirely different perspective of church in the future.

Stephanie Wells, Maniototo

*If you are interested in reading Stephanie's full study leave report it can be accessed at [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz) or [www.synod.org.nz](http://www.synod.org.nz)*

*Search in Study Leave Reports for "Rural Parishes – dying, surviving, thriving: doing ministry beyond the traditional 'one parish-one ordained minister' model"*

Faith is what someone knows to be true, whether they believe it or not.

Flannery O'Connor

## TRANSITION TO NEW RURAL MINISTRY MODELS

Reflections on a Rural Ministry Day at  
Pahiatua, 25 October, 2011

Wendy Scott, Vicar of Pahiatua, North Wairarapa, initiated this day long gathering. Twenty clergy and farming folk from Wairarapa, Manawatu and Central and Southern Hawke's Bay met to:

- Share news about their patch
- Find out about the changing social make-up of rural communities
- Reflect on a theology of rural ministry
- Discover how ministry structures in country areas are changing within the churches

people are generally very positive about the life of the church in the community

The round-robin sharing revealed that people are generally very positive about the life of the church in the community. Most realise that the days of being a safe little religious enclave focussed on the local country church building are over.

Steph Aspinall and Kathy Braddock, both from farming families, gave insights from of their social work experience in the rural community. Although rural areas may offer cheaper housing for rent or sale, those on benefits (and there are many, and the number is increasing) cannot hope to buy – lending agencies and government realise that there are no work opportunities available for such people. They said established rural people, including church goers, 'don't see' the levels of destitution and poverty in their communities. Christians are called to simply be with

them, stand alongside them, and not preach at them. Steph and Kathy emphasised that the most effective ministry is simply to listen. There are stories people want to share. Many individuals have mental health needs. But with no jobs available, a government wanting to get people off benefits, no rural transport and few young people being trained for work on farms (note that the government has 'imported' hundreds of Filipinos to work in the dairy industry to fill a labour vacuum!), the size of this rural under-class is growing. There is an urgent need for parishes to network with other support and government agencies in their rural communities, and to offer hope to those 'imprisoned' in the unemployment web.

Sharing these insights highlighted that the church's mission to the wider community is as urgent as ever. Many spoke of projects already being undertaken to connect with the wider community. And given the current impetus of 'missional ministry', they are realising God is calling them to affirm the good work already occurring out there. They are being challenged to avoid a theology of 'drawing people into' a small faith community, of getting 'bums' on pews, and instead rather praising God for a faith and spirit of enterprise already at work.

reflections on rural theology

Bill Bennett offered some short reflections on rural theology – the giftedness of land from a caring loving Creator; the notion of community as the locus of the 'kingdom' rather than focussing on individual salvation; the danger of creating a 'success' model for church; allowing the Spirit of God to refresh and renew in unexpected ways; using the seasons and land-use types

as opportunities for the whole community to celebrate God's presence, and developing local liturgies and festivals; reminding the church of its baptismal calling, the ordination of all Christians to service and ministry (the insights of Total/Mutual/Local Shared Ministry still hold good); and finally seeing the Eucharist as the gathering up of the labours and fruits of rural life (symbolised in Bread and Wine) for renewal and further service – the Dismissal at its end is the invitation to go out and serve Christ daily. The Eucharist is 'rugby practice', daily Christian service in the community is the 'rugby game'!

Lunch, as always at such gatherings, becomes an opportunity to mingle, share ideas, test theories, and generally get to know one another better at an informal level.

The afternoon was spent looking at different models of rural ministry.

#### different models of rural ministry

- Some told of closing small country churches and parishes and establishing worship centres. Dealing with a sense of loss – of building and of ownership of local parish life – becomes an issue where centralisation is adopted.
- Decision making by the Diocese or Rural Deans means locals losing ownership and control of their parishes. The issue then is how to ensure the integrity of the small local church and the iconic nature of their building.
- In terms of ministry, local people called to ministry roles, especially as ordained clergy, find they have the skills and confidence they thought

they never ever possessed – this says something about the strengthening of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Advocate.

- There remains a need to resource those called to lay or ordained ministry in rural parishes – it seems this resourcing has waned in recent years.
- Southern and Central Hawke's Bay are about to become a cohesive area known as Ruahine, i.e. seven rural parishes, and resourced by 2.5 stipended staff. The call to missional ministry will drive such a venture. The staff will train and resource the Ministry Teams currently being called and discerned in each parish. Existing local and non-stipendiary clergy will have regional recognition. And an overall Regional Council will help steer policy and goals for the region. It begins on 15 December, 2011.

Engagement and networking with the wider community and finding new ways of being 'church' seems to be the way of the future

Local Shared Ministry has been a real source of hope for many struggling rural parishes in the past. Some parishes have plenty of energy and are growing. Engagement and networking with the wider community and finding new ways of being 'church' seems to be the way of the future. After all, ministry is about te tangata, te tangata, te tangata – the people, the people, the people.

Thank you, Wendy, for organising this day.

Bill Bennett, Hawke's Bay

## THE CASE FOR A LAY MODERATOR

The Presbyterian Church is structured with a General Assembly (national), a number of Presbyteries (district) and the parishes. The Moderators of both General Assembly and Presbytery are elected. Both positions tend to be held by ministers.

As a layman I was elected Moderator of the Gisborne Hawke's Bay Presbytery for the 2005/2006 year. In geographic terms the Presbytery is the second largest in NZ covering from just above Dannevirke and North to the East Cape. Although I am an Elder of the church I am not licensed to preside at Communion or Baptism which Moderators are often involved in. I have chosen not to become licensed which is something I could discuss at a later date. However I overcame the issue by appointing (with his agreement) our parish minister as my chaplain. This turned out well as during my time we had the ordination of a parish minister, and several communions.

I decided to focus my attention on the pastoral side of the task

After much prayer and discussion with our local church leaders I decided to focus my attention on the pastoral side of the task. I would use my time outside the usual round of meetings etc. to visit as many parishes as possible and see what help I could be to the members, ministers, and parishes in the Presbytery.

At the time I had a two tonne blue Isuzu truck which I used round our property and my wife found ideal for towing our caravan along the highways and byways of the North Island. So I let it be known that if they spotted my blue flat deck truck on the road, I would be shortly in town.

Very quickly I found that this was part of the Moderatorial duties that had not been carried out for some time. I must admit to being very nervous about the visiting programme I had set up and was in great trepidation about my first visit. I chose a co-operating parish close to Napier as my first visit (I had been a member of a co-operating parish for about forty years before shifting to Napier) and I was completely blown away by the reception.

A discussion about the issues and problems of the parish went long into the night

They held a special worship service and afterwards laid on a marvellous meal. A discussion about the issues and problems of the parish went long into the night. They had not seen a Moderator for many a year, but the Bishop had visited them on a number of occasions. I was at a meeting recently in the parish and they reminded me of the pleasure they had in my visit of 2005.

Pastoral visiting was not a scary as I first thought so my next visit was again to a co-operating parish, this time well out in the country. Again, a great welcome, a meal and a discussion this time relating to the difficulties of ministry and their relationship to Presbytery. The presbytery issue had not been resolved for some time but a resolution was soon sorted.

I was feeling more confident, so my next visit was to Gisborne for about ten days visiting four parishes. We took the caravan and parked it at the beach by the river mouth and used it as our base for our visits and meetings. Again well received, it was interesting visiting four quite different parishes, mid city, suburban, co-operating and rural all with their own varying agendas, programmes and issues.

obviously divine intervention in the development of skills which lead me to be able to carry out this variety of tasks

I came to realise that, although I had reservations about being a layman in the job, I was able to bring other skills and observations to the task. My wife helped considerably with this pastoral oversight. We had raised four sons (and now have nine grandchildren) and I had run several small businesses, worked as a senior executive in a large public company, and spent my last fifteen years before retirement as a teacher, mentor and lecturer at the Wellington Polytechnic and Massey University with what we now would describe as decile one tertiary students. There was obviously divine intervention in the development of skills which lead me to be able to carry out this variety of tasks.

There is certainly a place for a lay Moderator as in my case I was able to prayerfully bring administrative, personnel, and planning skills within the pastoral oversight.

David Dransfield, Hawke's Bay

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorise one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, 'The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know.'

· The best vitamin for making friends..... ·  
· B1 ·

## **TORAJA-NEW ZEALAND PARTNERSHIP**

[www.toraja.co.nz](http://www.toraja.co.nz)

The project started in 2004 and aims to assist Torajan farmers improve their farm output and profitability, particularly of coffee. New Zealand can offer skills in using latest technology, the application of modern farm management techniques, and co-operative marketing. It was these skills that we hope to transfer to Torajan farmers.

The project involves funding a Torajan Small Farmers Association, called Jalesa, to work with coffee growers through visits and discussion groups, work to improve coffee husbandry, pruning, fertiliser use, and pre-and post-harvest techniques. The result to date of this approach is both improved coffee yields and quality, and higher family incomes.

### **CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING**

Quality coffee is best produced at high altitudes. Mountain farms in Toraja lie between 900-1600m above sea level and is renowned for producing Arabica coffee. Most farmers produce only small volumes of coffee, their quality is variable and they become price takers. Coffee at present is sold to middle men and traders who offer cash prices to individual farmers.

As a result of inputs from the project, better husbandry practices and more emphasis on pre- and post-harvest treatments, farmers are producing more reliable quantities of good coffee, they are looking to develop marketing strategies to improve returns. There is little experience of co-operative marketing among Indonesian farmers. Our latest move has been to link Jelesa and our

project with Veco, to provide closer monitoring and a more sustained advisory programme to farmers.

### OUR COLLABORATION WITH VECO

We have recently formed an alliance with a large Belgian aid organisation which has a branch in Indonesia called Veco-Indonesia. [www.vecoidonesia](http://www.vecoidonesia)

Veco have development officers throughout Indonesia, including one who monitors the work of Jalesa and assists them where necessary. We now have a joint project to work together with Veco in both evaluating and monitoring the project. While we visit Toraja at least once per year, we cannot exercise the close control that Veco is able to do with a staff member based in the region. We visit to maintain good will and cement farmer to farmer ties.

### OUR VISIT THIS YEAR

place next winter. It can be coordinated into a longer trip by routing through Singapore.

### GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

We qualified for substantial government support in the past, but in the last year the rules have changed. When a project meets the Government's official aid policy, it will be funded 100%; if it doesn't meet the policy then it doesn't get funded. Rather than face the uncertainty of waiting to find out whether the project is eligible or not, we decided to fund the project ourselves.

We have been conscious of making maximum use of our supporters' donations by keeping overheads low. Any contributions donated are channelled directly to the project. Those who help within NZ do so without remuneration and travel to Toraja is self-funded.

*From the Toraja Supporters Newsheet*



A group of eight NZ farmers visited Toraja recently, going to remote villages and meeting local farmers and their families. They visited a local school, met the local mayor, and enjoyed the wonderful scenery. Another farmer visit to Toraja will take

Because we cannot see Christ we cannot express our love to him; but our neighbours we can always see, and we can do for them what, if we saw him, we would like to do for Christ.

Mother Teresa



## THEOLOGY BY CORRESPONDENCE

For people who are involved in rural ministry, the Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies (EIDTS) provides the opportunity to upskill from the privacy of your own home, and at the time of your choosing. More than this, it provides a tutor who you are able to contact by phone or email, along with substantial course booklets. EIDTS papers cover Theology, Biblical Studies, Church History and Ministry and Mission. Details of each paper and a list of tutors can be found on the website, [www.eidts.ac.nz](http://www.eidts.ac.nz). Each course costs \$390 including GST.

We have around 100 students each year, which means we get to know each person well. Our approach is flexible, so that if the deadline for your essay is in the middle of lambing we can offer an extension. The Academic Registrar, Sue Haley, is a great source of course advice and can be contacted on 0800 667 969.

For more than 20% of our students, enrolling for an EIDTS paper is their first foray into tertiary education. Our staff are happy to support students in this position. Some of our students are clergy who are wanting to upskill themselves; some are training for ordination; but most are lay people equipping themselves for a wide variety of callings.

A recent survey showed that our students used their EIDTS qualifications to help them in lay preaching, pastoral care, chaplaincy in prisons and in hospitals, work with children, young people and families, and work in the community. Some of our students study theology out of interest and

find it very satisfying (and no doubt challenging on occasions!).

This is what some of our students have said about the value of their EIDTS studies:

“I am doing three papers this year... One of these papers is Rural Ministry MM206. This paper has been invaluable in teaching me a great deal about the differences and problems that a rural parish experiences.”

“Besides being invaluable in the on-going development of my relationships with God and my family, the EIDTS courses have proven of great assistance in my men’s ministry.”

“I am primarily doing this course for my own pleasure, and I intend an LTh to be my retirement project. Having said that, I am in active lay ministry work...”

“I find the papers very useful especially in my work with children and youth... This year I have seen a lot of growth and development not just in the young people but also in myself, and I believe this is because of these papers challenging me in my work, inspiring me to build the relationships with families and encouraging me to engage on a deeper level.”

“Apart from my own growth which has been great I use what I learn in preaching and study groups. I can offer a much deeper understanding and broader viewpoint. And also in just general talk when the occasions arises.”

If you think EIDTS might be helpful in meeting your needs, do contact us. Studying theology is exciting, and studying by distance makes it accessible and manageable.

Linda Cowan, Christchurch

To choose what is difficult all one’s days, as if it were easy, that is faith.

W.H. Auden

**IRCA-OCEANIA  
TRANS-TASMAN 2012  
2 - 6 July**

Theme: Resilience  
“Building robust communities”

Herberton, Atherton Tablelands (West of Cairns), Far North Queensland, Australia is the venue for the 8th quadrennial Trans-Tasman Rural Conference.



The Conference begins with the evening meal on Monday 2 July and ends at 3pm on Friday 6 July. The proposed programme sets aside Tuesday for sharing stories and input from a keynote speaker, local mayors, and emergency services. The theme recognises that many rural regions in both countries have experienced extreme natural events. The Trans-Tasman gathering is an opportunity to share wisdom gained, continuing concerns, solidarity and prayer.

Field Trips on Wednesday and Thursday travel to Mareeba and Southern Tablelands, with half going to each place, each day. Wednesday evening is free time. A keynote speaker on Thursday evening, and our own reflections on Friday, will help gather insights and action plans for use at home.

A cost of NZD500-550 is projected for the conference – accommodation, two coach

trips, four dinners and breakfasts, all linen, setting up and cleaning etc. The organisers are planning for volunteers to transport people up from Cairns.

Go to [irca.net.nz](http://irca.net.nz) and click on the Trans-Tasman link under “Latest IRCA news”. Options for registration will be available there soon.

New Zealanders thinking of attending, please get in touch with the editor of this newsletter, for more details and to share travel ideas.

**True Worship**

Be a gardener.  
Dig a ditch,  
toil and sweat,  
and turn the earth upside down  
and seek the deepness  
and water the plants in time.  
Continue this labour  
and make sweet floods to run  
and noble and abundant fruits  
to spring.  
Take this food and drink  
and carry it to God  
as your true worship.

Julian of Norwich  
*Earth Prayers from Around the World*



*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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