

Rural Mission Evangelism and New Congregation consultant Special Outcomes summary 2007-2011;

I have seen my role in the Board as a catalyst or encourager. I have travelled and seen God inspired activities and needs which I have been able to nurture, resource or grow. Often I have not been the principal driver, just the supporter for those ideas and activities. Usually it has been other people who end up making it happen and so I apologise for claiming some of these in this list of outcomes. I am only part of a team, an encourager in many cases, but I feel I can claim some role in some of the outcomes.

I believe God has been significantly moving and changing the way we operate as church over these 4 years and my prayer is that you can say AMEN, Praise God to many of these outcomes and new directions.

Drought/Chaplains

- After Kel Hodge & I presented at Synod 2007 a motion was unanimously supported from the floor that Synod appoints additional Rural chaplains. Funds were obtained for one additional Rural Chaplain position. The position was advertised and we appointed Julie Greig in 2008. Julie elected to be placed in Hillston NSW.
- I have worked with the Rural Chaplains as they have been in place for some of the most difficult seasonal, demographic and agricultural change periods of NSW history.

Their role has been significant in:

1. Channelling financial support for Rural areas and people
2. Developing community projects
3. Networking NGW and Govt rural support people
4. Organising community self help activity and initiatives
5. Linking city country
6. Contributing to the government submissions about drought impacts and water use in the Murray Darling Basin, which has been invaluable
7. Initiating and progressing disaster coordination responses
8. Establishing a position recognised in the church that is not congregationally based.

Special RSS Moderator's drought fund appeal was launched for use by chaplains and Presbyteries and the Rural Chaplains have made use of this fund when able to and as needs and opportunity presented.

- . Personally I was able to help with the drought by:

Being part of the RSS who approved drought projects, activities and special needs money allocations.

I spent 7 days working on the Riverina Presbytery Victorian Fire fencing recovery program with two teams.

I was able to help facilitate a tour of the Riverina and CW by the Sydney male choir.

I was part of the negotiations with Anne & Fred Humphreys to spend approx. two years visiting farms around the Riverina Presbytery and for a short time around Cobar.

Twinning between city and country congregations has continued slowly as a flow on from the drought. Website information and stories are on the BOM website.

I have been working on a UCA submission, with the chaplains, for the Federal Government about the Drought Policy Review and the Social Impacts of the Drought in 2009. The chaplains and I appeared before the government committee in Griffith.

Also I worked with them on UCA submissions to the Standing Committee on Regional Australia about the Murray Darling basin Plan. The chaplains and I appeared before the Regional Australia committee.

Resource ministry

- After years of convening meetings of those involved in Resource ministry. The 2007 Resource ministry gathering defined the role of Resource ministry and Synod in 2007 appointed a Resource ministry consultant. The consultant role was to develop ministry resources and training to enhance the growth and potential of Resource ministry as an alternative to normal ministry placement. Resource Ministry has become a preferred strategy for ministry supervision adopted by at least 7 Presbyteries. These Presbyteries are organising congregations into Zones, Regions, Mission areas. I was part of the reference group for Chris Lockley's time in this Resource ministry role.

Project Reconnect

- Project reconnect appointed a promotions person for 12 months then applied for a SMRF grant and have now appointed a Consultant for 3 years. Kingsley Murphy. We have seen the use of Project Reconnect grow. Other centres as well as MLMA are contributing resources and teaching. There is a distribution now of approx 50 DVD's per month. I act as the Australia/world wide promoter and sponsored a gathering of these small congregations. I have been part of the Project Reconnect committee as it grown.

Lay Training

- I have liaised with ELM staff to help change the approach to training and the focus of lay training needs. ELM training and Lay training have jumped significantly over the last 3 years by up by 300% in at least 6 Presbyteries. Some Presbyteries have not changed or taken up lay training for a variety of reasons. This growth in lay training can in part be explained by:
 - The bringing of training to congregations and Presbyteries outside of Sydney.
 - The change in emphasise: basing study material on mature adult learning linked with a non academia focused training,
 - The shift away from training for specific organisation objectives to a more general Christian teaching awareness.
 - The lack of ordained MOW availability to continue traditional ministry roles within a congregation.
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International Learnings

- In my role I have had the opportunity to bring learning's, models and experiences of the Christian church worldwide back to Australia. The idea of rural chaplains came from the UK. The commonality of Rural church and specific rural ministry training issues across continents and denominations is remarkable.

There is a change worldwide:

- in models of being church

- of the emphasis on ministry roles
- of ways that people are worshiping in styles and methods
- a changed focus away from congregation toward community
- a need for specialist training for rural ministry.
- There is a growing need for rural churches to advocate for water, land and food justice, food production, the small family farm, the destruction of the earth resources and sustainable living

These latter perspectives have been instrumental in my passion for taking up the water issue in Australian Murray Darling Basin, Involvement in Uniting earth Group, Climate change awareness for local agriculturalists and joining in with the establishment of Food Sovereignty in Australia.

- The work on UCA submissions to the Standing Committee on Regional Australia about the Murray Darling Basin Plan has been very significant.
 1. Three submissions were presented one to the Senate and two to the Regional committee.
 2. The Rural Chaplains and myself were invited to present to the standing committee.
 3. The Rural Ministry Unit and the Board of Mission supported the development of a theological discussion paper about some of the issues about the Basin plan and this was circulated for discussion and response among 140 congregations, groups and Presbyteries. Responses came from approx. 100 persons. 10 groups Their ideas were included in the second submission to the Rural Committee.

National Rural ministry Networks

After attending a national meeting in Murray Bridge and a Trans Tasman meeting in NZ I became keen to help grow and maintain the National network. Rob Stoner SA and restarted the meetings in Culcairn in 2006 and we have continued to meet in a different Synod each year since. These meetings have been the stimulus to focus and initiatives I have nurtured over the years.

- Lay Ministry Teams – Shared ministry teams
- Lay Ministry training resources
- Resource ministry training and establishment
- Rediscovering what is the Christian Hope we have in Rural areas.
- Sharing how each Synod has been dealing with rural disasters
- The issues nationally rural areas have to deal with gaining recognition of lay ministry
- The issues of mining's growing dominance with the consequent social and community impacts

A Rural Hope program has been developed for 2010/2011 'Rediscovering Hope for Today – Exploring Hope for Tomorrow' This is made up of A 93 page resource book and DVD with additional resources to give ideas for worship based around a meal.

New Congregations

- The role of our church people in the community is diaconate in many cases and has the potential to become new forms of church. I have begun to make a

database of these activities so that networks can be created and the activity can become more missional.

- My exposure to Greenbelt UK and the tour of some Fresh expressions of church in the UK have focused my appreciation of:
 - the world wide movement toward monastic living and a concentration on spiritual growth.
 - Spiritual formation and Christian practices critical importance in new church growth
 - The need for incarnational activity outside of church environments.
 - The critical importance of relationship building as a precursor to evangelism
- The use of Community gardens and food distribution have grown as a perceived strategy to be in mission with the community. At least 12 community gardens are in place and another 4 congregations are exploring the idea. A number of congregations are establishing food barns, bread distribution or meal provision as strategies to bless their community. My theory is that this strategy can be enabled and enhanced when it is facilitated by a group such as EUG and or a passionate individual who makes the effort of coordinating sharing activity and learnings.

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Resources I have had a part in developing

- Jesus Conversations year 3 was completed and the 3 year sets of 6 studies with a combined DVD recording of 38 peoples telling their stories have been sent out to 440 congregations,
- Evangelism Direct has been circulated up to 4 times a year with summaries of select interest articles about evangelism and mission taken from 12 magazine subscriptions. The distribution has continued to be around 1,000 per copy and the feedback and request for articles continues to be encouraging.