

Rural Evangelism Network

Summer 2013

www.ruralevangelism.net

The National Forum for Churches and Mission Agencies
concerned for the evangelisation of rural Britain.
Encouraging good practise through sharing knowledge and experience.

SUMMER OUTREACHES

While many church activities close down for the summer, it is often used as a time for outreach activities such as Holiday Clubs. There are many other evangelistic activities that also often feature in the summer months: barbecues, beach parties, outdoor services, evangelistic retreats, garden communions, holiday at home programmes for older people ... the list is long.



It would be good to receive news of anything seasonal in which you or any churches are involved so that we can bring our Knowledge Exchange section of the website up to date. Please let us know what you have been doing (or are planning to do). Let us know about any special materials or programmes on which you are drawing. Are you writing your own HBC material? Do you have summery plans for Messy Church? When you have completed an event please let us know how the outcome matches your expectations. If possible include some photos.

Anything you send that goes on the website will be anonymised unless you indicate that you are happy to be contacted.

Country Way Goes Online

Country Way is now available in two forms. The quality magazine version continues to be printed but we now also make it available online. You will have received an email inviting you to indicate if you prefer to continue to receive the printed version. **Whatever your decision your subscription will be paid for by REN.**

The printed version is attractive and gives you something you can pass on to others. The online version looks exactly the same and is accessed by an e-reader that is simple to use. While some past issues are accessible online free, the subscription has to be paid to access the more recent issues. Opting for the online version only will reduce costs for REN and enable us to keep the annual subscription at the present level.

Country Way is a unique a valuable source of relevant information and inspiration for matters to do with life and faith in the countryside. It is produced by the Arthur Rank Centre as a collaborative venture with REN being one of the partners. It is a vehicle for sharing your stories of rural mission. If you value the printed form and wish to receive that, you will still have access to the online version and the ability to search for articles.

Please remember to use the form in the email sent to you. Please send the Secretary your news regularly. Don't keep your news, ideas, and good resources to yourself. Others need read them!

REN Committee

Capt. Gordon Banks (Diocese of Chichester)
Rev'd Peter Dakin (Diocese of Lichfield)
Capt. Norris Boyland (Church Army)
Rev'd Barry Osborne (Rural Mission Solutions)

Core members of the Committee are required to equally represent Churches and Mission Agencies.

Burning Issues

Your Committee would like to know if there are any aspects of rural evangelism that you think it would be helpful for us to explore within the **Knowledge Exchange** on the website and/or in our regional rural mission consultations.

These could be matters we have addressed previously and need to update such as Missionary Communities, Messy Church, Alpha, etc or it could be something new. Please send to the address overleaf.

Sharing Together in God's Mission

-ism versus -ation. Does it matter?

Some people feel quite strongly about preferring the use of the word *evangelisation* instead of the word *evangelism*. It would be easy to adopt a phlegmatic attitude and say that it doesn't really matter. But does it? We would like your views please.

There is a thoughtful article on Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AEvangelization> you might like to see. You may also have books on your shelves or articles on file on the subject. It has been a serious controversy (quite apart from whether it should be spelled with a z or an s!), though not divisive.

Evangelism is not a popular word in many church contexts today (yet increasingly popular linked to secular concepts). Whether you represent a mission agency or a Church within REN, you will work with and through local churches, so we need to be careful that the use of certain words and phrases do not put stumbling blocks in the way.

Evangelisation is commonly understood as the process by which the knowledge of the gospel is spread through a range of activities and influences. Some would see evangelism as the actual act of proclaiming the gospel. If that distinction is what is in the minds (consciously or unconsciously) of the people we seek to inspire and encourage, should the title of this network be the Rural Evangelisation Network?

Some of our members will feel that it doesn't matter. But some may well see it differently. Titles carry some idea about what an organisation's culture and aims are. Picking up on the comments in the Wikipedia article, our current title would suggest that we are a network for people who subscribe to an ideology rather than a network concerned for a process.

Are we fishing with a net full of holes?

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew to become his disciples he speaks about them becoming "fishers for people". This has become a metaphor for evangelism. The context for our activities tend to incline us towards using the more agricultural metaphors of sowing and reaping. But some of the disciples would have been familiar with the concept of a harvest from the lake.

There are two accounts in the gospels where we find Peter and others fishing on the lake. In both accounts we find them tired and discouraged because their efforts had been unsuccessful. Despite their extensive experience and skill they would know that there is no guarantee that they will always return to the shore with a good catch. But they would have expected to do so normally.

It is said that no one can claim to be a teacher unless people actually learn. It is outcome that justifies the process. When a farmer sows seed he doesn't do it to justify how he uses time; he does it to obtain a harvest. A professional fisherman does not want to influence fish, he wants to catch them.

In a blog at ruralevangelism.blogspot.com the Secretary reflects on effectiveness at proving the statement of Jesus to be right. Is a poor harvest because we have poor nets? Your comments on the blog are welcome.

Rural Mission and Ministry Conference 2014

REN has been involved in discussions with others regarding a one day conference towards the end of next year. We are grateful for the many responses that came in regarding a suitable date and venue. Most people indicated a preference for the event to be held at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire. I believe that the date agreed is Saturday 11th October. In addition to key-note speakers we are looking for practitioners who can speak (briefly) about experiences of good examples in rural mission. These will take the form of a series of case notes. The Arthur Rank Centre are looking after most of the organising and it has the full support of the Churches Rural Group. Please put the date in your diary. More to follow later this year.

Rural Evangelism Network

Administration:

4 Clarence Street

MARKET HARBOROUGH

LE16 7NE

Tel: 01858-414930

Email: ren@ruralmissions.org.uk

www.ruralevangelism.net

Membership Matters

Rural Ministries has moved its office from Wellingborough. The email remains office@ruralministries.org.uk. Simon Mattholie (key contact for REN) is accessible on 01799 522852. Nick Jones has taken over from Rob Webb and handles general enquiries on 0845 600 6788.

Please ensure the office has your correct details on our database.

You can download a copy of this newsletter at www.ruralevangelism.net. Please forward copies to key people in your Church or Organisation, you represent. (e.g. General Secretary, Rural Officer, Secretary for Evangelism)