



Churches Rural Group

The CRG brings together representatives of Christian denominations with a significant rural presence and other groups and organisations concerned with rural life and ministry to discuss issues of common interest on behalf of Churches Together in England. The December 2015 meeting included:

Farming issues. Matt Caldicott (FCN Development Officer) gave an update from the Farming Community Network, particularly focussing on the flooding that is affecting large areas of the country. This has come at the same time as problems for farmers with the new farm payments. **‘Fit for Farming’** has just been reprinted –an excellent little booklet from the Men’s Health Forum, FCN and Haynes Manuals. More information and bulk orders from matt@fcn.org.uk

If you would like to be part of a local group discussing some of the issues identified in **‘Honey and thistles: Biblical wisdom for renewal of farming’**, please contact Christopher Jones at cj@agriculturalchristianfellowship.org.uk He would also be interested in reflections on the relationship (or lack of it) between food poverty and the poverty experienced by farmers.

New Resources from the Arthur Rank Centre:

- Germinate Enterprise: helping villages thrive. Rural business start-up course available, free of charge, at www.germinate.net/go/enterprise
- Resourcing Rural Ministry’ by Simon Martin, edited by Jill Hopkinson. Insights and ideas, resources and background theology for those involved in the rural Christian community.
- Tackling rural isolation. A paper for churches with ideas from the Rural Pastoral Support Network Project. www.germinate.net

‘Germinate listening event.’ 16 key people engaged in rural mission spent 24 hours together, listening to God and each other. Eight themes were identified for challenge / action:

- Deepening discipleship
- Developing prayer
- Developing ecumenical and partnership working
- Communicating vision and facilitating change
- Pruning, simplification and creating capacity
- Developing and empowering the ministry of lay people
- Developing and supporting lay and ordained leaders, team building, and reducing isolation)
- Communicating what we already have.



Examples of good practice or gaps in provision in these areas welcome!

Future dates for your diary:

- **17 July. Rural Mission Sunday.** This year’s theme will be ‘Sow and Grow’. Look out for resources on www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk
- **15 October. Germinate Conference in Coventry.** ‘Making it Happen’ will focus on the challenge of deepening discipleship to inspire, encourage and equip flourishing rural mission. Keynote speaker – Revd Dr Roger Walton, President of the Methodist Conference 2016/7. Programme and booking forms available late January from www.germinate.net

And finally: Do have a look at <http://www.godforall.org.uk> for information and ideas about a new way of working ecumenically in Cumbria.

Present: Jerry Marshall (Chair & ARC), Robert Barlow (RTA), Matt Caldicott (FCN), Elizabeth Clark (ARC / Methodist / URC) Jim Currin (CTE), Roger Greene (IRCA /Agricultural Chaplains), Les Hann (Methodist / URC Rural Strategy Group), Jill Hopkinson (ARC / C of E), Christopher Jones (FCN / ACF / ATP, / Vincent Woods (RC South), Ann Wright (C of E / IRCA Europe).