

MINS 590 – Research Project

Otago University

MULTI-PARISH MINISTRY
FOR
PRESBYTERIAN PARISHES
IN
SOUTHLAND



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Preface

Throughout my research I have sourced information from some very old publications. This has meant that occasionally people's first names have not been mentioned. Therefore, I have not been able to include them, though every effort has been taken to find as many of them as was possible.

I have also retained many of the capitalised words used in Church records, especially with reference to positions of leadership, committees and constructs.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past sixty years or so, there has been a well-documented decline in church membership, which has impacted on church activities, social interaction, community outreach throughout Southland, as well as in the rest of New Zealand and the world. This has been particularly so in main-line Protestant churches and especially in rural sectors, as reflected in church statistics and in Church Life Surveys. Noted scholars such as Bishop Dr. John Selby Spong,¹ Dr. Diana Butler Bass² and Rev. Dr. Kevin Ward³ have discussed these trends.

These trends have been particularly evident in Southland Presbyterian parishes. In 2010, the Southland Regional Resource Ministry was established by the then Southland Presbytery to provide Resource Ministry for nine parishes in Southland, who are led by members of those parishes in Local Ministry Teams or in ministry teams comprised of Session Elders or Parish Councillors. Beginning in February 2010, Rev. Ian Crawford and I served as Resource Ministers for the Southland parishes without ministers.

During the first year, while arranging to hold training workshops, the Southland Resource Group (our employers) agreed that we needed to undertake some training for the role of Resource Minister. Most of the information and training provided for the resource ministers was either academic theory or experience-based learning, neither of which was specifically about multi-parish ministry or rural ministry. An avenue for obtaining some input was sought on these forms of ministry, which could be transferable to the Regional Resource Ministry situation. A two-day workshop, run by the Arthur Rank Centre for Rural Ministry Training, June 15-16, 2011, was held at Offa House, Offchurch, Diocese of Coventry, Warwickshire, England. Its topic of Multi-Parish Ministry was found to be suitable, and arrangements were made for me to attend, using some of the Study Leave I had available. In Chapter Three I report on some of the material covered in that training workshop.

¹ John Selby Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die: A Bishop Speaks to Believers in Exile*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1999, 172.

² Diana Butler Bass. *Christianity After Religion: The End of the Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*. New York: Harper Collins, 2012, 17.

³ Kevin R. Ward. *Losing our Religion?: Changing Patterns of Believing and Belonging in Secular Western Societies*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013, 68.

After one year the Southland Regional Resource Ministry held its Annual General Meeting, and the roles undertaken by the Resource Ministers were affirmed.⁴ The nine parishes continued to support the ministry, and a meeting was held at the end of 2012 to gauge support for continuing the ministry beyond the initial three-year period. A parish review process was put in place by the Southern Presbytery and the Resource Ministers' contract was extended by one year to allow time for this process and for a Ministry Settlement Board to carry out its role.

With such experience as a backdrop, this research project looks at the history of the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Southland, including the heyday of church growth, church planting and expansion, as well as the more recent trend of church closure, amalgamation of parishes and the downturn in church attendance and people entering the ministry. It will also explore issues relating to multi-parish ministry and what that involves, as well as implications for the future. Finally, it will look at options and possibilities for the future, not only for Presbyterian churches in Southland, but also for other denominations in Southland and throughout New Zealand in comparison to solutions being trialled in other parts of the world.

⁴ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin, New Zealand. Resource Committee Report to Southland Presbytery, March 2011.

CHAPTER ONE

The History of Presbyterianism in New Zealand

From the beginning

In order to understand the events of recent history, that is, since the Southland Regional Resource Ministry was established in 2009, it is necessary to look back to the arrival of Presbyterianism in New Zealand, with specific reference to Southland. The development of the Presbyterian Church in Southland marks a definitive stage in the development of this part of nation.⁵ The preaching of the Gospel of Luke (11:10) by Rev. Samuel Marsden, Church of England, from Leeds, on Sunday, 25 December, 1814, at Rangihora, marked the first Christian influence in New Zealand.⁶ By 1838, a significant settlement had been established at Kororareka (now Russell) with a church, five hotels and numerous grog-shops.⁷ The missionaries there had difficult work to do, leading folk to a higher and nobler life.⁸

On 30 September 1839, the New Zealand Land Company berthed the ship ‘Troy’ in Port Nicholson (Wellington), claiming New Zealand for the Crown, a mere 48 hours before the arrival of a French ship. The first colonists from England arrived on 22 January, 1840, at Petone.⁹ Governor William Hobson arrived in the Bay of Islands on 29 January, 1840, to establish New Zealand as a portion of the British Empire and signed a treaty with Maori at Waitangi (Bay of Islands) on 6 February 1840. In May 1840, he proclaimed sovereignty over the North Island by virtue of the Treaty of Waitangi and over the southern islands on the grounds of discovery.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the French had sought to establish a colony at Akaroa, Bank’s Peninsula, but this was usurped by Captain Owen Stanley, an Englishman who arrived there on the 11 August 1840. When the French ship arrived four days later, they consented to land and settle under the British flag.¹¹ The government set up by Governor Hobson was initially overseen by New

⁵ R. M. Ryburn. *Jubilee of the First Church, Invercargill, 1860-1910*. Invercargill, NZ: William Smith, 1911, 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

South Wales, Australia, and then became an independency established at Russell; then, from January 1841, the government moved to Auckland. Settlements at Wanganui, New Plymouth and Nelson followed thereafter.¹²

Missionaries and ministers of various denominations also arrived and commenced activities. In 1823, Rev. Henry Williams arrived on one of Rev. Samuel Marsden's seven visits and translated the New Testament into the first version of a written form of Maori.¹³ Methodist and Catholic missionaries also found that 'making converts' was a slow process, but by 1839 a quarter of Maori were baptised, and many more were influenced by Christian teaching, with most children attending missionary schools.¹⁴ It was largely through the work of Rev. William Colenso that Maori became a written language.

Presbyterianism arrived in New Zealand in 1840 with the arrival of the 'Bengal Merchant' in Port Nicholson with 150 emigrants from Glasgow, led by Rev. John Macfarlane of the Church of Scotland who had come out to New Zealand expressly to minister to settlers.¹⁵ He conducted his first service on Petone Beach in February 1840, opening with the hymn 'O God of Bethel.' After floods occurred in Petone, most settlers moved to Wellington, with services held in the Exchange Building until 17 February 1844, when St Andrew's Church was opened as the first Presbyterian church in New Zealand.¹⁶ The Reformed Church of Scotland was by then sending missionaries, but in 1850 moved on to the New Hebrides as a more worthy mission field.¹⁷ The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland also sent ministers to serve settlers in the Hutt Valley, Wanganui, Manawatu and Wellington. The first Presbytery was constituted in Wellington to cover the whole Wellington Province as a connection of the Established Church of Scotland until 1874 when it united with the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.¹⁸

¹² Ibid., 17.

¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 22

In the South

While missionaries were winning the way in the north, other factors brought Western civilisation to the South. Whalers and sealers were active around South Island's coast, with stations at Preservation Inlet in 1829, Dusky Bay in 1832, Otago Heads in 1834, Waikouaiti and Bluff in 1835 and, in 1839, at Riverton, Tuaeheki, Taieri and Moeraki.¹⁹ Those men were known throughout the region; many of them lived with Maori wives from tribes greatly depleted in number by Te Rauparaha's raid and a measles epidemic.²⁰

The first missionaries south of Waikouaiti arrived in May 1844. The first was the Rev. Johann Friedrich Heinrich Wohlers from Germany by way of a brief spell in Nelson, where he found Maori already being reached by missionaries, so he moved south to reach out to 'heathens' there.²¹ At this time, the Free Church of Scotland had formed the Otago Association with the New Zealand Company in order to found a settlement exclusively for Free Church emigrants.²² Rev. Wohlers accompanied Mr. Frederick Tuckett, the New Zealand Company surveyor, on his trip from Nelson, calling in to Lyttleton, and Moeraki, before eventually arriving in Otago Harbour. Mr Tuckett chose the site at the head of the harbour (Dunedin) for the Free Church settlement.²³ Rev. Wohlers then travelled overland across the Taieri Plain, a swamp, to the mouth of the Molyneux (Clutha River), then by boat, calling in at Tautuku and Waikawa and eventually landing on Ruapuke Island on 17 May 1844 to establish his mission post.²⁴ Those who had travelled with him then sailed on to explore Bluff (the site later used to build Invercargill), Jacob's River (Riverton) and Stewart Island and returned to the Molyneux, then overland to Otago Harbour, by way of Kaitangata, Tokomairiro (Milton), Waihola, across the Taieri Plain and back to Otago Harbour in the space of just ten days.²⁵

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 23.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 24.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Having decided to make the Free Church settlement at the head of Otago Harbour, land was bought from local Maori (with the help of interpreters from Ruapuke Island), extending from Otago Heads to Nugget Point, on 31 July 1844 for £3000. The land was then divided up by the New Zealand Company for the Free Church Settlement Association, consisting of suburban plots, rural plots and land expressly for religious and educational purposes,²⁶ as well as local and municipal government. The Otago settlement came about directly as a result of the Disruption of the Established Church of Scotland, which brought about the formation of the Free Church of Scotland, which in turn provided the settlers for Otago. The Disruption of 1843 was a schism within the Established Church of Scotland, in which 450 ministers of the church broke away over the issue of the church's relationship with the state to form the Free Church of Scotland. The schism came at the end of a bitter conflict within the Established Church and had a huge effect not only within the Church but also upon Scottish civic life.²⁷

Port Chalmers was named after Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers, the leader of the disruption movement.²⁸ The first ship of emigrants to leave Scotland was the 'Philip Lang' under the command of Captain Elles with 250 passengers, which included Rev. Thomas Burns, the first minister, arriving on 15 April 1848.²⁹ The second ship to leave was the 'John Wickliffe,' captained by William Cargill, who was the official head of the settlement, arriving in March 1848, with 97 passengers and a printing press.³⁰ Once in Dunedin, they set about erecting barracks in time for the other ships' arrival. On Sunday 16 April 1848, Rev. Thomas Burns preached his first sermon in Dunedin. Also present was Rev. Charles Creed, a Wesleyan from Waikouaiti who had welcomed the new settlers on their arrival.

The first church services were held in the barracks, then the Survey Office (near today's Customs Building), then in a wooden building below Bell Hill which accommodated 200 people, with the First Church of Otago opening for divine worship on 3 September, 1848. Rev. Burns also walked (13 miles) to Port Chalmers, once a month to conduct services for

²⁶ Ibid., 25.

²⁷ Roxborough, John. *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission. The Christian Good of Scotland and the Rise of the Missionary Movement*. Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology. (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999), 144.

²⁸ Ibid., xi

²⁹ Ryburn, *Jubilee*. 26.

³⁰ Ibid.

settlers there. He was assisted in his duties by Captain Cargill and Mr. John McGlashan.³¹ Roads and housing were developed in Dunedin, and on 13 December, 1848 the first issue of the 'Otago News' was published.³² Schools were established in Dunedin, North East Valley, Port Chalmers and East Taieri. Rev. Alexander Bethune, a Licentiate of the Free Church of Scotland, was in charge of a school at Green Island.

As the workload for one minister was great, covering the area from Waikouaiti to Clutha, the church in Scotland was asked to send help, which resulted in the arrival of Rev. William Bannerman and Rev. William Will in January 1854. Rev. Will settled in East Taieri, and Rev. Bannerman at Waihola with responsibility for the territory south of the lake. In 1854, the three ministers and three elders formed the Presbytery of Otago. With the arrival in February 1858 of Rev. John McNicol at Waihola and Rev Alexander Todd Snr. at Milton, Rev. Bannerman was then able to turn his attention to regions further south.³³ In 1861, Rev. Burns had conferred on him an honorary DD (Doctor of Divinity) by his alma mater, Edinburgh University,³⁴ and when Otago University was established in 1869 he became its first Chancellor.

Southland

When Mr. Tuckett anchored at New River Heads on 18 May 1844, he was not impressed with the prospects of settlement in the region, describing it as a 'land of ceaseless rain, dripping bush, boundless swamps and deep creeks.'³⁵ There were European settlers at Jacob's River living peacefully alongside Maori under the 'beneficent sway' of Captain John Howell, who had probably arrived in 1837.³⁶ The New Zealand Company was dissolved in 1850, so southern land was bought from Maori by the government in 1853, with payment of £2600 being paid on 15 February, 1854.³⁷ At this time, the site at the head of the New River estuary

³¹ Ryburn. *Jubilee*, 27.

³² *Ibid.*, 28.

³³ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁴ James Chisholm. *Fifty Years Syne. A Jubilee Memorial of the Presbyterian Church of Otago*. Dunedin, NZ: J. Wilkie and Co, 1898, 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

was named Invercargill, and what is now Bluff was named Campbelltown. Surveyors supervised by Mr John Turnbull Thompson arrived, and during October 1856 ‘the town of Invercargill was laid off and 2½ million acres of the surrounding country was triangulated.’³⁸ Captain Elles had been stationed at Campbelltown (Bluff) as the Collector of Customs and then moved to Invercargill on 1 February, 1858, to be appointed the Receiver of Land Revenue. At the time, Invercargill was mostly covered in bush; there were about twelve houses, two hotels and two stores³⁹ in Tay Street. It was difficult to reach Invercargill overland due to swamps and creeks, so most supplies arrived by sea from Dunedin, over the bar into the New River to a berth on the Puni Creek, a journey of three to six weeks, depending on the weather. In 1855, the land between the Mataura River and the Oreti River remained uninhabited and undeveloped. By 1858, the growing town of Invercargill had added two banks, two shops, a carpentry, a saddlery, a cobbler, a smithy, a bakery, a butchery, a cricket ground, a prison, barracks and private residences.⁴⁰ In December 1858, there was near famine when the 40 residents had to go without supplies because ships sheltered at Waikawa on the trip from Dunedin due to ‘contrary winds,’⁴¹ and many inventive means were employed to compensate for the non-arrival of provisions.

Those wishing to get married at this time had to call on either Rev. Bannerman, who travelled on foot from his home at Waipahi or cross to Ruapuke Island (in an open boat) for Rev. Wohlers to solemnise the union.⁴² Tales were told of the sad fate of an entire wedding party of six, all of whom perished by drowning on the 7 December, 1858, when the boat they were travelling in hit the sandbank when crossing the New River bar and capsized while they were on their way to the island.⁴³

The population of Murihiku (Southland) was growing slowly, and settlers, due to their isolation from Dunedin, ‘became seized with a strong desire to manage their own affairs.’⁴⁴ Therefore, Southland was proclaimed a separate province from 1 April 1861, with a

³⁸ Ibid., 32.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 34.

⁴¹ Ibid., 35.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Provincial Council made up of 11 councillors, representing 6 electoral districts, for a total of 269 electors, with Captain Elles appointed the Commissioner and Treasurer.⁴⁵ The first edition of 'The Southland News' was published on 16 February 1861, and the first coach journey from Invercargill to Dunedin was 6 April 1864. Trains from Invercargill to Bluff started in February 1867, with trains going through to Dunedin from 22 January 1879.⁴⁶

First Church – Invercargill city centre

One of the earliest settlers in Southland was Rev. Alexander Bethune, who arrived from Green Island on 6 November 1856 and conducted the first service of worship in Murihiku, at Kelly's Point (now the corner of Tay and Clyde Streets). He built a house on farmland at Myross Bush, opened a private school in Invercargill and ministered to the settlers there,⁴⁷ leading worship each Sunday either in a hotel, the prison, a store or eventually in the courthouse. The Otago Presbytery placed Invercargill under the oversight of Rev. Bannerman, who travelled overland whenever he was able to visit, occasionally being relieved by Rev. Will or Rev. Burns.⁴⁸ These visits encouraged the worshippers, who sought to have their own minister at the 'earliest possible date.'⁴⁹ This was conveyed by Rev. Bannerman to the Otago Presbytery in mid-1859, and it was agreed in August that year to send for a minister from 'home' (Scotland).⁵⁰ A congregation was organised (by Rev. Will and Rev. Burns) that consisted of 105 members who received Holy Communion for the first time in January 1860. Rev. Andrew Stobo from Scotland duly arrived to take up the new charge in Invercargill on 18 May 1860, being ordained and inducted on 29 June by Revs Bannerman and Todd at a service held in the Courthouse.⁵¹ The first meeting of session was held on 14 November 1860, with Rev. Bethune appointed Session Clerk and Captain Elles became a Deacon and the Treasurer.⁵²

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 39.

⁵² Ibid., 40.

From the outset Rev. Stobo was ready to carry the Gospel to distant settlements and visited the goldfields, which were a four days' journey each way. He also regularly took services at Woodlands.⁵³ A minister was requested there, and Rev. Thomas Alexander arrived in 1864. A new schoolhouse was erected in Tay Street shortly after Rev. Stobo's arrival in Invercargill, and the congregation moved there for worship services until the original First Church building was opened on 15 March 1863.⁵⁴ Invercargill prospered as a result of the gold rush in 1862, though this lasted for only a few years. When a second minister, Rev. Andrew Stevens, arrived from Scotland to form a second congregation in July 1865 there was little support for the plan, so he was sent to work with settlers at Wallacetown.⁵⁵ Other settlements also requested ministers, especially Riverton, with the result that Rev. Lachlan McGilvray arrived, who was followed shortly thereafter by Rev. James Clark.⁵⁶

With there now being three ministers in charge at Invercargill, Riverton and Woodlands, the Otago Presbytery formed the Southland Presbytery on 5 May 1865,⁵⁷ with Rev. Stobo as the first Moderator. Wallacetown was also constituted as a charge at that time with Rev. Stevens as the minister,⁵⁸ and the Presbytery of Maitara was formed in 1891 seated in Gore. The Presbytery of Otago became the Presbytery of Dunedin, and all three presbyteries constituted the Synod of Otago and Southland, with its first meeting 16 January 1866 with Rev. Dr. Burns as Moderator and Rev. Bannerman as Clerk.⁵⁹ The area covered by the synod is the southern region of the South Island, south of the Waitaki River. This region remained connected to the Free Church of Scotland, whereas the (mis-named)⁶⁰ Presbyterian Church (of the rest) of New Zealand was connected to the Church of Scotland until the Synod of Otago and Southland joined the 'union of incorporation' with the northern region in 1901.⁶¹

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁰ John McKean, *The Church in a Special Colony. A History of the Presbyterian Synod of Otago & Southland 1866-1991*. (Dunedin, NZ: Synod of Otago and Southland, PCANZ, 1994), 15.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Further parishes in rural Southland were then established as land was surveyed and sold for farming. These parishes met the needs of those settling in the area, with membership made up of land-owners, staff, workers and those who lived in the near vicinity, especially as commerce and trade was developing and towns started to emerge. Over the intervening 150 years or so, the location and make-up of parishes in Southland has changed due to various influences. The following is a closer look at the history of the parishes that were members of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry, the establishment of the parish, the merger with other parishes in the region and the ministers that served in the parish over the years since they began. I describe these parishes in the order in which they were founded.

Wallacetown – 15 kms north-west of Invercargill city centre

The first service of worship was conducted by Rev. Dr Thomas Burns (on his travels) in 1858.⁶² Rev. William Will had accompanied him on his visit to Invercargill, as he had recently retired from serving in the Taieri and Clutha and was then appointed to oversee the Wallacetown congregation until the appointment of Rev. Stevens in 1866. Rev. Stevens had come from the Free Church in Scotland and was noted for covering large distances in the parish, which included Winton Bush and Centre Bush, on his horse. He was also noted for teaching children the Catechism, which may have been why they hid in the bush when they heard his horse approaching. The parish grew to include Forest Hill until the Winton Parish and Forest Hill Parish were formed, along with Dipton, Browns, Oreti Plains and Drummond Parishes. Then Waikiwi (which was slowly being settled) was added to Wallacetown and later Waianawa and Ryal Bush. In 1881, Rev. James Hutton MacKenzie was called to the parish from Scotland, and he served until 1891, during which time he was also Clerk of Assembly and was the ‘guiding spirit’ of the writing of the Book of Order.⁶³ Ministers that followed were in 1891 Rev. William White, 1904 Rev. James Burrows, 1911 Rev. Adam Begg, 1918 Rev. James Ponder, 1921 Rev. Walter French, 1926 Rev. Duncan McKenzie, 1933 Rev. Leonard Whitehead, 1939 Rev. James Olliver,⁶⁴ 1946 Rev. Laurence Ker, 1964 Rev. Thomas Lewis, 1968 Rev. Ross Thompson, 1975 Rev. John Scarlet, 1984 Rev. James

⁶² Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 155.

⁶³ Georgina McDonald, *A Flame Unquenched*. Invercargill, NZ: Southland Presbytery, 1956), 35.

⁶⁴ McDonald, *.Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

(Jim) Young⁶⁵ (formerly a member of the parish, now serving in Malawi with his wife who is a Medical Practitioner) and in 1998 Rev. Geoff Holding. Since 2003 the parish has been served by members of the Session with a Moderating Elder. In 1903, a branch of the PWMU (Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union) was formed which, as APW (Association of Presbyterian Women), closed in 2003. For a short while in 2005 a Lay Supply Worker, Mr. Don McLeod, was employed to serve in the community, and a Youth Worker was employed for a short while. Church membership in 1898 was recorded as 5 Elders, 6 Deacons and 172 members;⁶⁶ in 1956 there were 5 Elders and 17 Deacons.⁶⁷ The parish currently has 4 Elders and 6 Deacons, with 4 Elders and 2 Deacons on Session, who serve a congregation of 30 members. The properties at Waianawa and Ryal Bush have now been sold off. Wallacetown is no longer a rural centre and is now mostly a satellite settlement of Invercargill.

St Stephen's – 4 kms north of Invercargill city centre

Waikiwi district was initially served by Rev. Stobo on his travels north of Invercargill. From 1869 it was served by Rev. Bethune as part of the Myross Parish,⁶⁸ then later it was under the oversight of the minister at Wallacetown. Initially, a church built for another denomination was used until the brick building on North Road was built in 1927. St. Stephen's Parish was established in 1890, with their first Minister being Rev. Isaac Jolly who had arrived in 1887, then in 1890 Rev. Robert Thornton.⁶⁹ Waikiwi slowly developed as a suburb of Invercargill, and the parish was commissioned in 1890 with 2 Elders, 9 Deacons and 112 members.⁷⁰ Ministers in following years were in 1898 Rev. Dr. James Cumming, 1914 Rev. James Young and in 1919 Rev. William Robertson, who also served the PSSA (Presbyterian Social Service Association) and was Presbytery Clerk.⁷¹ Then in 1939 Rev. Leslie Rothwell and in 1945 Rev. Thomas McDonald.⁷² In 1956, the parish had 12 Elders and 16 Deacons. The

⁶⁵ Crawford Madill, *Part of a Miracle. Profile of a Presbytery – Southland 1956-1990* (Invercargill, NZ: Southland Presbytery, 1990), 157.

⁶⁶ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160.

⁶⁷ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched* Original and Present Office-bearers, np.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ John Collie, *The Story of the Otago Free Church Settlement 1848-1948* (Dunedin, NZ: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1948), 131.

⁷² McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

parish also incorporated a Sunday School Hall at Grasmere and a church at Makarewa, built during Rev. Dr. Cumming's ministry.⁷³ They utilised the services of retired Deaconess, Sr. Dulcie Blick, from 1952 until her death in December 2006.⁷⁴ In 1959 Rev. David Wilson, 1966 Rev. Alan Morgan, and in 1975 they added Rev. Russell Thew when the parish amalgamated with Makarewa, which had detached from St. Stephen's in 1960.⁷⁵ In 1979, Rev. David Jack was called but served only two years, as he then completed studies in England and returned as the Hospital Chaplain at Kew Hospital in Invercargill.⁷⁶ He was followed by Rev. Neil Whimp in 1981, Rev. Michael Chappell in 1984 and Rev. Alison Bell in 1990.⁷⁷ She died in 1992 and was followed in 1994 by Rev. Alan Matheson in a part time position, who was a member of the parish and also took on the role of Presbytery Clerk until he retired in 2002. The parish now has 3 Elders and a three-member Local Ministry Team, which includes a full-time Team Leader for a congregation of 40 members. The parish has since sold the Grasmere property and closed the church at Makarewa after providing services there on a shared basis for many years with All Saint's Anglican parish. Sacred Heart Catholic Church also serves this area of the city.

St Paul's, Invercargill – 1.5 kms north of city centre

When First Church's membership increased significantly, with Rev. Bethune appointed in 1864 to oversee the process, it was proposed in the 1870s to form Second Church in Invercargill. Rev. Alfred Arnot preached first at the Drill Hall and then in the Exchange Hall.⁷⁸ The parish gained independence in 1875. The parish named St. Paul's included the areas of Avenal, Grasmere, Collingwood, Waihopai, Gladstone and West Plains. Many of the members transferred from First Church, with the first Sacrament of Holy Communion conducted by Rev. Stobo. Rev. Arnot resigned, and supply was provided by Rev. Robert Ewen, while after vigorous fundraising the building was opened in December 1876.⁷⁹ The

⁷³ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 87.

⁷⁴ Bush Telegraph, Change of Status, February 2007. <<http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/publication/bush-telegraph/2007/february-2007>> accessed 30 October, 2014.

⁷⁵ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 158.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 77.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

parish started with 14 Elders, 15 Deacons and 276 members.⁸⁰ Their first Minister was Rev. James Paterson from Scotland, who attracted a strong following which necessitated two further increases in the seating in the church.⁸¹ He was followed in 1884 by Rev. David Gordon and in 1888 by Rev. George Lindsay, who was very active in work with children and youth, seeing the building of the Sunday School (now sold and demolished) and was for many years the District President of the Christian Endeavour Society. During his ministry the congregation was divided when the parish at North Invercargill (Windsor) was established.⁸² He later became Moderator of the General Assembly. Ministers that followed were in 1911 Rev. H. W. Burridge, 1920 Rev Henry (Harry) Gilbert, 1926 Rev. Cecil Tocker, 1954 Rev. Ken McRae, 1961 Rev. Malcolm Highet, 1969 Rev. Robert Murphy, 1973 Rev. David Borne, 1986 Rev. Neil Cowie.⁸³ Then after a long period of vacancy, the parish employed half-time Lay Worker Mr. Alan Hawke who in 2006 became part of a three-member Local Ministry Team. The parish also employed Deaconess Sr. Heather Webster from 1967-1971.⁸⁴ In 1956 the parish had 31 Elders and 22 Deacons; it now has 5 Elders, 4 Deacons and a membership of 20.

Bluff / Greenhills – 28 kms south of Invercargill city centre

In the mid-1880s, both Rev. Will and Rev. Bannerman made journeys on foot south of their charge in the Taieri to Invercargill. Rev. Bannerman even made it to the Bluff, visiting the early settlers in the area⁸⁵ and returning from time to time to nurture these members of his flock.⁸⁶ The Bluff had also been visited by Bishop Selwyn on his journey around New Zealand in 1844.⁸⁷ Rev. Bethune presided at the first Presbyterian service of worship in Bluff in 1867 to a very small gathering, as Bluff was a very small port town compared to the port at Riverton.⁸⁸ Rev. Arnot was employed to consider the possibility of a home mission charge which would include Bluff (known as Campbelltown), but due to difficulties in setting this up

⁸⁰ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160

⁸¹ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 77.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 78.

⁸³ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 157.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 139.

⁸⁶ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 10.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the Presbyterians in Bluff worshipped with the Primitive Methodists and were included in the charge of First Church session. A Mr. Green took charge of a home mission including Clifton, Woodend and Bluff, followed by Rev. A. Stobo, and then Rev. William Hain (formerly a First Church parishioner). Bluff was later separated from Clifton and Woodend when St. Andrew's (South Invercargill) Parish was established.⁸⁹ The town of Bluff had grown somewhat and the port was then able to accommodate large ocean-going vessels, so the task of buying land and plans for a church and manse were commenced. The parish was established at Bluff in 1894 under the charge of Rev. J. Anderson Gardiner, with 4 elders, 10 deacons and 52 members.⁹⁰ It was possibly the most southern parish in the world, including preaching places at Ocean Beach and Greenhills.⁹¹ Rev. Gardiner was soon called to a post in Sydney, Australia, and was replaced by Rev. Walter MacLaren. His successor, Rev. Alfred Laishley, 1903, became well known as the father of daughters who instigated the Busy Bees Hives,⁹² which focused on Biblical teaching, entertainment and support for missionaries overseas, which spread throughout Presbyterian churches in New Zealand.⁹³ (I even attended a 'hive' in Feilding in my youth.) Ministers that followed were Rev. Edward Walker 1913, Rev. Robert Francis 1919, Rev. Samuel Waddell 1927, Rev. Thomas Speer 1932, Rev. Arthur Ferguson 1939, Rev. David Hay 1943, Rev. Frederick Robertson 1944, Rev. George Jeffreys 1946 and Rev. Barry Doig 1952.⁹⁴ Rev. Doig also oversaw the home mission at Stewart Island, as there have been strong links between Bluff and The Island over the years.⁹⁵ In 1956 the parish had 5 elders and 8 deacons.⁹⁶ Rev. Leslie Gibb arrived in 1961, Rev. Alfred Willoughby in 1965, Rev. Eric Uden in 1970 during whose time, in 1979, the parish became part of the Bluff-Greenhills Co-operating Parish⁹⁷, amalgamating with the Methodist and Anglican congregations and meeting thereafter in the Methodist building. As a co-operating venture, the parish rotated the oversight from the partner churches, with part-time ministers who no longer resided in Bluff but who were in charges in Invercargill. This system of ministry supply commenced with Rev. Robert (Bob) Short (Methodist) 1982, Rev. Howard

⁸⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁹⁰ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160.

⁹¹ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 89.

⁹² Collie, *Otago Free Church Settlement*, 131, 274.

⁹³ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 138.

⁹⁴ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

⁹⁵ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 90.

⁹⁶ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Original and Present Office-bearers, np.

⁹⁷ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 161.

Smith (Presbyterian) 1985, Rev. Alec Clark (Anglican) 1990, Rev. Colin Leadley (Methodist) 1995, Rev. Guus Lukkein (Anglican) 2000. Then, in 2005, I was seconded from First Presbyterian Church in Invercargill to supply quarter-time, until the parish joined the regional resource ministry. They have since opted out of the resource ministry and have chosen to come under the oversight of All Saints Anglican Church, Invercargill. The congregation of 30 members has only one Methodist, one Presbyterian, and five Anglican members with others who have joined more recently from a variety of faith traditions. There is also a New Life congregation and St. Mary-of-the-Sea Catholic Church in Bluff.

Oban, Halfmoon Bay, Stewart Island – 40 kms south by sea from Bluff

Stewart Island was, from as early as 1802, a centre for sealers, and later there was a considerable Norwegian presence – whaling, sealing and logging. The Anglican Bishop Selwyn visited and performed marriages and baptisms in 1844. Mr. John Murdoch requested a Minister to serve the settlers, and as he was an Elder at First Church who owned a sawmill on the island, he was commissioned to provide for the spiritual welfare of the islanders.⁹⁸ Mrs. Charles Traill, who resided on Ulva Island in Paterson Inlet, provided Sunday school lessons for children at The Neck, Bravo Island and Halfmoon Bay (Oban). Rev. Stobo visited Stewart Island in 1874, conducting worship services at The Neck, Halfmoon Bay and Fort William. He later installed Mr. Arthur Traill as a missionary stationed at The Neck.⁹⁹

Rev. Wohlers, the Moravian missionary who arrived on Ruapuke Island in 1844 after a short stay in Motueka to minister to the Maori on the island,¹⁰⁰ transferred to Stewart Island to minister to the resident Presbyterians after the decline of the population on Ruapuke. His daughter Gretchen married Mr. Arthur Traill in 1878 and settled at The Neck on Stewart Island, where Brother Wohlers died in 1885.¹⁰¹ In 1884, an inter-denominational building was built for the Union Church at Halfmoon Bay, administered by trustees from the Presbyterian, Congregational, Salvation Army and Brethren denominations, with Mr. Traill

⁹⁸ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 90.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰⁰ Sheila Natusch, *Brother Wohlers. Te Porora O Ruapuke*. (Christchurch, NZ: Pegasus, 1969), 85.

¹⁰¹ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 8.

as the Presbyterian representative.¹⁰² The Union church arrangement however was not successful especially in the provision of ministers, and the Presbyterians proceeded to purchase land and build a church and manse on a bush-clad promontory overlooking Halfmoon Bay.¹⁰³ The church was opened in 1904, and centenary celebrations were held there ten years ago. The manse was replaced in 1930, and a Sunday School Hall which was relocated from the Norwegian whaling base has recently been sold and converted into a private home. Stewart Island Presbyterian Church has been served over the years of its existence by a variety of Ordained Ministers, Stated Supply and Home Missioners, many for very short periods of time.¹⁰⁴ Sometimes the Minister at Bluff visited on a regular basis, but more recently under the oversight of an Interim Moderator, the parish has welcomed those who have travelled to the island to conduct worship as part of a short stay of a few days, or a few weeks, or sometimes a few months. The parish joined the Regional Resource Ministry in order to provide support for their leaders and resources for the parish as well as oversight and a point of connection with the wider church. The parish currently has 4 Elders who manage the day-to-day administration and the hospitality of visiting ministers and preachers, with oversight from myself as Interim Moderator. As there is no longer a resident Anglican priest on the island, the ministry team at All Saints Anglican Church in Invercargill have been providing oversight since 2013, as was the arrangement between 1890 and 1911.¹⁰⁵ They are now exploring options for joint worship and community outreach with members of the Presbyterian Church.

Limestone Plains – 25-40 kms northwest of Invercargill city centre

Rev. James Clark was the Minister in Riverton in the 1860s and was followed by Rev. Charles Ross in 1871 after a period of supply by Mr. Arnot, , assisted by Mr. Ewen who was responsible for Limestone Plains and the Waiau. Rev. Ross was succeeded in 1877 by Rev. James Cameron.¹⁰⁶ When the Limestone Plains Parish was established in 1878, Rev. Ewen's region of responsibility included Limestone Plains, Wrey's Bush, Otautau, the Waiau and

¹⁰² Ibid., 92.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ *McDonald, Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

¹⁰⁵ St Andrew's Anglican Church, Stewart Island, historical notes in information pamphlet, np.

¹⁰⁶ *McDonald, Flame Unquenched.*, 66.

Nightcaps, where coal was first mined in 1882. In 1879 the parish had 4 Elders, 7 Deacons and 104 members.¹⁰⁷ In theory Rev. Ewen ministered to all the settlers between Flint's Bush and Te Anau, having at one time thirteen preaching places.¹⁰⁸ They covered a large area which he initially covered on foot and later on horseback and when gravelled roads were developed he rode a buggy with pair of horses.¹⁰⁹ His sermons, which often appeared in the Southland Times, were carefully prepared to cater to his mixed flock of farmers, flaxmillers, sawmillers and miners. He developed an outstanding church choir at Limestone Plains and was Moderator of Synod in 1891. He died suddenly in 1900 of a chill (at the Wallacetown manse) after 22 years of ministry. A church was built at Isla Bank in 1881, following the manse (where services were held) being built in 1880. The original church building was replaced by a brick building named St. Cuthbert's in 1928. Rev. Ewen was followed by Rev. William Brown in 1900 and then Rev. Henry Barton in 1907. Ministers that followed were Rev. John Erwin 1912, Rev. John Robertson 1916, Rev. Andrew Smail 1921, Rev. Walter Evans 1925, Rev. George Mitchell 1930, Rev. John Reilly 1945, Rev. William Moore 1951,¹¹⁰ Rev. Alfred Willoughby 1969, Rev. Howard Smith 1975 (who became a Hospital Chaplain at Kew Hospital in 1979), Rev. Kenneth Burnett provided supply in 1982 during five years of vacancy, then Rev. David Smail in 1985,¹¹¹ followed by Rev. Clive Haliday from 1992 – 1996.

The parish had a short ministry supply from Rev. Jim Hunter in 1997 and lay pulpit supply since. Then from 1999 there was a part-time ministry supply by Rev. Murray Marshall (LLM –Local Limited Ministry, 2002 – 2004¹¹²) and is now led by the Session and a Moderating Elder, overseen by an Interim Moderator. The parish has three preaching places, Waimatuku, Isla Bank and Thornbury, which they use in rotation, having decided in 1999 to discontinue the three services of worship held each Sunday (one in each venue). There are 5 Elders on Session and 12 members of the parish.

¹⁰⁷ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160.

¹⁰⁸ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁰ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

¹¹¹ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 158.

¹¹² Information obtained in a private communication with Mr. Peter Campbell, Chairman of the Otautau Presbyterian Church, 8 September 2014. .

Otautau / Waiono – 50-90 kms west north-west of Invercargill city centre

As already referred to, Otautau, Ohai, Nightcaps, Wairio and Opio were ministered to by Rev. Robert Ewen who covered a very wide territory. When the parishes of Otautau, Nightcaps and Orawia, as well as Orepuki (now both part of the Waiau Valley parish), Waimatuku (Limestone Plains) and Waianawa (Wallacetown) were established, this lightened his load somewhat.¹¹³ Services had originally been held at the Strathmore, Birchwood and Otahu sheep stations until Otautau was surveyed and established. Services were subsequently held at the hotel and later still at the school. The church building was opened in 1890.

Nightcaps was developing as a mining centre so that parish was divided from the Limestone Plains Parish, and in 1892 the parish was established at Otautau with Rev. Alexander Macdonald, who had come from South America,¹¹⁴ in charge. There were 8 Elders, 13 Deacons and 115 members. In 1900, a Church Extension charge was established for Nightcaps, Opio and Wairio, which also included South Hillend, Heddon Bush (from the Winton parish). Rev. Macdonald was noted for his long ministry in Otautau of 33 years, dying five years after retiring. Later another stationing was made at Waiau, which became Merrivale and in 1916, became Orawia.¹¹⁵ The current church building in Otautau was opened in 1928.¹¹⁶ Ministers that followed in Otautau were Rev. John Bickerstaff 1925, Rev. William Howes 1929, Rev. Harold Burnett 1938, Rev. John Condie 1949 and Rev. Alec (Bill) Mudie in 1956.. In 1956 the parish had 7 Elders and 16 Deacons. Ministers after that were Rev. Mudie 1956, Rev. Roy McKenzie 1963, Rev. Philip Brown 1970, Rev. Alan Shaw 1977, Rev. Doug Rogers (Methodist) and Rev. Stephen Lindsay 1990. Otautau Parish became a Union parish, joining with the Methodist Church and in 1987 and the Wairio parish.

A new parish was opened in Nightcaps in 1900, which called Rev. Thomas Tait as its first minister, and in 1926 a church was built at Ohai, with Rev. Thomas Campbell as the minister. Nightcaps, Wairio and Ohai have had over a period of 50 years a history of short ministries,

¹¹³ Collie, *Otago Free Church Settlement*, 126.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 130.

¹¹⁵ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*. 69.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

of between one and six years with as many as 13 vacancies in between. In 1929 there were two ministers, with one at Ohai and one at Nightcaps.¹¹⁷ The Nightcaps, Wairio, Ohai Parish became a union parish called Waiono (Wai for Wairio, O for Ohai, N for Nightcaps and O for Opio) in 1973 and amalgamated with Otautau in 1987.¹¹⁸ The church buildings at Wairio and Nightcaps have since been closed and church buildings sold. Latterly the Union with the Methodist Church has been dissolved, and the Parish Council resigned at the 2012 AGM due to lack of personnel as office-bearers. Ohai and Otautau members then each formed a small committee of four people who oversee the day-to-day functions of each of their congregations, each of which has a worshipping congregation of 10 members. Rev. Ivan Smith, now retired and living in Nightcaps, conducts worship once a month throughout the year and for both the two services each month in the winter. Catholic church services are provided in Otautau and Nightcaps on a rotational supply.

Waiau Valley – 80 kms west of Invercargill city centre

Waiau Valley Parish was formed in 1991 as an amalgamation of two parishes that had previously been four separate parishes, Merrivale-Waiau and Tuatapere-Orepuki, with Rev. Ian Pimm as their Minister.¹¹⁹ In 1910 a ‘sawmills mission’ divided the area of Western Southland into Merrivale, Eastern Bush, Belmont, Feldwick and Orawia, to become the Orawia parish and Clifden and Tuatapere, while the Lilburn Valley made up the Tuatapere Parish. In 1868, gold was discovered at Orepuki and Round Hill (in the Riverton parish) so the population at Orepuki grew, with a large presence of Chinese miners at Round Hill. These miners had been served by Paul Ah Chin and then Mr. Hugh Cowie who had been a missionary in Amoy. However, he did not speak Cantonese as the miners did, so Rev. Alexander Don was sent to Canton to learn the language and returned to minister at Round Hill and later in Lawrence and Dunedin, continuing to maintain oversight of Chinese congregations in Otago and Southland.¹²⁰ Rev. Ross at Riverton visited when he could, at least quarterly, conducting the first service of Holy Communion in 1874.¹²¹ Mr. William

¹¹⁷ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np

¹¹⁸ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 162.

¹¹⁹ John McKean, *The Church in a Special Colony. A History of the Presbyterian synod of Otago and Southland 1866-1991*. Dunedin, NZ: Synod of Otago and Southland, 1994, 206.

¹²⁰ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 47-49.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 46 .

Nichol, who later became Rev. Nichol, served at Orepuki for a year from 1874.¹²² Then, as the gold was running out, it was ten years later that a Mr. Carter was appointed to a parish that included Orepuki, Pahia, Round Hill and Colac Bay (which was predominately Maori). He was followed in 1888 by Mr. Hain, formerly an Elder and the Sunday School teacher at First Church in Invercargill, who went on to ordination a few years later.¹²³ A church building was erected at Orepuki in 1890 with 60 members,¹²⁴ and a session was formed in 1897, with Round Hill, Pahia and Colac Bay becoming Home Mission stations.¹²⁵ Mr. Hain was followed by Rev. George Roby 1899, Rev. John Lopdell 1911, Rev. Leonard Hodson 1928, Rev. John Wylie 1930, Rev. Angus Climie 1933, Rev. Walter Humble 1935, Rev. George Dallard 1937, and Rev. David (Jack) Martin 1939, and then the parish was linked with Tuatapere in 1941. This parish was established in 1915, when farming and sawmilling had been established in the Waiau Valley, with 6 Elders and 13 Deacons and a church built in 1917. The first Minister was Rev. Robert McEwan 1913, then Rev. Robert Hill 1918, Rev. Samuel Waddell 1921, Rev. Albert Lion 1927, Rev. David Campbell 1931, Rev. James Thomson 1934, Rev. Edgar Allison 1937, Rev. Malcolm McFadgen 1938, Rev. Henry Bartlett 1949,¹²⁶ Rev. Norman Sheat 1956, Rev. Ivor Davies 1966, Rev. Gordon Mackie 1969, Rev. Kevin Ridley 1976 and Rev. Stuart Lange 1985.¹²⁷

The Waiau Parish was established in 1903 with the Rev. George Mitchell, 2 Elders and 4 Deacons at Orawia, and in two years it was re-named as Merrivale Parish. Ministers that served there were Rev. Robert Robinson 1905, Rev. Richard Morgan 1906, Rev. George Falconer 1908, Rev. John Johnston 1910, and then lay ministers until 1915 when the parish was re-named again as Orawia. The following 36 years saw 15 ministers serve there, and the longest serving remained for four years, while most were for just one or two years at a time. In 1953, under the charge of Rev. Allison, the parish was re-named again as Merrivale-Waiiau.¹²⁸ In 1956 there were 7 Elders and 7 Deacons.¹²⁹ Ministers that served this new parish

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Chisholm, *Fifty Years Syne*, 160.

¹²⁵ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, 47.

¹²⁶ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, , Register of Ministers, np.

¹²⁷ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 166.

¹²⁸ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

¹²⁹ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, , Original and Present Office-bearers, np.

were Rev. Dallas Clark 1958, Rev. James Jones 1967, Rev. Wallace Murray 1971, Rev. Tame (Tom) Hawea 1979, Rev. James Cullingford 1988,¹³⁰ then in 1990 Rev. Stuart Lange and Rev. Ian Pimm.

In 1997, the Waiau Valley Parish was established from the merger of Merrivale-Waiiau and Tuatapere-Orepuki, based at Tuatapere with services held each Sunday at Tuatapere and Orawia.¹³¹ From 2000 – 2005, Mrs. Sue Hogbin provided lay ministry supply. Short terms of ministry supply were provided by ministers from USA and Australia, using the manse as a base for travel throughout the country. Ministers included Rev. Bob Lantz 2005 from USA, followed by Mr. Peter and Mrs. Caroline Horrell 2006 and Mr. Laurie and Mrs. Jeanette Parkinson 2006, Mr. Eddie and Mrs. Nola Frost July – November 2009 and Mr. Dennis and Mrs. Phyllis Crookes March – June 2010 from Australia. The church buildings at Eastern Bush and Orawia were sold in 2002. Since 2008 the parish has been led by a Ministry Team, who were six Elders on Session led by a Moderating Elder with oversight from the Resource Ministers of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry. However, four of these Elders moved from the district in December 2011, and there are now only 3 elders in the parish and 30 members.¹³² In 2013, a Baptist Minister, Mr. Nigel Crocombe, moved into the manse as a Community Chaplain in an arrangement that sees him providing ministry support to the leadership as well as outreach to the community, since the Presbyterian Church is the only denomination in the area.

Mossburn – 100 kms north of Invercargill city centre

This parish for a long time was linked with Te Anau and was first called Mararoa. The parishes of Te Anau and Mossburn, which had separated from Lumsden, both separated from Taringatura Parish, with the first Minister at Mossburn being Rev. Evan Miller in 1962, followed by Rev. Ian Galloway 1966, Rev. Roger Oates 1977, Rev. Ian Haszard 1981, Rev. Anthony (Tony) Martin in 1986,¹³³ and Mr. Harry Kemp from 1990 to 1992. Since then, the

¹³⁰ Madill, *Part of a Miracle*, 168.

¹³¹ Parish Profile. Information supplied by Mrs. Zona Pearce, Past-Parish Administrator, Waiau Valley Presbyterian Church, 30 October 2014.

¹³² Information on the later years of the parish has been provided in a private communication by Mr. Lincoln Moffat, moderating elder of the Waiau Valley Parish. 11 September 2014.

¹³³ McDonald, *Flame Unquenched*, Register of Ministers, np.

parish has been served for very short periods by Stated Supply and Lay Ministry.¹³⁴ Mossburn enjoyed a settled period of Lay Supply with Mr. Chris Waples, and then in July 1997¹³⁵ Mossburn separated from Te Anau, with Lay Supply from Mr. Trevor Parkinson 2001 - 2004 and Mr. David Kimpton in 2004, then Mr. Brian Gallagher in July 2005.¹³⁶ However, as the Presbytery had not been properly informed or involved in Brian's employment, when this appointment became unsatisfactory Presbytery had to step in and sort out the situation. Therefore, in 2007 the Session resigned, a Commissioner was appointed and two Presbytery Elders from Winton were appointed to a temporary Church Council¹³⁷ called the Interim Management Team.¹³⁸ A new Parish Council and Local Ministry Team were commissioned in 2008 prior to the parish joining the Regional Resource Ministry. The parish is still acutely aware of the mistakes they have made which have taken a long time to remedy, and there are still repercussions that arise from time to time. This is a salient lesson to be learned by parishes that are left to their own devices without oversight by an appropriate Minister appointed by Presbytery. New Elders have recently been ordained at Mossburn, and the parish is endeavouring to connect with the community more by forging links with the Catholic and Anglican congregations, both of which are also very small groups of local residents.

Summary

From the very beginning, with the arrival of missionaries and the translation of the Bible into a written form of Maori, to the spreading of the gospel to the furthest corners of New Zealand and the establishment of the Presbyterian Church by the Free Church of Scotland in Otago and Southland, there was a wholehearted desire to share the Good News with everyone in this new country. The intentional establishment of parishes throughout the Otago and Southland regions continues to this day in one form or another. However, though historically it was an accepted practice to establish parishes or close them or merge them with others depending on

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ PCANZ Archives in Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, June 1997.

¹³⁶ PCANZ Archives in Dunedin. Southland Presbytery, Report of the Mission and Ministry Committee, July 2005.

¹³⁷ PCANZ Archives in Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, 2006.

¹³⁸ Information obtained in a private communication with Mrs. Yvonne Helliwell, Parish Secretary, Mossburn Parish, 13 September 2014..

need or changes in the make-up of the community that now seems very difficult to undertake. Looking back on their histories may encourage parishes to follow early examples and see if there are ways they can work together to better serve their communities now that their needs and circumstances have changed since they were viable, strong and well-attended independent parishes. This has been the focus of the suggestions for change and ideas for a new way of being church in Southland over more recent years. The following chapter looks at some of the options that have been explored.

CHAPTER TWO

Southland Presbytery 1990 - 2010

In my research at the Presbyterian Church Archives Centre at the Knox Centre in Dunedin, I discovered that the plan proposed in 2013 to re-arrange the Southland parishes is not a totally new idea and that something similar was proposed in 1996. Even as far back as 1993, a need was identified by the Ministry Committee of Southland Presbytery for a “Parish Mission Consultant” to be employed by the Presbytery¹³⁹ at one third of stipend to work for Presbytery Committees, Special Committees and Commissions, Quinquennial Visitations to provide Resource Advice, planning assistance and to be called upon in crisis situations.¹⁴⁰ The Parish Mission Consultant was charged with the duty of delivering the mission packages: ‘From Maintenance to Mission’, ‘Gossiping the Gospel’, ‘Four Faces of Mission’, ‘Who Ministers Where?’ and Growth Evangelism projects¹⁴¹ to encourage members of the parishes to actively undertake these projects, to suggest initiatives and to provide links for parishes as they seek to fulfil their mission.¹⁴² This position was advertised in Presbytery Notices in November 1993, following appendices 3i, 3ii and 3iii on the need for a Parish Mission Consultant. These appendices drew a comparison between a Consultancy and the role of a Director/Supervisor, gave a list of consultancy type of work that was in hand or had been requested by parishes and also the presbytery tasks that would be undertaken by the successful candidate. Rev. Ron Townsend was the only applicant for the job, and the Board of Nomination agreed that he was suitable for the role, to commence in March 1994.

The Presbytery applied for funding for the position from the Synod of Otago and Southland to the tune of \$5700, which included a travel allowance of 763km per annum, with parishes that used his services paying the travel costs for his visits. However, it is unclear whether Rev. Townsend ever really undertook the job, as there are no further references to the position, and there are no reports to Presbytery from this Parish Mission Consultant on the

¹³⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. July 1993.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, November 1993. Advertisement in Presbytery notices, following Appendices 3i, 3ii and 3iii on the need for a Parish Mission Consultant.

work being undertaken. Presbytery minutes record that Rev Townsend tendered his resignation in May 1994, citing a lack of confidence in Presbytery, but the resignation was withdrawn after mediation.¹⁴³ Funding was provided for the consultant's role by the Synod of Otago and Southland and the Adam Hamilton Fund in August 1994, with no levy for parishes. The role was to be reviewed in December 1994, but Rev Townsend had already resigned in September 1994.¹⁴⁴

By 1996, numerous reports¹⁴⁵ express concern about the future of Southland Presbytery.¹⁴⁶ Some parishes with ministers, such as Otautau/Waiono Union, were saying they could no longer afford to support them due to falling membership numbers¹⁴⁷ which had resulted in diminished income. Because many parishes had employed lay pastors on short-term contracts¹⁴⁸ and eight parishes had been identified as suffering hardship,¹⁴⁹ Limestone Parish requested that a forum be held, not just for Western Southland parishes, but for all Southland Presbytery to examine the future of the Presbytery.¹⁵⁰ They also requested that a letter be sent to all Presbyterians in Southland outlining the concerns that had been identified. They suggested a merger of several parishes with others and that no vacancies be filled until this had been achieved. An amendment to these proposals allowed parishes to fill their own vacancies, but insisted that a full review of parish boundaries, parish building requirements and future membership trends, as well as present and future requirements for ministry be carried out.¹⁵¹ By July 1996, proposals were put forward with various options for Western valley-yoked parishes and for Central Southland to be established as clusters of parishes.

¹⁴³ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, May 1994.

¹⁴⁴ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, September 1994.

¹⁴⁵ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, Ministry Committee report, November 1995, the Joint Regional Committee (JRC) report, November 1995 and St Stephen's Vacancy report, February 1996.

¹⁴⁶ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes, Business Committee report, Addendum A, March 1996.

¹⁴⁷ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes, JRC report, March 1996.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes, Ministry Committee report, November 1995.

¹⁵⁰ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes, Letter tabled from Limestone Plains Parish, October 1995.

¹⁵¹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes, April 1996, with various options included for ways ahead for the future.

In February 1996, a report from the Futures Work Group urged parishes and the presbytery to realise that “they should no longer expect society to follow the Gospel and come to church”¹⁵² but that they should feel empowered to undertake a mission approach to avoid a maintenance model but rather should re-program for mission and to realise that it would take time to restructure.¹⁵³ Some ideas which had been suggested for re-structuring of parishes and their neighbours were most enthusiastically received by the Central Southland parishes. At meetings held on 4-5 December 1996, 4-10 February 1997 (convened by Alan Paulin), parishes of Western and Central Southland discussed their various needs and possible ways of having them met alongside options for amalgamation and co-operation between parishes.

Parishes of Eastern and Southern Southland also looked at their options and possibilities for the future.¹⁵⁴ One positive outcome of these discussions was a first step towards the amalgamation of the Merrivale/Waiiau and Tuatapere/Orepuki parishes as of 21 February 1997. From March 1997 they became known as the Waiiau Valley Parish, with a Service of Inauguration held on 29 June at Orawia Church. In 1999 Otautau/Waiono Union Parish employed part-time Lay Supply ministers, Mrs Judith Day until May 2002 and Stephen and Shona Hurd from August 2002 to January 2004, as well as Summer Supply. Limestone Plains undertook to have worship held in three locations on a rotational basis to replace the need for a service in each of their three locations every week.¹⁵⁵

By May 1997, a plan emerged to establish a circuit amongst the parishes of Western Southland to be facilitated by both Lay and Ordained Ministry which would provide support and leadership with due consideration for each parish’s needs and keeping in mind the risk of rushing into something without an agreed process. The new ministry model, to be called the Longwood Circuit, would recognise the various services that could be provided by the Ministers involved. By this time, the parishes of Wallacetown and St. Stephens had met and decided not to link together, and each then sought to fill their vacancies.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes from the meeting of the Western and Central Southland Parishes held on 4 February 1997.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery minutes, Rev. Neil Cowie, Presbytery Facilitator. Report on Progress on Future in Far West of Presbytery, May 1997.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

A comprehensive report from the Futures Committee to the Southland Presbytery dated 30 June 1997 outlines the task of the committee, the meetings held, the proposals and outcomes. It was “generally agreed that the present situation is not tenable,”¹⁵⁷ and eight themes were identified as follows:

- a) clergy and lay people working together in leadership
- b) a mission focus rather than a chaplaincy model of ministry
- c) a desire to be active in and relevant to our local community
- d) work to meet the needs of people under forty
- e) a range of worship styles, with all including some contemporary music
- f) the congregation as the key missional unit but several are likely to be grouped for administrative purposes and served by a ministry team of lay and ordained people, some paid full time, some part time and some voluntary
- g) Minister’s leadership seen as enablers and co-ordinators, sharing in innovation, rather than figureheads
- h) denominational linkage is less important than congregational home.”¹⁵⁸

The report also expressed a considerable degree of frustration, mainly because congregations were little inclined or committed to such bold future options; they preferred only to put in place cosmetic changes. The report commented: “If this conservatism remains, the few options available will reduce to none at all.”¹⁵⁹

Each of the regions were given a programme of steps towards progress to implement and each one concluded: “We have been in these discussions many times before. DO IT NOW!”¹⁶⁰ Presbytery was strongly advised to act as the situation had reached a critical stage. At the same time, the following report was tabled from the Ministry Committee’s discussion of issues relating to ministry and restructuring in the Southland Presbytery. It covered the following topics:

- 1) Roots of the PCANZ as a reformed Church

¹⁵⁷ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin, Southland Presbytery Minutes, Allan Paulin, convenor. Futures Committee Report to Southland Presbytery. 30 June 1997.

¹⁵⁸. PCANZ Archives, Dunedin, Southland Presbytery Minutes. These points are taken from the Alan Paulin report from the Futures Committee. 30 June 1997.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Capital letters are as in the original minutes.

- 2) The PCANZ's philosophy of Ministry
- 3) The Presbyterian Form of Church Government, As It Relates to the Ordained Ministry
- 4) Some Issues Affecting the Church/Presbytery At This Time:
 - The Decline of Denominationalism and the Coming Revival
 - The Problems of the PCANZ
 - What Value is the Ordained Minister?
 - The Right to Call
 - The Role of Interim Moderators When It is No Longer an Interim?
- 5) Recommendation for Federal Model of Ministry
 - What it means to by a 'Federal' Model of Ministry?
 - Why is this model being proposed?
 - How should we go about implementing such a change?
- 6) Minister At Large in the Presbytery"¹⁶¹.

This was followed in September 1997 by the Ministry Committee's Special Report which explored the following topics:

- (1) "How do the proposals in the futures report fit in with the proposed federal model in the ministry committee report?, with a better definition of the term 'Federal' and what groupings of parishes do we envisage?;
- (2) How will a Federal Model provide a fairer distribution of lay and ordained Ministry Resources across the Presbytery and how will it enable Presbytery to better fulfil its responsibility to [provide ministry to every part of the Presbytery?;
- (3) Giving further consideration to the implementation of such a proposal; a further look at the audit and how will these proposals further a Mission Focus?"¹⁶²

This report recommended the implementation of a complete re-structuring of all parishes into viable and appropriate groupings, to be phased in one group at a time, with Presbytery employing a suitable person for three years full-time, possibly funded by the Synod of Otago and Southland Mission and Evangelism Fund and PSDS (Presbyterian Savings and Development) to oversee the work.¹⁶³ Southland Presbytery adopted these recommendations

¹⁶¹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery minutes, Rev. David Gordon, Convenor. Ministry Committee Report. August 1997. All points written as topic titles with capital letters, as in the original report.

¹⁶² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, September 1997.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

on 2 September 1997. A job described as Oversight of Rearrangement of Parishes in Southland Presbytery was presented in December 1997, along with terms as a part-time or full-time position. The position was advertised but remained vacant.

By June 1998, it became clear that nothing would happen if Presbytery continued to wait for the right person to apply. The convenor of the sub-committee commented that the current parish system was unworkable and that a cluster system would be better. He pointed out that there were three alternatives to achieve change:

- a) the worst method, to do it ourselves and take many years,
- b) the best method, to do it ourselves soon with a minimum of fuss, and
- c) the realistic way, to employ someone to do the task.¹⁶⁴

A “Report on Progress on Future in West of the Presbytery” received by Southland Presbytery from Rev. Neil Cowie, Presbytery Facilitator, in December 1998, asked: “What is going to happen in the Parishes of Limestone Plains, Riverton, Otautau/Waiono Union and Waiiau Valley? Only God knows and the leaders are trying to discern His plans.”¹⁶⁵ It listed the meetings that had been held and the discussions that had taken place and made the general assessment that “each parish has got over the emotional turmoil of instability and uncertainty of the past, to become now more practical and focussed on mission.”¹⁶⁶ At a meeting held on 8 November ’98, Presbytery decided to consider a Longwood Parish to embrace all four parishes, with each parish appointing two “committee” representatives to meet in 1999 to consider proposals on working together and produce a “Longwood Newsletter” to communicate between parishes.¹⁶⁷ This was followed by a meeting on 3 April 1999.

During this period the following parishes were vacant and looking for ministry alternatives to calling a full-time Ordained Minister. At the time they were using various forms of leadership as follows:

- Mossburn – part-time lay supply

¹⁶⁴ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Rev. Clive Haliday. 2 June 1998.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

- Otautau/Waiono Union – part-time Methodist lay supply, Presbyterian pulpit supply; Summer Supply by theology students; some Ordained Ministry supply at Ohai/Nightcaps
- Waiiau Valley – part-time lay supply
- Riverton Union – Methodist Minister
- Limestone Plains – part-time Local Limited Minister
- Wallacetown – vacant, lay leadership, seeking Ordained Minister, filled Jan. ‘99
- St. Stephen’s – vacant, then full-time Ordained Minister, Dec. ‘98
- St. Paul’s – part-time lay supply
- Bluff Co-operating – Methodist ministry supply with lay (and some ordained) pulpit supply
- Oban – Pulpit Supply, lay and ordained (ecumenical).¹⁶⁸

Woodlands and Oteramika/Kennington also indicated they could no longer sustain full-time ordained ministry and some others, St. Paul’s, Knox and St. Andrew’s, indicated that the same situation was rapidly approaching for them as well. This prompted a discussion paper from Allan Paulin, Co-Director of the Southern South Island Mission Resource Team in September 2001, which contended that Southland Presbytery needed to make some difficult strategic decisions.¹⁶⁹ He identified Invercargill and its surrounds as having 16 parishes, a much larger number than seemed necessary, and he suggested that 8 parishes would be a much more workable number. He also pointed out that, of the 27 parishes in the Presbytery, only one parish had lived within its non-capital income in the last financial year. He went on to suggest some potentially workable amalgamations and groupings (similar to the grouping or federal model previously suggested for rural parishes) of city congregations, with reference to some of the possible links with rural parishes close to the city. He urged the Presbytery “to act NOW as the potential to fill vacancies is limited and parishes may fall over with consequent frustration, hurt and loss.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Vacancy Reports for 1997/1998.

¹⁶⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Allan Paulin. Southern South Island Mission Resource Team Report to Southland Presbytery, September 2001.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. His capital letters.

The Report of the Joint Regional Committee (JRC) of the Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) for October 2002 noted that, in three of the western parishes (Riverton, Limestone Plains and Otatau/Waiono), there were ongoing discussions regarding co-operation between them, including sharing of ministry resources and collaboration on training for lay leaders.¹⁷¹

At a meeting held 2 December 2003 between the Mission Committee and Rev John Daniel, Synod Mission Advisor, discussed models of church for those parishes unable to sustain an ordained ministry. These models included 1) a House Church for small numbers supported by a mentor and resource minister; 2) Local Ministry Teams (LMT) where there were people able to take on various roles supported by a Resource Minister; or 3) a combination of both with a Resource Minister working with a number of parishes who could be assisted by the Mission Resource Committee of Synod to undertake a strategic review of what resourcing each parish would require for their mission and future plans.¹⁷²

In July 2004, Rev. Dr Simon Rae, Southland Presbytery Moderator, presented report to Presbytery entitled “An Uncalled-for Report from the Moderator.” In it, he stated that the Presbytery was in a near-terminal crisis, or ‘melt-down.’ He went on to say that the Presbytery was unable to function as it should, to sustain the values Assembly had identified, of safe ministry, healthy congregations and mission orientation (as opposed to survival strategies). He pointed out that the workloads of Ministers, Presbytery Elders and Presbytery Committees were too heavy, with multiple responsibilities for many people. He highlighted a radical unwillingness for change, risk co-operation or to share power, especially with reference to the Allan Paulin plan, which had been ignored, allowing parishes to just do their own thing without stable ordained ministry and a lack of personnel for Visitations and Boards of Nomination. He pointed out that ignoring Risk Management Processes could lead to abuse (and litigation) as statutory requirements for a duty of care were being neglected. This was evident in the making of inappropriate appointments and the lack of provision for supervision. He called for parishes to be linked in Mission Units which would call a full-time Nationally Ordained Minister (NOM) for each unit. There should be one Parish Council for

¹⁷¹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, October 2002.

¹⁷² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Keith Cameron, convenor. Mission Committee Report, December 2003.

each unit, which would develop a mission strategy plan that would use their shared resources. This proposal would see parishes move away from historic territorial boundaries towards dynamic, viable, community-facing mission units with strong lay leadership and stable ordained ministry. This would allow parishes to get to know each other, to act immediately to resolve issues and to sustain appropriate staffing levels.¹⁷³ The suggestions he made about which parish would be in which unit were similar to the plan proposed by Allan Paulin.

In November 2004, parishes reported to the Mission and Ministry Committee on the proposed clustering of parishes, and some expressed concerns such as having to attend more meetings, the need for evangelical outreach, and ministry appointment processes. Presbytery voted to hold its meetings bi-monthly (March, May, July, September and November) with the clusters meeting on the other months of the year (February, April, June, August, October and December). Each of the seven clusters (with Te Anau to stand alone or opt in when able) would meet early in 2005 to appoint a facilitator to organise meetings. This new arrangement would relieve the workload of Interim Moderators, some of whom were working with up to four parishes. They would then be supported by other ministers in each cluster,¹⁷⁴ as there was to be at least one Ordained Minister in each cluster. This model also allowed for the inclusion of parishes in Co-operative Ventures. However, the model did not address the distances to be travelled by some parishes, such as Mossburn, Waiau Valley and Oban, whose leaders nevertheless expressed their unwillingness to attend most of the meetings. However, it was generally felt that this model of strategic planning would be a positive step towards a healthy Presbytery,¹⁷⁵ as proposed by the Reform Group of Assembly in its paper on Healthy Congregations.¹⁷⁶

Terms of appointment had been adopted by Assembly for the setting up of Local Ministry Teams, and the Knox Parish then undertook to achieve this. However, this model also included the requirement to have a Resource Minister for each team, putting further pressure on the limited number of ministers available. Therefore, at the February 2005 meeting of the

¹⁷³ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Rev. Dr Simon Rae, Moderator Southland Presbytery. 22 July 2004.

¹⁷⁴ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Rev. Neville Jackson, Convenor. Southland Presbytery Minutes December 2004.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Mission and Ministry Committee, ways of providing resource ministry were suggested: 1) a NOM to be provided with 15% stipend for working with one LMT; 2) Presbytery to appoint a Resource Minister for up to five LMTs with each providing 20% of stipend; 3) Presbytery to appoint a Resource Minister to coach and mentor LMTs (like a rural chaplain); 4) suitable retired ministers to be considered as Resource Ministers for LMTs, 5) a NOM within the LMT's parishes cluster to be contracted for a percentage of stipend for the role of Resource Minister within the cluster. At this meeting the role of a Parish Enabler was also developed. It was proposed that a person might work across 4-5 parishes with each providing a percentage of their stipend.¹⁷⁷ In July 2005, St. Paul's Parish also indicated their intention to form a Local Ministry Team.¹⁷⁸

Another strategy adopted by the Presbytery to reduce the workload for Interim Moderators was to appoint an Elder to moderate Session meetings to save the moderator from having to moderate every meeting. Traditionally Interim Moderators, while being Minister in another parish, also chaired Session and Congregational Meetings, conducted weddings, funerals and sacraments, in the absence of ordained clergy in the vacant parish they were Interim Moderator for. This new role of Moderating Elder was instigated on the understanding that the Moderating Elder would seek advice and guidance from NOM's when needed and make it known whom parishioners could approach in matters of complaint.¹⁷⁹ This role was then adopted by Oban, Limestone Plains, Mossburn, Wallacetown and St Stephen's as well as Woodlands, Oteramika/Kennington, PIC (Pacific Island Church), Richmond Grove and Toitois. The committee also made allowance for the short-term appointment of lay ministers (six months at a time) to alleviate the lack of LOMs and NOMs, especially in the situation where there was not an Ordained Minister in each of the cluster groups. This dearth of clergy was also making it difficult to find appropriate resource Ministers for LMTs. It was also indicated that some members of LMTs might benefit from attending courses provided by Knox School of Ministry and that if they did so this would be recognised as Continuing Ministry formation.¹⁸⁰ Alongside these proposals the need was also highlighted for elders to

¹⁷⁷ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, February 2005.

¹⁷⁸ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Craig Stoneman, Nola Stuart, Board of Discernment Report, July 2005.

¹⁷⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin., Southland Presbytery Minutes, Rev. Alastair Taylor, convenor. Mission and Ministry Committee Report, October 2005.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

be trained and commissioned to conduct baptisms as well as the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Following on from the Synod Review of Presbyteries in April 2006, the Mission and Ministry Committee prepared a report on the Revised Functions of Congregational Clusters, and the Cluster make-up was revised as well. Key roles of the cluster group were defined, and the parishes in each cluster were identified along with key personnel in each cluster.

I was personally involved as the APW (Association of Presbyterian Women) representative to Presbytery, beginning in February 2003, then later as a member of the Presbytery Executive and convenor of the Administration Committee. I can recall that with regard to the cluster groupings of parishes, the bi-monthly meetings became more and more difficult to plan, with fewer and fewer representatives attending.¹⁸¹ Within a year or so, support for this model diminished to the point that it was no longer tenable, with communication between parishes cited as one of the difficulties.¹⁸² This then left a significant vacuum of ministry oversight for a significant number of vacant parishes. Ten parishes in the Presbytery were identified as having an Interim Moderator; three had established Local Ministry Teams over the years since 2005, two with a Resource Minister and one still looking for a RM, two with Lay Supply ministers. Interim Moderators were responsible for three parishes and one parish was a Co-operating Venture under Presbyterian oversight. Four parishes were identified as remote and unable to be linked or supported by a neighbouring parish.¹⁸³

The first Local Ministry Team at Knox Presbyterian Church in Invercargill¹⁸⁴ was closely followed by the commissioning of a Local Ministry Team at St Paul's, Invercargill, and then St Stephen's.¹⁸⁵ In December 2007 there were 12 parishes in the previous Southland Presbytery that were classed as being vacant and being led by lay members, with oversight by interim Moderators. This situation had come about during the preceding ten years when

¹⁸¹ By June 2007 there is no longer any mention of cluster group meetings or activities noted in Presbytery minutes.

¹⁸² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes, March 2006.

¹⁸³ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes June 2007.

¹⁸⁴ Presbyterian Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery minutes for 2005. The events described in this paragraph are recorded in these minutes.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

congregation numbers were in decline, finances were insufficient to employ an Ordained Minister and ministers were reluctant to accept a call to rural parishes in Southland.

Four streams of ministry have been identified by the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand,¹⁸⁶ Nationally Ordained Minister (NOM), Locally Ordained Ministry (LOM), Local Ministry Team (LMT) and Amorangi (or Maori Minister), and these were being developed at this time. The third stream was the preferred option for many parishes who then commissioned a team of lay leaders as an LMT to take responsibility for key roles in the church, such as worship leader, mission leader, pastoral care leader, and sometimes other roles such as administrator or pastor.

While the requirement for these lay teams is to have a Resource Minister,¹⁸⁷ it was recognised that there were very few Ordained Ministers in Southland available, or willing to move to Southland, who could undertake this role. A small group of Presbytery members met to write a job description and set up a Ministry Settlement Board, convened by Rev. Ian Crawford, for a role initially described as a Presbytery Ministry Enabler, who would work half time for St Paul's Church and half time for five other parishes – Wallacetown, Knox, Otautau/Waiono, St Stephen's and Limestone Plains.¹⁸⁸ A meeting was held at St Paul's Church on 9 August 2008 to discuss issues relating to ministry, support for parishes with LMTs, Pastoral Assistants or Lay Assistants, at which the need for Resource Ministry was confirmed.¹⁸⁹ The position was advertised in national publications, in the SPANZ and PCANZ websites, but there were no applicants, which was not surprising as very few would have a concept of what the role would entail. The Ministry Settlement Board reported in July 2009 that 17 people had been approached.¹⁹⁰

As it became clear that someone was needed to undertake this role sooner rather than later, it was thought that someone already resident in Southland might be able to take on the role. At the time, I was a Locally Ordained Minister (LOM) and I was in a situation where my

¹⁸⁶ PCANZ Book of Order, Guide for Ministry Settlement Boards, p 11.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. Chapter 9.23, 9.24, 9.25, 9.26, 9.27, 9.28, 9.29, 9.30, 10.18 & 10.19.

[Http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/for_parishes/Book_of_Order_2010_corrected_March_2011.pdf](http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/for_parishes/Book_of_Order_2010_corrected_March_2011.pdf)

¹⁸⁸ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. February 2008.

¹⁸⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. September 2008.

¹⁹⁰ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. July 2009.

employment status could change, so that I would no longer provide ministry supply for ten hours a week at Bluff/Greenhills Co-operating Parish. Rev. Ian Crawford was in the same position, ending a five year ministry at St David's Parish, with some oversight of St Paul's. We came together to make a proposal. We were interviewed by the Ministry Settlement Board on 29 October 2009. Presbytery decided that the two of us could take on the role, jointly, of Resource Ministers for Southland parishes that did not have a minister. This also enabled all those Ministers in Southland who were Interim Moderators of those parishes, not seeking to fill their vacancy, to be discharged of this responsibility.

Each parish without an Ordained Minister was invited to commit to this initiative and a rationale of contribution towards the funding was calculated. An application to the Synod of Otago and Southland to gain major funding for three years of the project was sent, and the outcome was affirmative. After a meeting with parish representatives in November 2009,¹⁹¹ nine of twelve possible parishes committed to the partnership proposal and, after two more meetings, agreed to proceed with Rev. Ian Crawford supplying quarter time and myself half time for a period of three years, with annual reviews. We were duly inducted at a service on 2 February, 2010, at St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Invercargill, for a three-year term. The Resource Ministry was funded by a levy apportioned to each of the participating parishes, and funding provided by the Synod of Otago and Southland.

The member parishes of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry were: Oban (Stewart Island), Bluff Greenhills Co-operating, St Paul's, St Stephen's, Wallacetown, Limestone Plains, Otautau-Waiono, Waiau Valley and Mossburn. These range from Tuatapere in the West, to Mossburn in the North of Southland, to Bluff, south of Invercargill and Stewart Island. The furthest distance from Invercargill is to Mossburn, 100kms, with Tuatapere almost as far, and to get to Stewart Island it is necessary to cross Foveaux Strait by air or ferry. St Paul's and St Stephen's are city parishes, and Wallacetown is nearby. Those parishes opting out were Knox, Oteramika-Kennington and Woodlands. However, if their arrangements had been unsustainable due to a lack of Ordained Ministers to be Interim Moderators or Resource Ministers, they may well have looked at their options for the future and considered joining the Regional Resource Ministry at a later date. In addition to the

¹⁹¹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. November 2009.

parishes I have mentioned, the parishes of First Church, Windsor Community, St Andrew's and St David's in Invercargill, Central Southland and Te Anau were able to support full time ministry, and Richmond Grove had a part-time minister, while Riverton and Otatara, as CVs (Co-operating Ventures) were under Methodist oversight.

When Rev. Crawford and I were commissioned to this new role,¹⁹² there was no job description and no outline of expectations. That was yet to be written. Parishes were asked what they thought the role should entail and what their specific ministry needs were. Some of the roles that were identified were:

- taking services of worship, as and when able, on pulpit supply rosters
- pastoral care, supervision and support of Local Ministry Team members and members of Parish Council-led parishes.
- providing training for team members, especially for Licensed Communion and Baptism Elders and for those with specific responsibilities, such as pastoral visitors.
- providing resources, educational opportunities and networking

This role was assessed informally after one year at the first Annual Meeting of the Regional Resource Ministry,¹⁹³ where it was endorsed with encouragement to continue providing ministry to those parishes involved.

Rev. Crawford and I continued to provide leadership for the member parishes as Resource Ministers for the contracted three years, when a review process was instigated by Southern Presbytery, since Southland Presbytery had ceased to exist and was by then part of the much larger Presbytery which covers the same geographical region as the Synod of Otago and Southland. Rev. Crawford had committed one week each month of the year to make himself available to an assigned parish on a rostered basis by leading worship on Sunday and providing any resources that parish currently needed. On the other hand, I responded to invitations by member parishes to fill the pulpit when requested, attended Parish Council meetings on a regular basis and provided resource input for specific situations. Both of us as Resource Ministers worked together in providing resource workshops on sacraments, pastoral

¹⁹² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes. February 2009.

¹⁹³ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southern Presbytery Minutes. Report to Presbytery, March 2011.

care, as well as liturgy and lectionary. However, these were not always well attended.

Southern Presbytery agreed to continue the Southland Regional Resource Ministry until June 2014, with the necessary funding provided by the Synod of Otago and Southland. That period of four and a half years, along with the training I had received in the UK, helped me to reflect analytically on what I had undertaken and achieved in the role of a Resource Minister, which I outline in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Multi-parish Ministry in the United Kingdom and Southland, New Zealand

For Ministers of Word and Sacrament who are Resource Ministers in a multi-parish arrangement, the role involves offering Supervision, facilitation and training for the laity (especially for Local Ministry Teams and Shared Ministry Teams) in order to maintain links and relationships across the number of parishes. Resource Ministers may seek to concretise support for themselves and the ministry they undertake, as well as continue their own professional development by attending conferences and training courses to up-skill with resource material and information. In June 2011, I attended a Multi-Parish Ministry Workshop in Warwickshire, England, over two days of eight sessions, where ministers serving in multi-parish ministries came together to learn skills and strategies. Through this course, I gained many insights and resources for my role as a Resource Minister.

The Southland Regional Resource Ministry Context

Features and characteristics of multi-parish ministry in other parts of the world, particularly the UK, are significantly relevant to the Southland situation. Many Anglican clergy in England who are familiar with this concept serve in arrangements of two to eight parishes, mostly close together (up to five miles apart) in rural or semi-rural areas and using similar worship styles. Some Parish Councils in England still serve as the governing body of the village, and most parishes have volunteers who fill the roles of Sexton, Deacon, Reader and Parish Councillors, which are age-old responsibilities.

While Southland parishes have similarities to the situation in the UK, there are numerous differences: Southland parishes are spread over a large geographical area (some are more than 100kms apart), in both rural and urban situations, are of diverse worship style, have a variety of team leadership models, and many leaders are new to the church. Many congregations have lost significant membership, struggle to find volunteers to take on roles, and their role within the community and connection with the wider Church has become more tenuous, even bordering on invisible. Many are also faced with urgent decisions concerning

maintenance, strengthening, insurance or divestment by demolition or sale of fragile church buildings.

The role of the Resource Minister serving a number of parishes in Southland was a juggling act, helping leaders in parishes make significant and wise decisions, helping with the regular provision of worship services, training and resourcing lay leadership, as well as being the connecting tissue to the wider church.

Features of Multi-Parish Ministry

The main reasons for setting up the Southland Regional Resource Ministry were congregation decline and the historic (repeated) failure of Presbytery to employ a Minister to facilitate a group of parishes in Western Southland,¹⁹⁴ thus relieving the increasing workload on ministers who took on the role of Interim Moderator. Other factors were the changing nature of the rural scene, lack of funds to employ a minister and the effects of an aging population, especially in rural churches. When facilitating mission and ministry in a number of parishes, various aspects of the a Multi-Parish Ministry model need to be understood to consider the various options for the future for those parishes in Southland who were struggling with these issues.

Leadership and Collaboration with the Laity

The parish system which most of us are familiar with has an uncertain future. What are the options? There is neither sufficient nor adequate research carried out on what the future options are for the Church in light of current issues. It is no longer possible to assume every parish will have an ordained minister, even part-time, who will minister to and pastorally care for a wide age-range of parishioners, live locally in the manse, who will provide weekly services of worship, community church services such as funerals, weddings, Anzac Day services and prayers or karakia at community and school events. Older models of ministry are now being replaced by collaboration and oversight.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ See the history of Southland Presbytery in the previous chapter.

¹⁹⁵ James Bell, Jill Hopkinson and Trevor Willmott. eds. *Re-shaping Rural Ministry. A Theological and Practical Handbook*. Norwich, Norfolk, UK: Canterbury, 2009, 14.

For ordained ministers called to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Church is the vehicle within which they carry out service in God's Kingdom. They help the Church to live out the gospel in order to be effective in the community in which it is situated. Rural churches in both New Zealand and the UK are often led by local lay people who are supported by a minister who usually lives somewhere else. Multi-parish ministry is a new form of Church identity that addresses issues facing 'vacant' parishes.¹⁹⁶ If our model is the traditional one of Church equalling a minister (or priest) in situ, does that mean that if there is no minister then there is no Church? The answer is an emphatic NO! Therefore we need a new model of the minister being a visitor who enables ministry in the church. Funds that previously would have been used almost exclusively for the employment of an ordained minister can now be used to obtain resources for both ministers and laity.

Multi-parish ministry has a unique characteristic that does not fit the traditional concept of Church. Multi-parish means that across the spectrum ministry is multi-faceted (i.e. with many different understandings and interpretations of theology) and multi-cultural, often including parishes in urban, semi-urban and rural contexts. As a result, God is seen to be present, alive and active in a multitude of contexts, throughout the area or region. One of the tasks of resource ministry is to find out what God is doing in each place and join in, which could even mean that the ministry has global implications.

Some of the difficulties of multi-parish ministry are that the minister has to spread his or her time and resources widely, over a great area, over diverse people and a wide variety of theologies found, even within one denomination, ranging from fundamentalist, conservative, or charismatic to traditional or liberal. Risks are not being able to connect with some and being less visible to others. For those who contribute financially, the concern that they 'get

¹⁹⁶ Jeremy Martineau. 'Distinctive features and values', in Bell, Hopkinson, Willmott, *Re-shaping Rural Ministry. A Theological and Practical Handbook*. 32..

Rob Stoner. *The Cluster of Congregations with Lay Ministry Teams, a Report for the Uniting Church of Australia*. Berri, South Australia, Australia: Uniting Church. 2001, 3.

John M Meade. *People and Ministry, A Future for the Rural Church*. Hedenham Bungay, Suffolk, UK: Fine, 1994, 13.

value for their money.’ It must be understood however that the Resource Minister is not the parish minister and so is not part of the local framework. Therefore the minister is not so much the ‘salt’ (one of the locals, living in friendship with one another as in Mark 9:50), but the ‘light’ for the community (placed on a lampstand to shine before the people as in Matthew 5:15-16). We share together in the Kingdom of God, help neighbours, act with God’s authority in mission and are witnesses in the community, outward-facing.¹⁹⁷ It is also necessary to understand that there are short-falls in the multi-parish model that can only be addressed by trying to understand what is possible and what is not possible.

Our basic humanity as neighbour can lead us in various directions, and this is shared by all those who are baptised as a ministry of fulfilment in partnership with the minister. It may be a spontaneous response to the needs of our neighbours rather than waiting to be asked to help or sitting back and saying who else could do this or thinking that someone else might be doing it already. In responding to what needs to be done, we then discover that there may be others who could be partners in this ministry, such as another church in the area of a different denomination.¹⁹⁸

Martineau stresses that in rural communities ecumenism is a theological necessity and a practical one.¹⁹⁹ Ecumenical co-operation may also lead us to partner with other groups and agencies in the community, such as District Councils, GreyPower, environmental groups, Women’s Institute, Rural Women, Federated Farmers, schools, volunteer Fire Brigade and St.

¹⁹⁷ Hugh Ellis. *Ministry, Ministers & Mission in Rural Areas. A Practitioner’s Reflection on Rural Ministry*. (A report written for the Diocese of Bath and Wells, 2010), 47. Stoner. *Fresh Directions Developing mission-shaped church and ministry*. (Keswick, South Australia, Australia: Mediacom Education, 2010), 4.

¹⁹⁸ Stoner., *Fresh Directions*, 7.

Jeremy Martineau, *Turning the Sod. A Workbook on the Multi-Parish Benefice*. Stoneleigh Park: Warwickshire, UK: ACORA, 1995, 31. This is particularly true in rural New Zealand, where there may be only one or two churches in a small town with a mix of denominations.

¹⁹⁹ Martineau, *Turning the Sod.*, 31. Many small towns in New Zealand have a Catholic church and a Protestant church, which may be Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian, with very small congregations, though a New Life or other evangelical church is often seen as well.

John Ambulance, sports clubs, community newspapers, shops and pubs.²⁰⁰ Consulting with these organisations can help with planning events and community activities.²⁰¹

God's laity are found in all walks of life and in all sectors of the community. Churches need to reconnect with those in the community who represent the Christian voice, who may not be regular church attenders, but who have a real connection with the community, especially in sharing church buildings with the 'unchurched'²⁰² for a wide variety of community events. Daily living is the core of Christian living, not what happens on a Sunday morning – even previous life experiences, knowledge and the skills of ministers need to be rediscovered and used in community outreach.²⁰³ Our resourcing, enabling and recognising the gifts of the laity acknowledges a true partnership in ministry with those who are employed by the church in a variety of roles.

The effective Church of the future will possibly be founded on the strengths, interests and visions of locals who are supported by the minister within their parishes. Members need to identify their strengths, interests and visions in order to identify their resourcing needs. The resource minister is not seen then as the 'great I-am' or the 'be-all and end-all', or a manager, but as a teacher, facilitator and inspirer.

Mission and Ministry

As in all forms of ministry, the central mission of multi-parish ministry is to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom, in worship, preaching and administering the sacraments, to teach, baptise and nurture Christian faith, as well as to respond in service to humanity in pastoral care, healing and support in order to transform communities and sustain creation. All

²⁰⁰ Jeremy Martineau, ed. in *Bridging the Gap. The Church in the Local Community*. (Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, UK: ACORA, 2001), Appendix 3, 41.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Kenneth L Holmes, in Martineau, *Bridging the Gap*. 'The perspective of a Christian architect.', 31.

²⁰³ Stoner. *Fresh Directions*, 9. Here Stoner talks about the variety of giftedness members bring to team ministry. I am a Registered Nurse, with 22 years of experience working with elderly patients, which gives me a real connection with elderly folk in parishes, in hospitals and aged care facilities.

of these aspects are outlined in the PCANZ Five Faces of Mission,²⁰⁴ which are the founding tenets of our calling. Resource ministers strive to help parishes to understand how to undertake these mission imperatives and what impedes them from happening. This is particularly so in small congregations which are made up of very elderly folk who are tired out from undertaking these endeavours over many years. This element of fatigue also results in a loss of the history of investment in that community by those who have contributed to the life of the Church and the church's connection with the community.

As a result of the visions of Christians in any given community many 'Fresh Expressions' of Church have evolved.²⁰⁵ In the United Kingdom, the term 'Fresh Expressions', first used by Archbishop Rowan Williams in the 1990s, initially in the Church of England,²⁰⁶ describes the movement to

a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church which will: come into being through the principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples, and have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.²⁰⁷

These new initiatives, which identify the Church's desire to move on from what they were to something new, have attracted many members of the community who would not have otherwise considered attending church. These fresh expressions are ventures such as breakfast church, soup kitchens, community meals, and house church groups. They develop a local care ethic and identify each other's giftings which contribute to the resourcing of such ventures.

Ministers serving in multi-parish ministry situations get to know the gifts, interests and visions of the members of the parish and the community. They are then able to assist them to work towards achieving the visions they have, especially if a fresh expression is proposed.

²⁰⁴ PCANZ, *Worship and Mission*, Ch. 7.1.1 The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand believes it is called by God to work with others to make Jesus Christ known through – Teaching and nurturing people in Christian faith – Loving service responding to human need – Proclaiming the gospel – Seeking to transform society – Caring for God's creation., 1.

²⁰⁵ Stoner. *Fresh Directions*, 7.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Ministers are to be a beacon of light, shining on the future and future possibilities. The minister should be able to resource, enable and empower those who undertake ministry in their local area, to initiate new projects and undertake outreach in their community.²⁰⁸

Leadership

Ministers need to consider whether models of leadership are top-down or not.²⁰⁹ The top-down model is likened to the pyramid, with implications of being entombed or buried. This reflects the Jesus model, inverse or bottom-up, with Christ serving the whole weight of the world, which could be seen as unstable or ready to topple over.

One model of leadership, proposed by Rev. Canon Jeremy Martineau, director of Rural Ministry Studies at St. Mary Centre in his resource workbook for those in multi-parish ministries, is based on the parts of the bicycle.²¹⁰ The centre frame is stable, with three equal sides representing the Trinity. The crank is where the drive comes from – the Bishop or Presbytery.²¹¹ The pedals that work the bike are the Archdeacons and Vicars or Minister; the forward momentum is potentiated by the axle and hub, the members of the church. Dynamism in the church is the result of the friction generated as the rubber meets the road, showing that the church is 'going somewhere.'²¹²

According to Martineau, leaders in the church should welcome hostile criticism as helpful and developmental, just as cyclists overcome nervousness and fear as they master their skill. The people of the Church are there in equal value to work together, as do the ball-bearings in the sprocket. All are equipped and enabled by the three persons of the Trinity – the three in one all, as lubrication. The spokes on the wheel all radiate from the hub, criss-crossing each other in their role, being the out-workings of the Church in the community; rubber hitting the road. No-one is expected to do more than another as the rim is equi-distant at all times from the hub. The tuning spanner (the Resource Minister) keeps all in tune with each other,

²⁰⁸Stoner, *The Cluster of Congregations with Lay Ministry Teams*, Ecumenical co-operation, section d) 2 on re-empowering the laity. 5.

²⁰⁹ Jeremy Martineau, ed. *Turning the Sod*, 44.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 45

²¹¹ Ibid., 46

²¹² Ibid., 47

maintaining good communication; maintaining an even tension.²¹³ The following proverb from ancient Chinese philosopher Tao-Tse sums up the following image -

*Leaders are best when people barely know they exist,
not so good when people acclaim,
worst when they despise them,
but of a good leader who talks little,
when their work is done,
their aim fulfilled, their people will say
'We did this ourselves'.²¹⁴*

The 'bicycle' model is easily understood and relates well to the roles and relationships of the minister and parishioners in a multi-parish arrangement. Martineau, in the chapter on 'The Bicycle as a Model of the Church in his workbook *Turning the Sod*, points out that there are questions that could be asked of this model. Some are:

- "How many spokes are you working with? The wheels could be very weighty if there were too many spokes or the wheel would buckle if there were only a few spokes.
- Are you the hub or one/some of the spokes? The Resource Minister or the Local Ministry Team could be the hub, or the hub could be the local community the parish serves.
- Is your Trinitarian frame even or wonky? Asking whether worship is heavily focussed on only one of the faces of the Tri-une God, or refers to God with equal (or nearly) emphasis on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Does the bike ride the road all the time? Or is the bike locked up in the shed most of the time? Who maintains it, keeps it clean and pumps up the tyres? All questions about the way parishioners care for themselves and each other, care for their property, and support each other in the projects and initiatives they endeavour to undertake.
- Is it possible to leave the bike in its stand occasionally? It is probably agreed by most of us that the bike will be idle at times. When there are other things to do, when the

²¹³ Ibid., 47

²¹⁴ Jeremy Martineau. Lecture at Multi-Parish Ministry Workshop, Offchurch, Warwickshire, England, 14 June 2011.

riders need to stop and rest, spend time with God, discerning God's will for them and their parish, to reflect and renew, ready to hit the road again."²¹⁵

The leadership style of this model carries with it the responsibility of teaching, modelling, facilitating, being the centre-point for over-lapping boundaries, having many fingers in many pies and being a trouble-shooter. The time has come for clergy to be 'change-facilitators', training the laity in readiness for their new roles. In other denominations, there is a less clergy-focussed willingness to include lay leadership like ours who are trained and commissioned into the leadership role in their parish.

When we consider our own style of leadership and what is expected of us, there is a great deal. We may find overlapping boundaries in our roles, we have too many fingers in too many pies, and we spread ourselves across wide areas that need to be carefully managed. Those of us who have to be 'change-facilitators' need to identify the facets of lay ministry that we empower, enable and resource and what we might bring to our roles in the future. What we say and do now may have results in 20 years' time. The way we deliver resource ministry will vary from situation to situation, but it is helpful to consider the following the biblical image of the shepherd (eg Psalm 23). A shepherd tries to get God's flock to go where they've never been before and do what they've never done before. At times no amount of verbal persuasion can convince a group to do something, but if just one person takes the lead and shows others the way, the group eagerly follows. The biblical image of a leader is not one of a cowboy, after all, but of a shepherd. Cowboys drive and push their herds from behind. Shepherds lead their flocks from the front.²¹⁶ Apparently this was so in biblical shepherding, as the sheep followed the master's voice. (John 10:3-5).

Being in the Community

Clergy in a parish may undertake to conduct ceremonial functions in the community such as weddings, funerals, Anzac Day services, especially in a small community. Historically there were also roles involved with close links to events held at the local school or in the town hall.

²¹⁵ Martineau, *Turning the Sod*, 46-7.

²¹⁶ Dennis Anderson. *Imitating the Good Shepherd*. 2007. Home page

<<http://cms.intervarsity.org/studentsoul/item/imitate-shepherd-intro>> accessed 14 January 2012

The position of the parish priest was one of historical attachment to the community and all its affairs. Many small town events were administered by the Kirk Session (or Parish Council), which reflects especially the role of the Parish Council in small villages in England where the Church of England was the centre of administration. In some instances the Parish Council became the link between the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church and the other Protestant (Reformed) churches in a larger community. However, the changing role of the Church in the community has also changed the role of the Parish Council and especially the clergy, with fewer occasions for performing weddings and funerals in particular. One of the other main outcomes has been a decline in applicants for ordination (though this is less so in churches with an evangelical theology).

In areas with declining church membership, there may be no clergy resident in the local area, as any clergy serving those areas are living elsewhere and are spread further apart. Ministers have to move about in order to serve the communities they are responsible for, which sometimes leads to confusion over the clergy's role, and conflict over the best use of the clergy in the area. A minister needs to be the light shining into the community, not the traditional salt or yeast (Matt.5:15-17), that is, not the driving force behind local mission, but the one who helps those locally who undertake mission. Clergy serving a number of parishes across a variety of communities need to resource those in each place who are doing the best they can to be church. The Minister needs to be an infectious model, spreading themselves as wide and resourcefully as is possible.

Parishes in grouped arrangements or who have casual connections could work together in collaboration or work apart on separate projects. In order to achieve the best outcome for the group or each parish, the Minister could assist in 'mapping out' the community to identify the place of parishes within their district, town and the wider community. The Resource Minister is in an ideal position to bridge the gap between parishes, communities and the wider church, being a conduit for information, a sharer of possible points of connection and a person who helps in assisting those in the parishes who are carrying out ministry roles.

Once a year, or more frequently (as with some who join together in the months when there are five Sundays), parishes could get together to share ideas, visions, plans and possibilities with each other, so that they do not feel like they are working in isolation but rather that they

are in a collaborative relationship across a wider field. Those parishes that are excelling at specific undertakings could act as consultants for parishes that wish to attempt similar undertakings (such as soup kitchens or school holiday programmes), as well as brainstorm why certain activities have not been successful when others have. The main role of the Minister is to be intentional in relationships with parishes, to offer resources, support the laity, provide focused training, keep in communication, share information, attend meetings and events as able and include colleagues.²¹⁷

Multi-Parish Ministry Structure

A discussion may eventuate among parishes grouped in a multi-parish arrangement about whether all parishes should combine into one entity that could be more helpful, administratively and financially

Points in favour include:

- less administration
- fewer offices needed
- amenities used locally
- shared ministry
- shared resources and finances
- strength of shared ideas

Points against include:

- no less administration
- shared ministry
- lack of coherence
- lack of common ground
- loss of local identity
- loss of local membership
- loss of building heritage
- loss of financial independence²¹⁸

²¹⁷ This outline of Resource Ministry comes from a discussion held with the Southland Resource Group who were the support group for the Southland Regional Resource Ministry after a presentation I gave on my attendance at the Multi-Parish Ministry Workshop, Warwickshire, England in June 2011. That presentation was given at an EquipSouth (bi-monthly meetings that replaced Presbytery meetings after the establishment of the Southern Presbytery) function held at Wallacetown, 1 May 2011.

²¹⁸ Jeremy Martineau. Lecture on multi-parish arrangements at the Multi-Parish Ministry Workshop, Offchurch, Warwickshire, England. 14 June 2011.

Martineau describes a common fear among church members that a top-down decision regarding geographical boundaries and parish amalgamations may be imposed on existing parishes, whereas the fostering of existing links and the development of those relationships could make more sense. The question then becomes, how can such connections be formalised? One suggestion is that everyone continues to do what they are doing now, and continue to maintain links and relationships with other parishes until the whole idea of the collective parish being one unit becomes woven into the psyche of each group.²¹⁹

Models from Other Denominations

There has been much thought put into how we can ‘do church’ in the twenty-first century, and Presbyterians in Southland New Zealand are in a similar situation as many other denominations and regions globally. The Southland Regional Resource Ministry therefore is comparable to other models of shared ministry such as the NZ Methodist Church, with Local Shared Ministry teams,²²⁰ where two or more ordained ministers (or teams of lay people) are shared by three or more parishes in a close proximity to each other. The same is true of the Anglican Church in Southland, with an Enabler supporting lay leadership in parishes, and the Catholic Church in Southland, with priests being responsible for as many as four parishes in an area. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ has also seen in recent years a new trend of parishes coming together in an area, sharing worship, ministry, leadership, outreach and administrative oversight, such as the Timaru one, where four parishes joined together, and the Rotorua model, where five parishes closed to allow four parishes to become one.

Other models of ministry which could also be investigated and considered as options include Collaborative Ministry,²²¹ where the clergy and laity work together in partnership,

²¹⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes October 2012, where a Southland Regional Parish proposal suggests an arrangement whereby the group of parishes to become one unit.

²²⁰ Waimakariri Shared Ministry Agreement, February 2009, s an example provided by the Methodist Church of NZ.

²²¹ David Robertson. *Collaborative Ministry. What it is, How it works and Why*. Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2007, 6-7.

collaboratively, as opposed to autocratically or through delegation.²²² Another model is Complementary Ministry, where two or more congregations with similar interests agree to work together in an informal way, networking and sharing resources.²²³ There is also Local Ministry,²²⁴ where resourcing is provided for each individual parish and its particular context,²²⁵ and Shared Ministry²²⁶, a Methodist model similar to the Presbyterian Local Ministry Team but designed with a built-in programme of replacement and succession of the team members. These models acknowledge a rapidly increasing willingness and necessity for the laity to be involved in the day-to-day leadership of the parish. Many of these models are beyond the single congregation to organise. A Presbytery or Regional minister obviously needs to be employed by a wider body. Arrangements such as Yoked Parishes or Local Ministry Teams with oversight by a Resource Minister require Presbytery or some similar regional body to set up and often to administer. Thus, congregations who want to have some options to consider as they face ministry beyond what they have known before but also want to consider the wider church dimension need to consider how they can enable these options.²²⁷

The Church of Scotland model of linked parishes has a ‘parent parish’ in a city or large town that is linked to two or three smaller ‘rural’ parishes in a supportive and pastoral role, and in many cases are merely additional preaching places of the parent parish.²²⁸ These linked parishes are often very close geographically, with the furthest being only 5-10 miles from the central town (or city), which enables the Minister to conduct worship in at least two centres every Sunday.

²²² Ibid., 10.

²²³ Stephanie Wells. *Rural Parishes – dying, surviving, thriving: doing ministry beyond the traditional ‘one parish-one ordained minister’ model*. Study Leave Report, 2011. In my possession. This report can be accessed at <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/study-leave-reports>.

²²⁴ Greenwood, Robin and Caroline Pascoe, eds. *Local Ministry. Story, Process and Meaning* London: SPCK, 2006, vii – x.

²²⁵ Ibid., x.

²²⁶ Riverton Union Parish, Shared Ministry Team model, obtained in private communication with Mrs. Nola Stuart, Riverton Union Parish. 13 September 2014.

²²⁷ Wells, *Rural Parishes*, 3.

²²⁸ Church of Scotland website. http://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/church_finder, Parish Profile, Langholm linked with Eskdalemuir, Ewes and Westerkirk, Church of Scotland. Parish profile, Newton and St Boswell’s linked with Maxton and Mertoun, Roxburgh, Church of Scotland. Parish Profile, Oban and Kilmore linked with Connel.

In the Presbyterian Church of Wales, there are many parishes without a resident Ordained Minister. These are grouped together under the oversight of a Minister who leads whatever aspect of worship is required, which may be a wedding, funeral, Communion, Baptism, family service or celebratory event. Some of these groups can involve as many as 20 parishes in an area, which are usually quite close together. This arrangement is similar to the Circuit Superintendent role in the Methodist Church in England. In Devon, 15 parishes are served by three superintendents who liaise with lay leadership and conduct Communion services and Baptisms, as the laity are not empowered to perform these sacramental duties.

The Presbyterian Church of the Cariboo in Canada has a unique solution to their vastly scattered congregations. Some are over 100 miles from the parish centre²²⁹ and are served by the minister based in a central location. The make-up of their membership is this:

Dave Mullan suggests simplifying the requirements of ‘church’ so that groups he calls *Ecclesion* are formed. He suggests these are small groups who meet for about two hours on a Sunday to worship, eat, fellowship and do any necessary church business together. Elements of doing business on Sunday are probably done in many churches already. For example, one church organised the sorting of church library books to be held during morning tea after the Sunday service. The important difference in the *Ecclesion* model is that Sunday is the only time the group is expected to get together. There are no Council meetings, prayer or bible study groups. Sunday is the only commitment. This idea does tend to assume that the faith community can’t, or doesn’t want to, get together at other times.²³⁰

This model very closely parallels what is currently the situation in congregations that meet in Ohai and Otautau. Since they dissolved their union with the Methodist church all the Parish Council resigned, and they ceased to meet as one parish in two sites.

The Uniting Church of Australia in South Australia has for the past twenty years or more had ‘clusters’ of parishes,²³¹ mostly rural and spread over very large distances. They have been

²²⁹ David S. Mullan, *Ecclesion: the Small Church with a Vision*. Manurewa, NZ: College Communications, 1990.np.

²³⁰ Wells, *Rural Parishes*, 8.

²³¹ Stoner, *Cluster of Congregations*, 8.

led by lay people in each locality, with an Ordained Minister providing oversight and a connection to the wider Church in a shared or yoked cluster. The Minister is usually employed by the Presbytery to work in a specific number of (usually remote rural²³²) parishes, and he or she becomes the person who trains Elders for their roles and equips leadership teams to continue the mission and ministry of region they are resident in.²³³

In some other denominations there is a less clergy-focused willingness to include lay leaders who are trained and commissioned in their parishes. However, in the Church of England, leadership is still thought of as the role which is the most visible, in that they wear clerical collars and vestments, which is sanctioned by bishops. Those who aspire to and seek training for lay roles are hampered by top-down authority of clergy who might like to empower the laity but are 'not allowed to' - though this is less true in the Anglican Church in New Zealand. With the decline in men seeking to become priests in the Roman Catholic Church in New Zealand, there has been a shift to allowing more and more lay people to have leadership roles in the life of a parish. Priests now celebrate the sacraments anytime between Saturday night and Sunday night over a wide geographical area.

The Southland Regional Resource Ministry Context

This outline of the features and characteristics of multi-parish ministry in the United Kingdom and in several denominations is significantly relevant to the Southland situation. Southland parishes are in rural and urban situations, are of diverse worship style, have a variety of team leadership models, and many leaders are new to the church. The role of the Resource Minister in Southland was a juggling act, to help leaders in parishes make significant and wise decisions, help with the regular provision of worship services, train and resource lay leadership and be the connecting tissue with the wider church.

²³² PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southland Presbytery Minutes 2005. In February 2005, Mrs. Lynette Fowler, a parishioner from Limestone Plains, reported to Southland Presbytery regarding her recent attendance at a conference on Possibilities for Rural Ministry held in Adelaide for the Uniting Church of Australia.

²³³ Wells, *Rural Parishes*, 10.

Being a Resource Minister in a Multi-Parish Ministry

The impact on one's life when taking on the role of a Resource Minister is mostly determined by our personality, the kind of person we are, not by how busy we seem to be. Our personality is also affected by those things that we have inherently and those things retained within ourselves as well as by events and expectations from without. All of which is influenced by our varied gifts, strengths and the many things we focus on and interact with. All of which leads the Minister to have to juggle their work-load, their responsibilities, their commitments and what others expect of them. Being all things to all people needs to be balanced by what is achievable. Ministers serving a number of parishes are particularly affected by pressures from parishes and the need to juggle commitments in their diary, as well as provide the resources each parish needs for their specific purposes, along with empowering parish members and enabling them to find ways to be less dependent on the minister.

External support from other colleagues and the wider Church is often needed by ministers to prevent overload and/or mental breakdown (burnout). Any signs of this should be detected by a Supervisor or Reviewer. All Ministry positions and contracts of employment are required to be reviewed regularly, possibly every two to three years, by experienced reviewers, without fear of criticism. The PCANZ requires Ordained Ministers to undertake a Ministry Review every two years to maintain a Certificate of Good Standing.²³⁴ Only comments made at a short meeting by those invited to be present would be recorded by the reviewer. All present at the meeting need to agree to the process. Any consultancy fees are paid by the parishes served by the minister. All clergy need to be open to the Ministry Development Review process as well as undergo regular Supervision. These are very helpful processes for sharing the concerns, frustrations, challenges and triumphs of multi-parish ministry. Another useful tool for lessening any adverse effects of multi-parish ministry is to meet with colleagues, ministers in other parishes, or those in similar roles such as chaplaincies, to share quality theological expertise, to let off steam, to share stories and give each other encouragement and support.

²³⁴ PCANZ Book of Order. Supplementary Provisions for Book of Order chapter 6.8.1-5. Ministry Development Programme, 2.

CHAPTER FOUR

Future Possibilities for Southland Parishes

With the National Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand ruling that congregations of less than 40 members must consider their options for the future and be reviewed by a commission,²³⁵ there is concern for many small, mostly rural Presbyterian parishes in Southland. Fearing that they will be closed, these parishes which are mostly led by teams of members began looking at their options and their future. While there was some reticence about losing their individual parish identities and an open unwillingness to undertake mergers, there was some support for combined parishes. This was a collaborative model with a plan to establish an over-arching administration of the parishes which were small in numbers, unable to afford to employ Ministers, and struggling to utilise the services of volunteers for lay ministry roles. The 2012 proposal for a Southland Regional Parish,²³⁶ which was developed by the members of the Southland Resource Group and penned by Rev. Richard Gray, the last Southland Presbytery Moderator, and Zona Pearce, Southland Presbytery Clerk (and later the Southern Presbytery Clerk), was well received by the Southern Presbytery as a possible way forward. As the proposal reflected many of the initiatives previously suggested by the Southland Presbytery in 1996, 1997 and 2004, parishes were already somewhat prepared to address their ministry needs and recognise the issues relating to their declining membership. In my role as resource minister, I was often involved in discussions on its possibilities and pitfalls.

The proposal, approved by the Southern Presbytery Council meeting of October 2012, started the process of forming the Southland Regional Parish as recorded in their minutes.²³⁷ It would follow a review of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry as follows:

²³⁵ PCANZ Book of Order – Chapter 5.10., 24

²³⁶ This information appears below in Appendix 1. PCANZ Archives in Dunedin. Southern Presbytery minutes. October 2012.

²³⁷ Information in Appendix 2. PCANZ Archives in Dunedin. Southern Presbytery Minutes, 24 October 2012.

The Review of Regional Resource Ministry

As outlined in Recommendation 4 of the Minutes, a review of the Regional Resource Ministry would be undertaken by a commission of Presbytery, with Rev. Andrew Scott from Brockville, Dunedin, Rev. Karl Lamb from Te Anau and Mrs. Teina Marie from St Andrew's Invercargill, as its members. Afterwards, a ministry position for the regional parish would be set up by the Ministry Settlement Board.²³⁸

This review was undertaken on behalf of the Reviews Workgroup of the Southern Presbytery in February 2013 by Rev Andrew Scott, who interviewed Rev. Ian Crawford and myself and parishioners in each of the member congregations. His report was presented to a meeting held at First Church, Invercargill, on 19 September 2013, of the Regional Resource Ministry made up of parish representatives, the Resource Ministers and Rev. Richard Gray, Mrs. Zona Pearce and Mr. Lindsay Jordon, the members of the supporting committee. Certain details were debated and clarified, and after some alterations and amendments Rev. Andrew Scott presented his final report to Presbytery Council at their meeting in October 2013.²³⁹

That review acknowledged the unique characteristics of living in remote areas, of worshipping in small rural parishes, and concluded with a comment that implied parishioners were investing significant finances into the Resource Ministry with little visible return. The review was a good reflection of what had been achieved and undertaken over past the three years but lacked any reference to parishes' visions and hope for the future. The report did not support the proposal for a regional parish for Southland. On receipt of this review report, Presbytery decided 'that the SRRM would continue until 30 June 2014, pursuant to some financial confirmation that we can afford it.'²⁴⁰ Their intention was to look at options and future possibilities for the parishes previously served by the Resource Ministers. Two representatives of Presbytery, who were commissioned to meet with congregations served by

²³⁸ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southern Presbytery Minutes, October 2012.

²³⁹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southern Presbytery Minutes, October 2013.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

the Regional Resource Ministry, conducted a whistle-stop tour in November 2013 and formulated a report of their discussions.²⁴¹

The report recommended that Presbytery Council ‘must work towards some form of alternative ministry, dream up something new or leave them [parishes] to their own devices.’²⁴² The report refers to congregations and cell groups, though most of the congregations are parishes, and the cell-groups are congregations. The word ‘congregation’ is more appropriate for a cell-group, and ‘parish’ can describe a wide variation of congregations with or without ministers and with various levels of viability. A parish can be a cluster of autonomous congregations with one contracted ordained minister, or a group of congregations that worship separately but have a combined ruling body, or a combination of amalgamated and separate congregations, or a group of church groups covered by a number of ministers, or any number of different permeations. Therefore, the term ‘congregation’ stands for a faith community who regards itself as autonomous and has some workable leadership structure.²⁴³

For Presbytery Council, the plan may be an appropriate way to meet the requirements of the General Assembly mandate as detailed in the Book of Order, Chapter 5, on the establishment and dissolution of parishes, with particular reference to parishes of less than 40 members.²⁴⁴ A consultation with the Moderator of Assembly, the Very Rev. Ray Coster, was suggested but instead I had an informal discussion with him in which I gained some understanding of the process the parishes in Rotorua used.

In April 2014, the Southern Presbytery signalled its intention to form a group under the oversight of the Ministry Workgroup to look into the situation in Southland and to formulate a plan for the future. It was hoped that the recent investigation in June 2014 conducted by the Ministry Workgroup Convener, Rev. Geoffrey Skilton, and the Executive Officer, Rev. Alan Judge, would see the proposed establishment of the Southland Regional Parish. At the same

²⁴¹ PCANZ Archives, Dunedin. Southern Presbytery Minutes. Rev. Reg Weeks and Mrs. Zona Pearce, Report to Presbytery Council on Congregations served by the Regional Resource Ministry, December 2013.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Wells, *Rural Parishes*, 3.

²⁴⁴ PCANZ Book of Order, Chapter 5.10, 24

time, the Southern Presbytery signalled its intention to listen to the ways in which folk in those parishes could work out a plan of implementing this proposal.

Following this visit, the Ministry Workgroup decided that Southern Presbytery would not proceed to form a Southland Regional Parish. One of the main reasons for this decision was the financial commitment needed from Presbytery, Synod and the parishes to provide ministry for the proposed parish. During the time of the Regional Resource Ministry, the funds provided had not met the funding required to employ Ordained Ministers and their travel costs to cover such a wide geographical area, and additional funds were sourced from the Synod of Otago and Southland to cover the shortfall. During the review process, it was revealed that some parishes thought their financial contributions were used to provide ministry for other parishes rather than for themselves. This is possibly how it seemed, since some parishes requested the services of the Resource Ministers' time more than others. Other factors that may have influenced the decision to discontinue resource Ministry, and not proceed with the Regional Parish proposal, could have been lack of enthusiasm from parishes to connect regionally. This may be evident from the poor attendance at workshops we provided for the whole region. Even though people seem to be prepared to travel to go to the doctor or hospital appointments, to get groceries or household necessities, they are reluctant to travel to a distance venue to worship in a community that is less familiar.

The Ministry Workgroup of Southern Presbytery has developed alternative ways of providing ministry oversight for the Southland parishes in the following arrangements -

- I was appointed Interim Moderator for the Oban Parish and Resource Minister for Mossburn Local Ministry Team. However, recently the LMT at Mossburn lost a member of the team through resignation and now need to consider their ministry needs, so I am still acting as Resource Minister while the Southern Presbytery Ministry Workgroup takes them through that process.
- St Stephen's will undergo a review conducted by a commission led by Rt. Rev. Peter Cheyne to look at their situation.

- The parishes of Western Southland, being Wallacetown and Limestone Plains, along with the congregations at Otautau and Ohai, will be served by Rev. Tekura Wilding as their Interim Moderator, who is a full-time Nationally Ordained minister for the Central Southland Presbyterian Parish, based in Winton.
- Waiiau Valley Parish is ‘standing-alone’ under the guidance of their Parish Council and a Community Chaplain, Baptist Minister Nigel Crocombe, who is in the process of transferring his ordination to PCANZ through the National Assessment Workgroup.
- St Paul’s Church was given permission to link with St Andrew’s Church in Invercargill.
- Bluff/Greenhills Co-operating Church moved from Presbyterian oversight to Anglican, supplied by All Saints Church in Invercargill.

This re-arrangement of ministry oversight for the Southland region should help these congregations feel that they need to put less energy into the survival of their ‘parish’ and more energy into the mission of the Church. As Rev. Dr. Kevin Ward says, ‘the focus of church leadership has seen a preoccupation with institutional concerns and a neglect of the wider kingdom role of the church as salt, light and leaven in society.’²⁴⁵

Further research into the various options for those parishes previously resourced by the Southland Regional Resource Ministry and others in Southland who do not have Ordained Ministry may still be required in order to consider again their options for the future. Whether it is possible for small (mostly rural) congregations in Southland to continue to offer sustainable ministry and mission is a very difficult question to answer, especially as their membership and numbers attending worship continues to decline. Congregations may need to think creatively to help Presbytery to find the best way forward.

This may well be the time for parishes to consider forming a Local Ministry Team to serve

²⁴⁵ Kevin Ward, *Losing our Religion? Changing Patterns of Believing and Belonging in Secular Western Societies*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013, 128.

the congregation in the absence of an ordained minister, a model referred to as the ‘corporate minister.’ However, the shallow pool of ordained ministers to work alongside parish leaders or LMTs as Interim Moderators or Resource Ministers, makes this option rather unattractive. Congregations may see the present time as an opportunity to encourage every member to identify and utilise their varied ministry gifts.²⁴⁶ However, with this model an Interim Moderator would still need to be appointed. Small groups who meet for worship on a regular basis, as well as those who do not meet the criteria for being a parish (the Ohai and Otautau congregations), will be encouraged to identify their ministry needs as well as to continue to maintain church buildings as venues for community events, such as concerts, displays, funerals and weddings.

While the proposal for the Southland Regional Parish will not be put in place, the multi-parish ministry model could well be translated to another situation in another area, region or denomination, where there is a similar downturn in membership, unavailability of ordained ministers and limited finances. Some of these options could enable a congregation to survive and even thrive, but it includes risk and often requires some major changes. Some changes to ministry oversight may be achieved by parishes, but only if the wider church commit to supporting small congregations. Most of these options, though, would be greatly helped by early intervention, as some require the availability of major capital to set them up.²⁴⁷ Nearly all need considerable amounts of energy and time to produce the change needed, and this is difficult to find when the congregation is tired and dispirited. However, it is important to realise that a congregation’s size and geography should not be used as an indicator of future viability or ability to take risks and defy the odds, trusting in God’s provision, and daring amazing things.²⁴⁸ Many of the options are probably beyond the individual congregations to organise, though a Presbytery or regional minister employed by the wider body could help facilitate the setting up of arrangements such as Yoked Parishes or Local Ministry Teams with Resource Minister oversight.²⁴⁹ Presbytery could enable the setting up of these arrangements and provide administration.

²⁴⁶ Wells, *Rural Parishes*, 12.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

In years to come, it may be that parishes will have diminished even further and will have had to make even harder decisions, such as amalgamating with a neighbouring parish, meeting less regularly or even having to shut the door and find somewhere else to worship. For many, this will be the hardest decision as they live quite a distance from others, and travel will be required. The situation though may have a positive spin-off with some completely new options being considered out of sheer desperation. The Ministry Workgroup of the Southern Presbytery, under a new convener, is currently looking into the requirements of Presbytery to provide oversight by Interim Moderators for vacant parishes, mostly in rural Western Southland. They will determine how that can best be resourced financially.

Much research is currently being conducted that will help congregations navigate the future. Prof. Peter Lineham, for example, makes reference to *Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme of 2011-2013*.²⁵⁰ He outlines what works and does not work in promoting church growth, for churches of any size, place or context. Church growth is possible if there is good leadership; a clearly stated mission and purpose; a willingness to self-reflect, change and adapt; involvement by lay members; intention to prioritise growth; a decision to choose a style of worship, and willingness to nurture disciples.²⁵¹ He lists factors that would be less likely to see church growth, such as having no (or fewer than five) children or under 16s, grouping multiple churches together under one leader and amalgamating into a multi-church.²⁵² He adds that ‘churches are more likely to grow when there is one leader for one community.’²⁵³ His survey also highlights concerns for burdensome buildings, stagnant pools of leadership, mission-wary clergy and uncertainty regarding priorities.²⁵⁴ Surveys such as these will continue to help churches identify where their strengths are, what they should put their energies into and assist denominations with strategies for the future.

Rev. Dr Kevin Ward, another scholar who researches congregations in New Zealand, asks ‘will we find a church in a future New Zealand.’²⁵⁵ He answers that the future will not be

²⁵⁰ Peter Lineham, ‘Traces of Gold amid the Grey’, in *Anglican Taonga*, 46, (Winter 2014), 15, with reference to the Church of England’s *Church Growth Research Programme, 2011-2013*.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ward, *Losing our Religion?*, 137.

‘churchless’ but that there will be wider and more diverse religiosity and spirituality outside of the Church.²⁵⁶ However, he sees that the Church will continue to have an important role in resourcing and giving some Christian shape to people’s faith, with New Zealand not so much a churchless society but a society with ‘less-church.’²⁵⁷ Ward maintains that the church will be less – in its form less institutional, in its role less central, and in its authority less powerful - but it will still be present.²⁵⁸ However, I would suggest that in rural western Southland, the Presbyterian Church will become invisible, having very little influence on the religiosity or spirituality of people in those communities where the Church used to be a key component of society. The Church is unlikely to be present at all, in many of the places it used to be, as parishioners age and become unable to attend worship, as the buildings age and become impossible to maintain (or strengthen to compliance standards). As the distance between rural isolated congregations and the centralised governance of the Presbyterian Church in Otago and Southland becomes more remote, that society may indeed be seen to be ‘churchless’.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

Appendix 1

The following proposal for the re-structuring of vacant parishes in Southland was approved by the Southern Presbytery Council at their October 2012 meeting and would have served as the initial constitution of the proposed Southland Regional Parish. (The section in red type is as it appears in the original document.)

SOUTHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS

Incorporating the Southland Regional Resource Ministry

Rationale

- To enable Southern Presbytery to exercise their responsibility in providing pastoral oversight throughout rural Southland for small congregations who are no longer viable on their own
- To ensure that congregations throughout Southland are resourced, equipped and enabled to live and present the Gospel in a meaningful way in their communities
- To encourage local worship, ministry and mission in the local context
- The Southland Presbyterian Congregations will be a charge/parish in its own right but can be likened to an umbrella, having oversight over small congregations, and will be run in conjunction with the Southland Regional Resource Ministry
- Congregations can volunteer to be members of this collective in their own time, or they can choose to associate themselves with this group, or join on the recommendation of Presbytery
- Urban congregations would be encouraged to join with a neighbouring parish but as an alternative may elect to join this group

For your information, these are the small congregations in Southland at present: (it must be noted, however, that all continue to offer worship and mission in some form or other, in their local areas. Amongst these congregations there are some very faithful committed and talented people, who know their area and the people they work with).

Oban, Bluff, Knox, St. Paul's, St. Stephen's, Wallacetown, Limestone Plains, Mossburn, Waiau Valley, Oteramika-Kennington, Otautau and Ohai. St. David's and Woodlands both have MSB's in place. Riverton and Otatara are both under Methodist oversight. All are considered not sustainable long term.

Church Council (or Commission of Presbytery)

- Representatives from each participating congregation (where possible Elders)
- Representatives from Southern Presbytery
- A Treasurer and Secretary to be appointed by the Presbytery
- Otago Foundation Trust Board/or Presbytery Treasurer – possible solution for keeping accounts
- To provide oversight likened to an Eldership, over congregations and staff
- Resource Ministers to attend, and moderate the meetings
- Secretary to receive all mail for Southland Presbyterian Congregations
- Responsible for preparing a strategic plan for property

- Agenda – business for each congregation to be listed on the agenda and dealt with as a whole

Meetings

- Church Council meetings to be held quarterly
- An annual meeting to be held
- All congregations to submit a written report, with any recommendations or requests
- Urgent business can be communicated between meetings by email, and actioned

Local Leadership

- The leadership (or Elders) of each participating congregation to meet informally and be responsible for:
 - Organizing pulpit supply, home groups, local mission outreach, pastoral care
 - Preparing quarterly reports for Church Council
 - Minor property maintenance
- Continue regular communication with Regional Resource Minister

Participating Congregations

- All participating congregations to provide a list of members and associates of their present congregation
- All participating congregations to provide full financial documentation
- New elders to be ordained into the local congregation as required.
- New members and associates be added to local congregation's roll in recognition of commitment, and confession of faith in Jesus Christ, at the request of local leadership
- Two elders in each congregation to be trained and commissioned as communion and baptism elders
- All congregations be invited to send representatives to Southern Presbytery and Synod AGM's, and attend EquipSouth resource meeting
- Church Council will only send one Elder or Minister to General Assembly
- That congregations be levied to meet the cost of Resource Minister, Honorary Treasurer and Secretary
- That members and associates of each congregation be encouraged to participate in Presbytery Workgroups if invited/requested to do so

Property policy

- All property titles held in trust by the Otago Foundation Trust Board
- All property investments with the Otago Foundation Trust Board
- All congregations to have a property maintenance plan and budget
- Major items of property maintenance to be referred to the Church Council
- In discussion with the congregation, Presbytery to be invited to consider strategically required buildings and advise Church Council to sell or dispose of excess
- Funds from the sale of buildings to form a central pool for the benefit of all congregations involved in the 'Southland Presbyterian Congregations'.

Accounts

- Budgets to be prepared in discussion with the local groups
- Each congregation to have their own bank account and bank their own offerings/donations

- Accounts will be sent to Church Council Treasurer monthly, with banking summary and bank statements for the month
- Internet banking will be set up for the paying of accounts
- One set of annual accounts will be drawn up with income and expenditure of each congregation identified
- Applications to Synod will be completed by the Church Council

Regional Resource Ministry

- Southland Regional Resource Ministry scheduled for review in October 2012
- Initially the Southland Regional Resource Ministers will resource the 'Southland Presbyterian Congregations' who are members of this collective, as well as resourcing parishes in their care
- Gradual transition over the next two years between SRRM and SPC
- Regional Resource Ministry in conjunction with EquipSouth to continue offering training and resourcing to congregations in the Southland area

Ministry Settlement Board

- Southern Presbytery to set up a Ministry Settlement Board, if the present staff of Regional Resource Ministry changes
- A Ministry Settlement Board to be set up in 2013, to consider calling a minister to the Southland Presbyterian Congregations.

Commencement Date: 1st July 2012

Some items for discussion:

Initial congregations – Ohai and Otautau

It will be necessary for these two congregations to work out a fair distribution of existing funds

It will be necessary to meet with Otautau Waiono Parish Council to discuss this proposal

Name: not set in concrete, open to suggestions -

Southland Regional Parish

Southland Presbyterian Congregations

Southland Regional Presbyterian Congregations

Property and Finance

Need to have a discussion with Otago Foundation Trust Board re Treasurer/keeping accounts and

Synod of Otago and Southland, Executive Officer Fergus Sime – re Property

Appendix 2

SOUTHLAND REGIONAL PARISH

The latest document on the process of forming a Southland Regional Parish was presented, and various amendments made. A Commission of Presbytery to be appointed to review the work of the Southland Regional Resource Ministry, and a Ministry Settlement Board be set up to determine future ministry for both entities.

Southland Regional Resource Ministry has further funding, but the employment agreements need to be renewed by February 2013. Can either roll over or declare the position vacant.

Recommendations:

1. That the Southland Regional Parish document²⁵⁹, with amendments, be adopted by the Presbytery Council.

Moved Reg Weeks/Russell Morton

AGREED

2. That a Church Council be established, comprising of representatives from participating congregations, Southern Presbytery, and the Southland Regional Resource Ministry, to meet a minimum of 3 times per year face to face, with business carried out by email or phone to oversee the operation of the Southland Regional Parish.
3. That the preparation of financial accounts for those congregations without a Treasurer be handled by the Otago Foundation Trust Board office.
4. That the Southland Regional Resource Ministry is reviewed, by the Commission, as the current employment arrangements expire in February 2013.
5. That other congregations in Southland be invited to join the Southland Regional Parish, especially those who contribute to the Southland Regional Resource Ministry.
6. That each participating congregation form a local committee, and along with the Resource Ministers be responsible for:
 - a) Mission and outreach activities
 - b) Worship arrangements
 - c) Pastoral care of the congregation

²⁵⁹ Appendix 1.

d) On-going care of property

Moved Heather Kennedy/Reg Weeks

AGREED

Southland Regional Resource Ministry - Review

That a Ministry Settlement Board be established, and that the three Presbytery members act as a Commission of Presbytery to complete the review and give direction for establishment of Southland Regional Parish.

Moved Reg Weeks/Ken Williams

AGREED

Comment: Union Parishes - Presbytery reminded to talk to other partners in Co-operating Ventures and JRC if considering joining this new parish.

SRRM would like arrange for Ray Coster (Assembly Moderator) to have a discussion with Southland Parishes re participation in this process, to enthuse and show some light on a way forward.'

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