



## Walking with those at both ends of life

Rev Jan Fogg

**January and February can often be a time of 'catch-up' with members of the family, both young and old. It can often include times of sadness and times of joy. We're reminded of the verse in the Psalms: "You have changed my sadness into a joyful dance; you have taken away my sorrow and surrounded me with joy."**

During the holidays I crossed Cook Strait to spend time with an older family member who is very unwell. It is difficult to visit with your original birth family and see them slipping away. There is time for sharing family memories and thankfully it can also be a time for speaking about things that we might not have

found the ability to do previously. It is important, I think, to be able to let go of painful memories and encourage each other with comments about the positive things we see in each other.

One of the pluses about a slow dying is this opportunity to say things that a rapid death takes away from us. There are many questions about slow dying and the suffering that may go with it, so finding a positive side is very important. Family relationships are rewarding a lot of the time, but can also be very challenging. What a gift it is to have this 'waiting' time to share thoughts, blessings, forgiveness and gratitude.

But alongside that is the pain, which is part of our compassion, seeing one's own family change and struggle. Sometimes it is almost easier to carry one's own burden than that of a parent or

sibling. I came home carrying sadness and concern for the future.

So what a joy to be able also to have time with those at the other end of life - the young ones, who grow and change so quickly: their sharp little brains that work so much faster than mine these days. We enjoyed playing various card and board games, as well as swimming. It was a joy for them because they were so often able to beat me, to win. Of course I didn't mind 'losing' because it felt like winning to see their brains working things out so quickly.

And to have the kind of conversations that reveal the development of a new person and their interests. This young family is mad keen on football and it was a surprise to me to hear my granddaughter reveal that she was "going to be a professional footballer". And



also a surprise to hear the clever smaller one say he was "letting go of the idea of playing for Liverpool and professional football".

So, a looking forward to the

future, wondering where the next year or two will take them, the family tree growing new leaves this family has not experienced before - an opportunity for joy-filled dancing.

## C A R I N G F O R O U R P E O P L E

### I got my brother arrested

Trudy Downes,  
Health and Safety Coordinator

**Really I only got him put in police handcuffs so I could send a photo to Mum and Dad with a caption, "Look at your first-born."**

I put him in a silly hat first to scare everyone in the Connexional Office. It was a 'Shelter in Place' drill and I thought it was great fun but I wish it wasn't needed.

It is one year now since the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre shootings and what have we learnt?

When a threat is on your premises, response is 40 percent according to the plan and 60 percent 'flying by the seat of your pants'. These percentages are not based on statistical evidence but reiterate that the best-made plans and intentions need to be flexible enough to cope with the conditions at the time.

Step number one to coping is to have a plan. Our first drill was chaotic. We had no plan and stopped the clock at 4 minutes and 30 seconds out of pity. For the second drill we had a plan. When my bro' came into the office, everyone cleared out or hid within 30 seconds. Outstanding!

Step number two is be flexible. Flexibility is key because you will not encounter the exact same emergency conditions twice. Undertaking the same actions and expecting different results is a definition of insanity.

Our office had discussed how to react

to threats outside the building, however I let my brother inside the building by giving him my access card and even a plan of the office layout. The "threat" was inside the building with no chance of keeping him out.

Half the people in the office went out the back door and left the building. The other half of the team hid under their desks. We discovered some desks are not suitable for hiding under and therefore the one plan we had did not fit all circumstances in the office. We had to be flexible and adapt to the circumstances.

To stimulate people into action we use the trigger word "Lockdown" within the office. However, when the brother was already in the building, the action we needed did not actually relate to the trigger word. The better action was to leave the building. What word we use is irrelevant. What is relevant is that within the office we have a trigger word which upon hearing means we will leap into action.

Key feedback from the drill, from the police observer and my brother is that we need to be situationally aware. Being aware of your surroundings will allow you more time to better respond. Sometimes every second counts.

Being aware of the situation you are in, or possibly going to get into, allows you to think about responses that are appropriate for that situation. It might mean not going into certain situations if you can't get out. It might mean hiding under your desk or leaving the building.

Or it might mean throwing a credit card



reader to distract a gunman from entering your house of worship. It might mean screaming at someone, and it might mean putting yourself into danger to save others.

It might also mean that a year after a tragic event there is still grief and sorrow and horror to remember, recognise and acknowledge.

They are us. Let us remember, let us learn, let us be ready.

"Hello brother."

Mankind is a single nation - Quran 2:213.

A template is available for you to start your own Escape/Hide/Tell, Shelter in Place plan.  
[http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring\\_for\\_our\\_people/emergency\\_response\\_plans](http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/emergency_response_plans)

Trudy can be reached on 027 457 4196 or email [trudyd@methodist.org.nz](mailto:trudyd@methodist.org.nz) if you would like to discuss a readiness plan for your place.

