

Security and anxiety

Rev Jan Fogg

In spring, one of the characteristics in small-town rural New Zealand is the presence of lambs being cared for by children. Out walking recently I heard two lambs calling to one another. I knew these two lambs were usually tethered close to each other on the front lawn of a house with a large lawn.

They are normally quiet but on this occasion one was banished to the back lawn; they seemed insecure at being separated from each other and so were calling to each other. I thought about how the general anxiety level in our society seems to have risen as the Covid crisis continues.

A conversation caused me to begin to reflect on security in older age. Human life is rather more complex than sheep life

but relationship and companionship are important for all of life. Relationship can offer a great sense of belonging and security but as humans age, that special life-long relationship might have been lost through the death of one person or it might be reduced through ill-health or challenged through insufficient means of support.

I guess in part what we look for in an election is a party that will offer us the kind of security we need. Security means different things to different people, and so different parties appeal, or not. Those who are materially secure may seek a party offering to look after and perhaps grow their material benefits. For those without material wellbeing, a party offering to reduce inequality and provide help for the rocky times of life will hold greater appeal.

Security will also mean different things at different stages of life. Grandparents can offer security to their extended family through acceptance, love and respect to

those setting out on their life journey. Likewise, friends offer this to one another. What a discovery to find that as we give the gift of security and belonging, we receive it back in return.

As I think on people living alone and some of the losses that involves, I also thought about marae and the sense of security those living on marae offer to one another. I am drawing only on what common knowledge suggests happens, or did happen for older Māori - the sense of respect and responsibility for one another from living in a communal situation. Beyond the marae - and for pākehā who don't have marae - how is this sense of belonging and security achieved? Is that what retirement villages are seeking to achieve?

Yet the deepest sense of security comes from the faithful relationship with God, this presence and protection guiding and holding us. I remind myself of the value of silence in prayer



(and other relationships), to hear what is being said to us, not simply what I have to say.

“Those who love me, I will deliver. I will protect those who

know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them.”
Psalm 91.

CARING FOR OUR PEOPLE

Covid-19 FATIGUE

Trudy Downes

It's always in the news. It's in social media. It's in politics. It finds its way into churches. It is everywhere! (figuratively speaking).

Are you over it yet? you still bouncing back from all of life's ups and downs or just doing a belly flop in the shallow end of the pool?

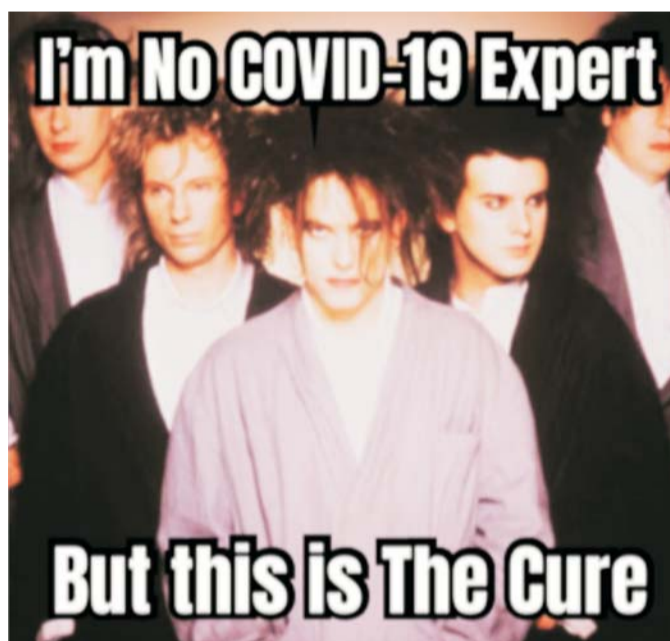
Bouncing back gets harder when the list of 'stuff' keeps piling up. Or are we compounding things by suggesting to people they may be feeling anxious?*

“Well, I didn't feel anxious, but now I am starting to feel anxious that I should be feeling anxious!”

I personally have got to the stage where I shrug things off. There are things that I can control and things that I will have to live with. It gives me such a feeling of freedom to shrug it off!

“Political leaders speak loudly in debates” (shrug).

“Can't visit Dad on his birthday” (shrug, although we have Zoomed him, and have plans to visit shortly... I'm not completely callous!).



Made masks for my sister in Hastings, and discovered they don't wear masks in Hastings as they are remote from the 'hot spots' (shrug).

I have also found that some of my guesses have been pretty good since January this year.

Wuhan has an outbreak - it will hit Aotearoa (tick).

We will get community transmission (tick although I didn't use the phrase community transmission).

We will lock down (half tick because I didn't think things would happen so quickly).

We will need one national contact tracing system (tick).

We will wear facemasks (half tick; I was a bit slower on this one than some of the other points).

We will have outbreaks from our isolation facilities (tick).

Hygiene and contact tracing are our key weapons until a reliable vaccine is available (tick and tick).

Here are my next six picks based on every experience is a learning experience:

- An overseas bubble will be opened and it will cause outbreak/s.
- We will overcome those outbreaks because our team is awesome.
- Auckland will experience more lockdowns than the rest of Aotearoa.

- Christchurch will be second for the number of lockdowns.
- Once the first overseas bubble is successfully in place, more overseas bubbles will open.
- We will get better and quicker at dealing with the outbreaks.

However, here is a list of things I am not sure about:

- Purchasing a 2021 diary; considering I still have over half of 2020 I didn't use!
- Buying a full year's gym membership (which is a lot cheaper than week by week)

- Renewing my passport

In the meantime we have life to live! I am in a fortunate role within the Church that gives me views of the inspiring works of the Methodist Alliance members, namely:

Lifewise, Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa, Palmerston North Methodist Social Services, Siaola, Wesley Community Action and Christchurch Methodist Mission.

Possibly what cheers me the most though are the signs of community gathering again. The community lunches, the garage sales, school plays, evening talks about referendums and the scale of continuous giving for people needing aid (lately the families from Lake Ōhau). There is a joy in the community with each loosening of our Alert Levels!

So while I understand Covid fatigue - we will all experience it to some degree - I don't recommend it as a place to stay permanently. Stay a short while, open your eyes and then maybe look again to see our communities in action. Help is there if you need it.

Contact Methodist Alliance members
http://www.methodist.org.nz/social_services/index

Mental wellness support:
http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people/covid19/supportinformation#mental%20wellness%20support

* Source: M Gott, who is not feeling anxious.