

*The Ageing Experience*

Jan Fogg

## Contributing from our side

**I was sharing the other day with another older person the joys and importance of being a grandparent. He has been a community-minded person concerned for the health of the environment and one of the things he has passed on to his grandchildren is an enjoyment of being in, and caring for, the bush, rivers and seascapes.**

Perhaps it's not until we become older that we see the fruits of our labour. As the years pass we see, or not, some of the traits which we ourselves have placed a high value on, coming out in our families. Sometimes it can seem demanding caring for grandchildren, and it's amazing where they can spread the toothpaste, but we can be thankful they clean their teeth!

As a grandparent, we also see lived out in the younger ones that a well-functioning family is such a blessing to the members. How good to see older children caring for younger children, helping them get through the difficult stage of 'please can I win', and supporting them in their grieving times.

How good to see the love these children have for their

own parents and how much they miss their parents, even as they stay with you who also loves and cares for them. Many of our Church families are fairly single age-dimensional; the majority are in the older age bracket.

That makes its own particular kind of family and is to be valued. But how is it that we haven't managed well to build mixed age Church families - we've thought it was all about the music we sang, but I think it's rather deeper than that. Look at a home-family that's functioning well: it's primarily about love and affirmation and building a variety of experiences, plus disciplining.

Disciplining, setting behaviour expectations, helps to shape routines and good habits. It needs to start at a young age or it becomes harder and harder to change patterns of living, or worshipping. How well are we fulfilling the grandparent role in our church? Who's doing the abandoning here?

"I have trusted in you since I was young. Do not abandon me now that I am feeble. You have taught me ever since I was young, and I still tell of your wonderful acts. Now that I am old and my hair is grey, do not abandon me O God.

I will praise your faithfulness, my God. I will shout for joy as I play for you; with my whole being I will sing." Psalm 71.

In December, I was thinking about the challenges of feeling part of family Christmas. This time, after the experience

of young grandchildren staying without their parents, I find that the role of an older person in the extended family can be immensely valued for what we can offer - to our own children and also to the grandchildren.

One of the gifts then of older age is appreciating and being thankful for what we have contributed to building, and to being a significant part of, a living network. Can we think about this in relation to our Church families as well as our home-families, as a new year begins?



## Caring for our people

Malo e lelei. Talofa lava. Bula. Greetings. Goeie dag. Anyoung haseyo. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

### Emergency Response

I hope you all had a marvellous Christmas season. Welcome to 2019!

Late last year I had the delight of observing Christchurch South Tongan Methodist parish setting up their emergency response team, and working out how they would ensure everyone arrived safely at the assembly area after a building evacuation.

What I particularly admired was how involved the team was. Gaps in the plan were identified, people arrived to fill those gaps and all tasks were completed. The endorsement of their great efforts came from the fire crew who were suitably impressed by their efficient building evacuation.

That experience got me thinking about building evacuations and the holiday season ...

**Q? What happens when lots of people are away and an emergency team is not at full numbers?**

A: Hmm... that's a good question. Hopefully the emergency team had a discussion about this issue before everyone disappeared for a holiday.

**Q?: And how likely is that to have happened at this busy time?**



A: Expect the worst and hope for the best! People are always surprising me and anyway, I could have reminded them to have the discussion.

**Q? That's true. Do you think our buildings should have a contingency plan to cover emergency team absences?**

A: That's a good idea. Consider ... a hall could be rented out to the public and none of the emergency team is there.

**Q? What happens then?**

A: (Bigger sigh). Okay. I'll add all this to the To Do list.

**Q? What else needs to go on that list?**

A: Well, there should be an emergency response plan for the team to follow, and the Fire Services - now called Fire and Emergency NZ. They changed their name when the new fire regulations came out in the middle of 2018. So... new Fire Action notices, revamp the old emergency response plans, kick start the approved evacuation schemes, and rewrite the

Trudy Downes, Health and Safety Coordinator

instructions to achieve all this. And while you're at it, write something about how to run fun and effective fire drills.

**Q? Did you know you can actually dial 111 while you are having a fire drill?**

A: You can.

So heads up everyone! New Fire and Emergency regulations were released in the middle of 2018. It is time to check your plans are up to date.

- Emergency response plan
- Evacuation plan
- Contingency plans
- Plans for holding a fire drill

and

- Your building may require an Approved Evacuation Scheme
- That scheme must be approved by Fire and Emergency NZ

Check out the MCNZ website for templates and guidance on how to achieve what's needed:.

[www.methodist.org.nz/caring\\_for\\_our\\_people](http://www.methodist.org.nz/caring_for_our_people)

Kua tūte haka a Tānerore! The quivering of the heated summer air has begun!

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

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