



Rev Jan Fogg

The Ageing Experience

Lost dreams, bells tolling

Older people have mostly been through a lot of suffering during longer lives and perhaps that gives us some experience to call on with mourning the losses we suffer in later life. But Friday March 15 exposed us all to loss and horror such as we had never experienced in this country before; and so we are all babes in this experience.

Except perhaps for the victims themselves, some of whom had come to New Zealand seeking refuge and fleeing from horror elsewhere.

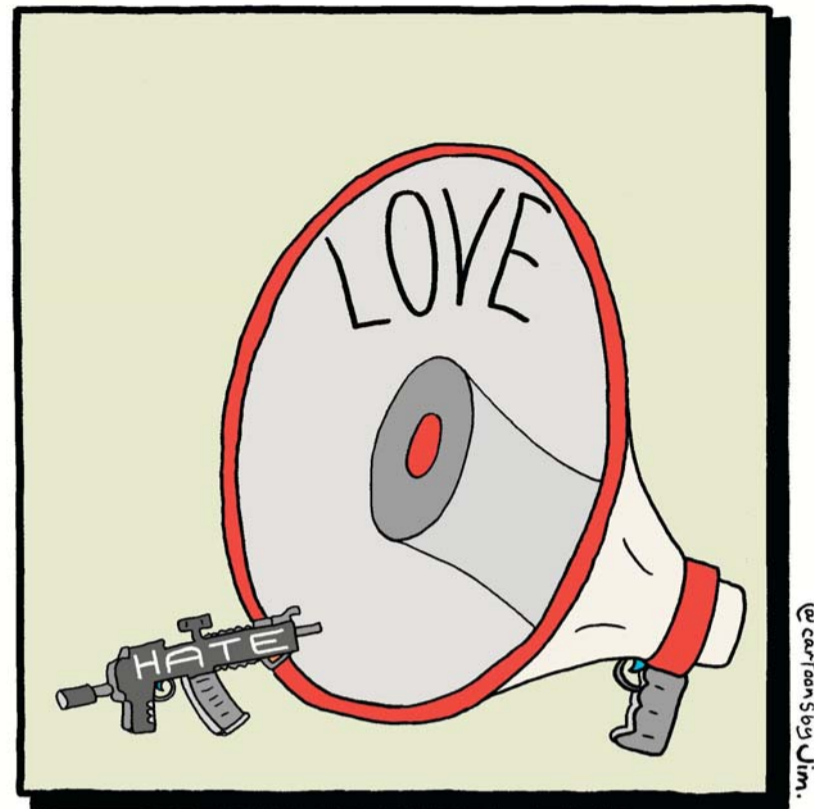
Older 'theories' of grief would have put all those who suffered loss into individual spaces, saying that grieving was working to achieve independence again. Newer understandings recognise that interdependence is to be put before that of independence. And the country seems to intuitively know that. The response to the horror and loss in Christchurch, up and down the country, is to come together in support and vigil, to bring life and beauty in the form of millions of flowers and messages

laid outside the doors of mosques everywhere. Although few will have personally known one of those whose lives were taken, the whole country seems to be in mourning. Perhaps it is an attack on all of us as human beings.

John Donne wrote, 'Send never to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' We are all connected each with the other in life; each loss of life impacts on each one of us. Fear and deep anger at injustice may in time become tolerable by holding closely warm images of those lost - and we have heard some remarkable stories of some of those who lives were taken away by hatred; religion will help, experiences of love and beauty around those suffering will help. We can't remove the loss of death and suffering, but we can choose to share the journey of those who suffer.

Perhaps as a country we mourn too for an image of who we thought we were - a country where this kind of terror didn't happen. Now it has and we feel a loss of who we thought we were. Mourning for an individual or a community includes mourning for the loss of the person we ourselves thought we were. It's important then that we join in efforts to help prevent

further actions that could threaten this sense of self. The meaning we can find through this frightening experience is to help collectively build peace and love within our communities.



CARING FOR OUR PEOPLE

Are we allowing our dedication to outweigh our safety expectations?

Trudy Downes

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

Last year two people were on their church roof looking at some work that needed doing. On the way down one of them fell. That person ended up in hospital for a check-up after experiencing a short black-out.



Are you thinking:

"Was the person OK?" or "Why did they fall?"

"Were they doing something silly?" or "What was wrong with the ladder setup?"

In fact there were a number of contributing factors to this incident, and although hindsight is always valuable, there remains a question that isn't often explored. What was our role in the event even if we weren't there, or directly involved?

Does our desire to minimise the impact of how much volunteers' time we take, create an environment where safety comes second to getting things

done quickly?

I suggest you think about the following:

If we treat health and safety as a no-blame-game, then when we seek to find the cause of incidents we must look beyond the people involved and extend our search to include other people and the wider work environment.

We can create unsafe environments and pressures when we push for results that don't incorporate safety.

The participants in our main event are long serving, dedicated members of their parish who put in extra time to look after the

parish property. They, like many others, are volunteers, and they certainly didn't plan for the 15 minute job to go sideways like it did!

If we don't include safety when planning a job, what subliminal message does that send to the people doing the job? What does it convey about our expectations of their behaviours and the importance that we assign to safety?

The people called Methodist are not adverse to this challenge of being safe, and would not knowingly put someone in an unsafe position. We can improve our safety behaviours to show others "we expect work to be done safely" by doing the following:

Have a safety conversation

While you have your cup of tea, discuss the work ahead and how you will undertake each phase of the work safely. Identify the unsafe work areas and how you will deal with them.

Include safety in all meeting decisions

Assess every decision for its safety component. Is it

safe now, will it be safe in the future? How will we keep it safe for the future? This approach ensures health and safety is considered everywhere.

Talk about incidents

Report incidents and share lessons learned. Conversations raise awareness. Awareness makes a difference for the future.

Would safety conversations have kept our original duo safe? I can't answer that and it doesn't matter because the incident has already happened. Our no-blame attitude is now focussed on

ensuring it doesn't happen again, anywhere, to anyone.

Ki te kāhore he whakakitenga, ka kore te iwi e tūpato; ko te kaupupuri ia i te ture, ka hari ia

Where there is no vision, people cast off restraint; but he that keeps the law, blessed is he.

Proverb 29:18

Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou.

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