



Reflecting on lockdown

Rev Jan Fogg

How was it for you being older during the lockdown period? There was explicit information on what older people could or could not do, and most of us mostly obeyed, as did most of the country.

Research into the behaviour of older people suggests that, because as young people we were trained to be obedient and punctual, we are more inclined than many young people these days to be obedient. But there may be several reasons that older people during lockdown did not go out for their food shopping and did stay in the house. Some were blessed with kind, younger neighbours who were delighted to have a task to do and be able to help. Many of us suffer significant disease issues and so take care to prevent as much as possible being affected by something in addition. It made sense to limit contact and reduce the risk of Covid-19. It may be that under stress or fear, there is a tendency to follow instructions, because to do otherwise requires more effort and energy.

Life satisfaction is an attitude to one's own life and so reflects our feelings about the past, present and future. It's made up of our thoughts about wellbeing, and our feelings of happiness. Our thoughts about staying in the house would have helped us

to obey those instructions, even if we didn't feel that happy about doing so.

Interestingly though, the nursing department at Auckland University is also concerned about what happened for older people during lockdown, recognising that social contact and activity is very important as we age. They have pointed out that firm instructions were given for older people without first seeking older opinions. Now they are inviting stories from older people as to their experience during lockdown. This is important research, not simply for knowledge about the past, but also for the future. Many are predicting that further new diseases may become rampant in the world, so it's important we learn from this experience to help inform behaviour for the next time.

We are learning for the future, in all kinds of ways from this time. Churches have found that people who didn't much attend a church service, appreciated receiving something online. Children interacted more in services on Zoom, whereas in the church building they perhaps feel too shy to do so. People felt linked-in and acknowledged through receiving these messages from the church. Regular attenders greatly missed the meeting together time, though - so not everything will change. We give thanks that newer technology enabled greater contact and less isolation than would have happened in past times.



COVID-19 was certainly inspiring Rev Smith to find new ways of preaching the Gospel.

CARING FOR OUR PEOPLE

The Taste of Words

Trudy Downes

A teacher told me off for blaspheming when I was in primary school and thus started my love of words.



Trudy Downes

McPhail and Gadsby were at their peak

and I have a brother called Wayne, so of course I was going to repeat McPhail and Gadsby's catch phrase whenever I could. I got told off and was left wondering what the blasphemy was. I worked it out eventually and was amazed! Who knew names and words morphed like that?

I have also discovered that different but related words make people respond differently.

Take my brother Wayne for example. If you ask him, "Can you take the rubbish out please?" he will answer, "Yes," and stay exactly where he is. If you ask him, "Will you take the rubbish out please?" he will go and take the rubbish out.

Which leads me to my job with the Methodist Church of New Zealand. I was employed to integrate the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 with the Church. I am the only person throughout the entire Connexion with this primary purpose.

However, I know that people won't do Health and Safety just because I say, "The law says..." Therefore I operate under 'Caring for Our People' because it fits

better within our church and because it is easier to get people to say, "I want to Care for People" versus "I want to adhere to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015"!

Caring for Our People got me involved in the Pandemic Planning for Covid-19. Now we are at Alert Level 1 and the Government has changed

its slogan from 'Unite against Covid-19' to 'Unite for the Recovery'.

Rev Mark Gibson of New Brighton Union Parish and Port Hills Uniting says:

"Recovery is not a biblical or theological word used in our corporate life as church. That is why I suggest 'renewal' as an alternative because it is. I personally prefer the more vibrant option of 'regeneration' which is a more ecological word and suggests a more holistic, community-focused pathway."

I think that we learnt a bit about 'recovery' here in Canterbury after the earthquakes. It was the official word for a long time and I believe it didn't serve us well because it didn't encourage us to break the old mindsets. It didn't create an understanding of crisis as a time and opportunity for change.

One of the reasons that Aotearoa NZ is physically and spiritually such a beautiful place is because it is dynamic. It is still being made. Change is built into our landscape and the people who call it home need to embrace this and integrate it into

Unite
for the
~~RECOVERY~~
Regeneration /
Renewal /
Restart?

who we are. We are not here to settle, but to grow.

I'm already hearing in the Synod Zoom meetings of ministers about the strong inclination of some parishes to get back to the way things were. This will not serve us well and we'll miss the opportunity to innovate and change. The season of Pentecost should be a season for change, renewal and regeneration. Bruce Sanguin calls it the Season of Emergence. He describes church as 'a domain or habitat for creative emergence'. I like that."

Lockdown caught some of us unprepared, me included. There was a minor scramble

to make online resources available for our parishes and we temporarily forgot about television or radio resources (remembering that the TV Guide wasn't printed during lockdown!).

We can do more to ensure that we are ready for the unknown as fast as it is thrown at us.

I think 'recovery' tastes of stale from the past and I prefer the sparkly taste of looking forward. 'Unite to Rewrite our Future'.

What does the word 'recovery' taste like to you?