

## HODGSON HOUSE CHAPLAINCY – REPORT TO SYNOD – 2015

This report is written against the beginnings of rapid change in the Residential Aged Care sector. As we all know the Church has been active in providing care for older people and was at the forefront of establishing 'rest homes' in our community. Nevertheless recent studies make the point that an actual study of religion and ageing has been surprisingly neglected. In writing this report I have endeavoured to compare the findings of some of these studies into the clinical ministry of chaplaincy at Hodgson Village and have noted the following.

Questions about the meaning of life people ask as they grow from childhood into maturity often disappear in adult life. People in mid life are too busy to stop and think. Such questions return with some force during later life primarily because of the weakening of the body, generally slowing down in all sorts of ways and as a consequence find themselves with more time to think, remember, and muse on the life that they once had. Complications can arise when the impact of technology in a sophisticated, industrialised consumerist, competitive society cause doubt in the minds of older people as to their worth, and there is an opinion in the community that those who struggle with age or illness are somehow less important and therefore not entitled to a fair share of resources.

Spirituality amongst residents is expressed in a variety of ways both formal and informal. Some people believe in eternal life; others do not. It is important to recognise and minister in ways that exemplify that those who do not express a traditional faith are accepted as persons of worth. Traditional expressions of faith and worship need exploring ways that are meaningful to a different generation who may be better educated than their forbears but find great difficulty in dealing with ultimate matters of life and death having come from society which generally does not wish to deal with such issues. Furthermore, and I quote, the steady decline of religious affiliation and attendance that has taken place over the last half-century has implications for the future of ageing' Will future generations of older people look to religion for support as has been the case in earlier times ? The new interdisciplinary field of gerontology developed after the Second World War has given relatively little attention to the role that religion plays in older people's daily lives. We need to find answers soon because the first predominantly non-religious older people are almost upon us. (Ageing Ritual & Social Change) Ashgate. {In a recent article published in the Australian & N.Z. Journal of Public Health it is reported that 47% (66% if aged 85+years) died in Residential Aged Care facilities}

Personally, I have found the work of chaplain at Hodgson Village an incredibly rich experience. I must place on record my grateful thanks to all who assist in various ways especially the volunteers who assist with worship services, on the Friday and Sunday of each week. Feedback from people at various levels inside and outside of the facility have testified to the difference the total ministry exercised make all the difference when it comes to the total care of their loved ones who are 'in care'. Included in this is the special co operation of the staff, management, nursing, carers and others who come together in a blend that make a very special ministry. .

J.Derm. Buchanan,

Chaplain, June 2015...