

What will this September mean for you, I wonder? Now I'm long retired, one month can slip into another all too quickly, with routines that provide a lot of continuity - until something happens that changes the course of life.

When I was a teacher, September was very much the start of my year, rather than January. That will be true for many: the moment of starting school, moving on a school year, changing school, starting work or college. Parents have to cope with both their children's and their own issues around leaving behind one life and starting another. For me, this September will mark the moment at which two grandchildren leave school, and in one case home and country. Nothing traumatic, but still new starts that mean a readjustment, mostly for them and their parents, but for us too - letting go of what has been and moving forward into the unknown. For all of you facing big changes, I wish you confidence in yourself and kindness from others.

For all of us this September there are changes in store: a new PM, a new government, and immensely difficult decisions for them and for us all about some of the very basics of life, as the gap widens between income and expenditure. And that's against the backdrop of drought, climate change and international tensions.

For some, it will coincide with other personal events that are calling for, or forcing, a change. Expected changes can be difficult, but unexpected changes are really challenging. If you are facing one of these, I hope you will be able to access help within our community to cope with what may be a very hard combination of both hanging on and letting go.

Faith - Christian faith - encourages us to hope for change, to look forward to signs of new life, to believe that there is healing for wounds created by things that have happened to us and by our own mistakes. That faith can be very hard to come by in the face of all that is wrong in the world and the way people behave towards one another. Jesus knew that; he spoke of faith the size of a tiny mustard seed as faith enough when faced with the need to move mountains. Farmers and gardeners will be sowing seeds in faith that they will grow over winter into plants next spring. Every small act of kindness could be the seed that turns into generous love. Every small decision made because it is morally right can move the world in the right direction.

As you face your own life situation this September, I wish you courage and faith enough to let go as needed and hang on to all that is good.

David Harmsworth, Reader Emeritus