

# Garry's Thoughts

(Sorry not sure what happened, the last bit was missing in Link, Marie)

I still remember when airbags became mandatory in all new cars in Australia. It was 2013. I remember reading protests from people who refused to buy cars with airbags claiming that airbags kill more people than the crashes they were intended to save you from. I still know a bloke called Brian who refuses to buy a car equipped with an airbag. I think Brian will be stuck with his 1986 Camira for the rest of his life. He says he's not opposed to airbags, he just thinks people should have a choice. I ask him, "What about your passengers?" He just reckons they can choose not to go with him....hmm mmm.

Two years earlier, Teresa and I had a serious car accident at Wyandra. The passenger side airbag went off and resulted in me receiving 3 broken ribs and a cracked sternum. It was painful for quite a number of years. Did I regret it. Absolutely not!! The alternative would have been my head

slung-throwing into the windscreen, despite the seat belt. I am still alive.

I am a big fan of increasing road safety. It was a primary reason we bought a Tesla in 2019. With more airbags than a ballooning festival and all the other safety features, ABS, auto-steer, auto-brake etc etc, it is rated as the safest passenger car ever on an Australian road. Yes, it cost \$66,000. But what price is life?

I know there are a small number, and seriously the number is small, who are opposed to mandatory vaccinations. I don't like mandatory anything myself. But we need to be thinking beyond ourselves. We need to ask how do we fulfil Christ's call on His followers to work towards a fair and just society in which the most vulnerable are protected when we selfishly use arguments of self over neighbour and not Christ's call for neighbour over self.

And now with a push for possible future booster shots, the question of our understanding of self becomes even more of a question in an increasingly self-absorbed, individualistic society. Currently, I need a yearly flu shot if I want to see my mother-in-law in aged care.

What troubles me is the we now live in such a society that people are so self-absorbed that aged care facilities have to introduce mandatory flu vaccinations to remind us that their centres are filled with vulnerable people.

The other night at a BBQ at my local airport, a few of us were talking about old Doug, an 86 year old fella who doesn't follow the news and refuses to be vaccinated. All there agreed that we needed to be vaccinated so that we protected Doug as well as we could. These people are not Christians, but they get it. How can we, who know Christ's call to serve others, even question it?

But back to car safety.

When seat belts were introduced into cars, people complained that their freedoms were being trampled on. But seat belts saved lives. It's a plain fact. When airbags were introduced, did anyone say, "Oh, they are introducing airbags because seat belts don't work!!". Of course not. They enhanced safety.

When hepatitis C vaccination was introduced, it was two shots. Now it's three. Not because it was ineffective, but that three shots are much better. Covid-19 booster shots are not an admission that vaccines are not effective, as much as airbags are not an admission that seat belts are not effective.

Around December 17, Queensland is going to open up. We know unvaccinated people will then have their movements restricted. We, as Christians have an obligation to speak Christ into the societal conversation. The world will say unvaccinated people are being punished for holding out or having genuine concerns. But Christ calls us to protect those who choose not to protect either themselves or their neighbours. I think it's fair enough that our little mob who meet on a Saturday night BBQ at the airport have chosen to require anyone new who comes to be vaccinated so that Doug will be safe.

Let's not enter into the conversation of hate and division. Let's ask ourselves in every conversation, "In what way will this show love to my neighbour?"

Be safe. Be loving.

Get vaxxed....not just for your sake, but for everyone else.

Blessings

Garry