

2 MINUTES WITH Fonoimoana (Fono) Faaita

I (the Ed.) first met Fono in the early days of the Tawa Community Centre when I was its first co-ordinator some 12 years ago. The House of Grace Pentecostal Church, of which Fono is pastor, is probably the community centre's longest regular 'user', meeting there every Sunday since the early days of the centre.

Fono also plays a role in our local train service as you will read in the following interview.



Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Leulumoega Tuai (near Apia) on the island of Upolu, Samoa.

Where were you educated?

Aana Junior High School, Samoa; Laidlaw Bible college, Auckland; Pacific Bible College, Wellington.

How long have you lived in Tawa? 13 years.

What do you like about Tawa, and what would you like to see improved?

It's a quiet area, close to town and close to Porirua, also close to the motorway. There's a great community here. It has good facilities like the community centre, railway stations and shops close by.

What about family?

My wife is Rosalind. We have four children plus an adopted son who now lives in Australia. Our three daughters are in their 20s and are working, and our son (14) is at St Pats College (Town).

Work experience over the years

I started work at age 16 as an office boy with the Electric Power corporation in Samoa. I was a mechanic at the Coca-Cola company for approximately 12 months before moving back to the Electric Power corporation as a meter reader.

In 1982 I moved to Mangere, Auckland and worked for six months at Thone EMI TV. I then moved to Wellington where many of my cousins were. I initially came for a visit but decided to stay. I worked for Wellington City Council as a parking officer for 7-8 years and enjoyed that job. When that was privatised I was offered redundancy and accepted. I went back to Auckland and was involved in recycling work.

I met my wife in Wellington. We were married in 1992 and lived in Pakuranga. I worked for the Manukau City Council in parking enforcement services for seven years. I then took up a job as a water meter reader in greater Auckland. It involved a lot of travelling and I became familiar with most streets in Auckland city.

We attended the Apostolic Church close to us in Pakuranga and got involved in the leadership side. We moved back to Wellington in 2007. Some of my wife's family lived in Tawa and were involved in the local Apostolic Church. We moved here to look after that and looked for other work too.

Rosalind started finance work with the Salvation Army in the city. I started working with Tranz Metro in October 2007 as a train manager – checking tickets, doors and safety. I am still with them today.

We needed space for our small church and began meeting at the Tawa Community Centre 2007-08 and have been there ever since. We have been happy there and our small church is growing.

What are your interests and hobbies?

I love rugby. I played for Poneke a few years ago. I started as wing when I was skinny and fast, and ended up as a prop!

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Favourite sports team?

The Hurricanes, and I sometimes watch the Tawa rugby team at Lyndhurst Park. I live near there.

Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?

I like Sol3 Mio.

What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?

We went down to the South Island one time. I particularly enjoyed visiting Nelson and Akaroa.

What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?

I'm glad that my children have turned out pretty well. We encouraged them at school and in their own Christian beliefs, to "ensure their future".

What are two or three interesting things about you that local people may not know?

1. I'm a Servant (pastor) of God.
2. I want to treat everyone the same.
3. I'm a family man, love my beliefs, my culture and all nationalities.

What are three things you would like to do before you die?

1. Make sure I lead my family to a Blessed Future – spiritually and physically.
2. Love, be friendly and helpful – to have safe communities and work together to look after each other.
3. Do the work and complete it, "before night comes" (I die).

(Compiled October 2020)

