

FEAR NOT!

Irene Frances

FEAR TAKES MANY forms and for me, it has often been with me when I set out in the car. Why? Whether it is to Christian events such as an inter-church meeting on the Sunshine Coast eight years ago, or non-church outings such as driving up the Toowoomba Range, going to and from Charleville, to Karana Downs and Ipswich, Manly, Highgate Hill, Norman Park or Brisbane's Northside—always, always fear and anxiety abound. Why?

Fear—of breaking down, in particular—even when my car was brand new! Fear now, with the slight “hiccup” when I move from 80 to 90kph—but which has caused no other problems, and which so seldom happens. Why fear?

Is this a hangover from when I was married and never drove when my husband was in the car because I felt inadequate compared to him? Is it because I don't think I can look after myself on the road? To call the RACQ [Royal Automobile Club of Queensland] if I need them? To trust my car that I have kept well serviced?

Is this telling me I am afraid of being alone—a woman on my own—when the reality is I am not alone and I know God is always with me? Why am I afraid of driving? On two occasions when I have had significant issues with the car—once when it needed a new gearbox and I was a long way from my home in Charleville, and another time when I had two flat tires, again a long way from home—I managed the situations with ease, called RACQ and was able to have both issues attended to quickly with no added hassles. Because the problems happened where I could access a mechanic they were attended to before I had to get back on the road for the long drive home.

I had never thought about this fear until recently when I was about to set out for the Sunshine Coast and felt yet again fear take over. I was looking forward to my time away, and I did not want my



journey to be spoiled by fear. Enough was enough.

We're encouraged to face our fears, and as I did—very definitely questioning what was going on and why—they suddenly dissipated. I was rid of them. I knew that I was a competent driver and that if needed the RACQ would be there to help along the way. In particular, I reminded myself that wherever I may be, on the road or at home, my awesome God is with me watching over me and protecting me.

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah repeatedly encourages us not to fear—at last I'm taking notice:

“Be strong, do not fear; your God will come...”
(Isaiah 35:4).

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

“For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (Isaiah 41:14).

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1).

I had the smoothest drive to the Sunshine Coast and arrived safely without getting lost, something of a miracle for me—I have often wound up in the weirdest places when my lack of navigation skills and inability to read a map have led me astray. But that's another story. □

Irene Frances contributes articles from Australia. She runs a blog called “Authentic Christian Living” at www.irenefrances.wordpress.com