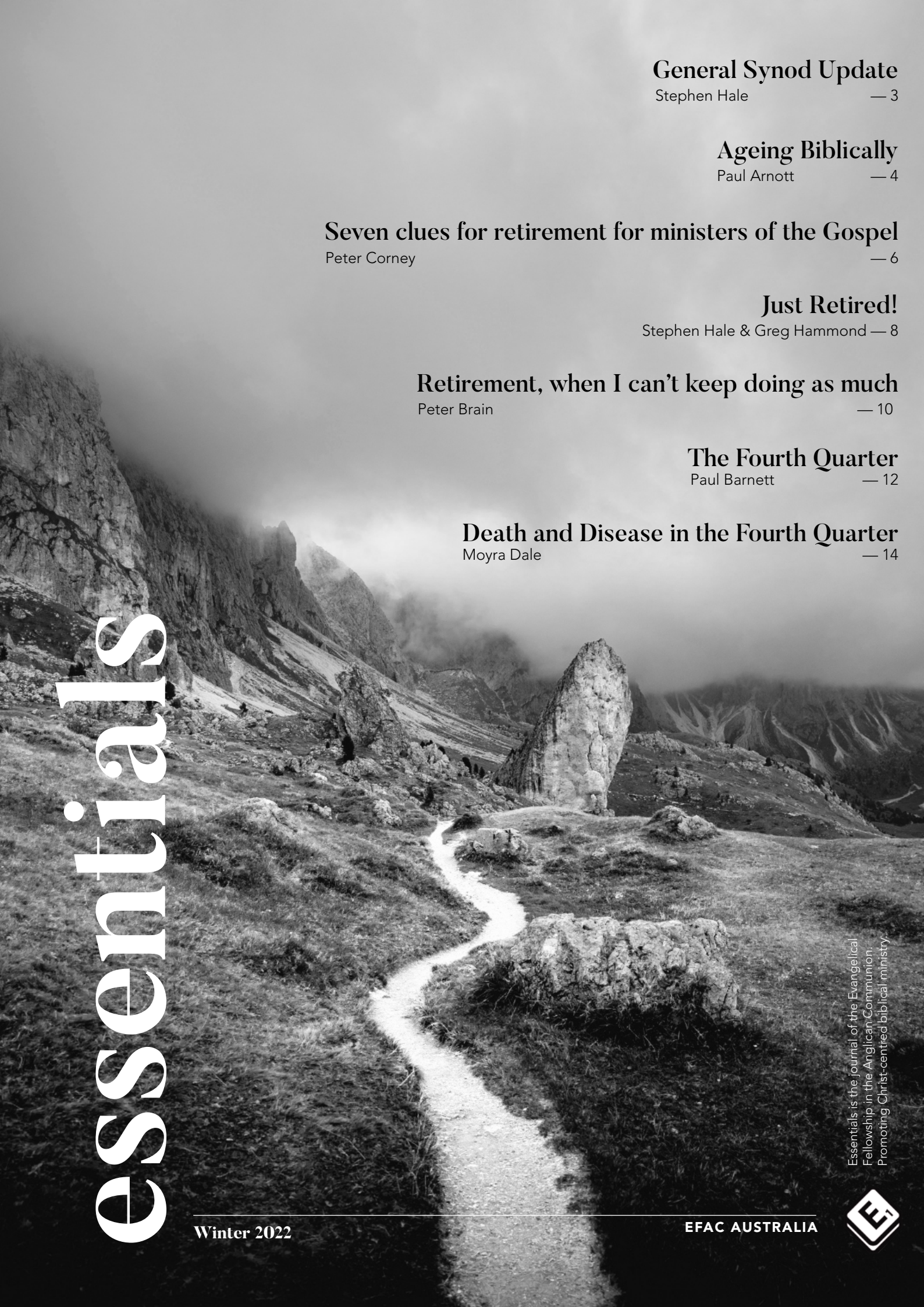

essentials

Essentials is the journal of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.
Promoting Christ-centred biblical ministry.

Winter 2022

EFAC AUSTRALIA

This issue of Essentials focusses on retirement. There are great contributions from some of the leaders of our church from a range of eras of retirement.

Given that most of us will be living longer lives the issue of retirement becomes even more challenging and important.

Being in the younger bracket of this phase of life I don't really regard myself as retired! When I'm locumming I'm working full time and in between I have more flexibility!

On top of that I have the opportunity to chair a number of Boards and to coach younger leaders. As well my wife and I volunteer with a local charity and we have the privilege of playing a small part in a remarkable work that assists those most in need in our city. I'm doing this without the stress of leading a church and all the joys and challenges that that represents.

There are wonderful contributions in this issue from some of the great leaders from the past 50 years or so. What they each illustrate is that ministry continues on for each of us, but it is being expressed in a diverse range of ways. If we're open to God's leading then He is always open to using us in His service.

At the same time Moyra Dale has written a beautiful and honest article which captures what happens when our plans are disrupted by major illness.

There is a genuine need for more conversation about how we can continue to serve God in the unfolding phases of our lives after our 'full time ministry' or paid work ends.

I trust you're refreshed by each of the articles and the book reviews.

STEPHEN HALE, EDITOR

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What is EFAC?

EFAC is a group of Anglican clergy and lay people who value the evangelical heritage of the Anglican Church, and who endeavour to make a positive, constructive contribution at local, diocesan and national levels. EFAC Australia is part of the world-wide Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.

The purpose of EFAC is to maintain and promote a strong biblical witness in and through the Anglican Church so as to advance the cause of the gospel in Australia.

The aims of EFAC are:

1. To promote the ultimate authority, the teaching and the use of God's written word in matters of both faith and conduct.

2. To promote this biblical obedience particularly in the areas of Christian discipleship, servant leadership, church renewal, and mission in the world.

3. To foster support and collaboration among evangelical Anglicans throughout Australia.

4. To function as a resource group to develop and encourage biblically faithful leadership in all spheres of life.

5. To provide a forum, where appropriate: a) for taking counsel together to develop policies and strategies in matters of common concern b) for articulating gospel distinctives in the area of faith, order, life and mission by consultations
and publications.

6. To promote evangelism through the local church and planting new congregations.

7. To coordinate and encourage EFAC branches/groups in provinces or dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia.

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General Synod Update

BISHOP STEPHEN HALE
CHAIR, EFAC AUSTRALIA

Most of the news in the secular press and various religious media from the Anglican General Synod has focussed on one motion and one issue. Indeed, General Synod did consider an important motion seeking to affirm the traditional understanding of marriage. The context for this was the Appellate Tribunal decision in relation to same sex blessing in the Diocese of Wangaratta. The Tribunal had indicated that if the General Synod wanted to make a statement on marriage it was should do so. The motion to affirm a statement on the doctrine of marriage was moved by Archbishop Kanishka Raffel in a thoughtful and sensitive speech and seconded by Natalie Rosner (Melbourne) who spoke to the pastoral challenges of upholding the Bibles teaching. While it was solidly supported in both the house of laity and the house of clergy, the house of bishops narrowly voted not to support it. It is worth noting that Sydney delegates accounted for roughly 50% of the lay and clergy support. There was therefore strong support from people from a wide range of dioceses across the country.

For those present there was significant upset at the outcome of this motion. While disappointing, it doesn't change anything in any Diocese, nor does it change the previous statements of General Synod which have consistently upheld an orthodox doctrine of marriage. The reality is that since the Appellate Tribunal decision in 2020, Dioceses have been free to make their own decisions in relation to same sex blessings.
Another important motion did pass which clarified a definition of unchastity as sexual intimacy outside of marriage, with similar levels of support in each house, the only difference being that the house of bishops very narrowly supported it.

From an EFAC perspective there are two things to note. Firstly, the bishops of our church are now clearly out of step with the lay and clerical representatives at Synod. How this will play out is uncertain. The Diocese of Melbourne will be a focal point given the unexpected action of its bishop at General Synod!

Stephen Hale

pictured

Secondly the Synod reflected the fundamental shift that is taking place in the ACA. The majority of those elected or appointed for both the Standing Committee and the Primatial Election Board (except for the House of Bishops) are evangelicals from across Australia. During the Synod there were wonderful speeches from evangelicals from across Australia and many people from many places made great contributions. There was a high level of cooperation between evangelicals at Synod from across Australia.

EFAC Australia ran an evening session at General Synod with around 80 people present. Bishop Mark Short led an interactive panel of Kara Hartley (Sydney), Kate Beer (NT), Bishop Matt Brain (Bendigo) and Bishop Richard Condie (Tas). It was a great session and we spent time in prayer for the Synod.

General Synod reflects the life of our church in many respects. However, it doesn't reflect the day to day reality of people serving our great God in and through the parishes, church plants and agencies of our church.

Stephen Hale is the former Lead Minister of the St Hilary's Network and a Regional Bishop in the Diocese of Melbourne. Stephen is the Victorian Director of Overseas Council Australia and Chair of EFAC Global and EFAC Australia.

Ageing Biblically

PAUL ARNOTT

Our 21st century world values youth above all else. It lauds the merits of the young in a myriad of ways. Just watch the ads on TV tonight. Youth is good and to be desired. Old age, not so much. In fact, not at all. Old age is seen as bad. In our ageist society older people are often portrayed as doddery, frail, and not really with it. Growing older is feared. It's seen as a time of decrepitude. Even those of us who seek to follow Christ can be seduced into seeing ageing as bad. Why was I so pleased when someone told me after I preached recently that I looked 61 not 71? Because I don't like the thought of growing older. To some degree I've imbibed the spirit of the age. I fear losing control, although if COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that much of life is beyond our control.

Robert Banks reminds us that ageing is normal. The ageing process, being biologically determined, is part of God's providence and is to be accepted with grace.[1] However, that's easier said than done when the world constantly tells us that growing old is bad. And we observe firsthand, the effects of ageing on people we love. Ultimately, we have a choice to accept growing older, with all that process may bring or to live in denial. T.S. Eliot famously wrote in his poem, *The Wasteland*, that human beings cannot bear too much reality.[2] The preacher in Ecclesiastes provides "a beautiful and poetic description of progressive fading and failing in each of the several faculties of the body. It is a picture of sad and ineluctable deterioration and decay."[3]

Paul Arnott

pictured

I recently slipped while coming down our stairs in bare feet and bruised not only my dignity, but my arm, ribs and leg. Thank God that I avoided any broken bones, but it was a salutary reminder that my balance isn't what it used to be and that I need to be more careful when descending stairs. I was also, two years ago, diagnosed with early-stage Parkinson's Disease. The tremor in my left hand is yet another reminder of my mortality. Covid and Parkinson's have both been encouragements to face my mortality head on and to review my life direction. Given the challenges growing older can present us with it would be easy to succumb to the world's view of ageing as a period of remorseless decay.

A biblical view of ageing

However, there is another way of viewing ageing. The psalmist reminds us that those who trust in the Lord will "still bring forth fruit in old age; they will be full of sap and green." (Psalm 92.14 – ASV). The late Billy Graham in his book, Nearing Home, tells the story of the missionary to India, Dr E. Stanley Jones.[4] When he was eighty-five Stanley Jones had a stroke that disabled him and impaired his speech. Despite the stroke he managed to dictate his last book, *The Divine Yes*, and address a world congress in India from his wheelchair shortly before he died.[5] He wrote, "In old age … blossom at the end like a night-blooming cereus."[6] Billy Graham writes that the night blooming cereus, a family of flowering cacti, brings a beauty to the desert when it blooms at nightfall:

> E. Stanley Jones certainly knew about blossoming in the night-time of life and producing fruit, despite disability.[7] Billy Graham asks "Do we, the

older generation, do the same? Are we replenishing fruit that replenishes others or do we complain about our circumstances and drain others who look forward to living full lives? By our attitudes do we make younger [people] dread the inevitable – growing old? Many elderly people, without realising it, taint the purpose God has for them: to impact the younger generation/s by exemplifying reliance on Him and hope in His unchanging promises. We should be content for Jesus has said, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you.' " (Hebrews 13.5 NKJV).[8]

In her book, *The Gift Of Years*, Joan Chittester argues that "old age is not a disease. It is strength and survivorship."[9] Chittester writes:

> When we ignore the fact that all of us are on an inexorable journey to our own old age, we miss the gift of years. We miss the profound insight that we are never too young to begin to see ourselves as old, to imagine ourselves as now, at this moment, shaping what we will be in the years to come – as well as the way we will become it. All of us will sooner or later arrive at the point where we are beginning to imagine ourselves entertaining the final stages of our lives and asking ourselves seriously, quietly, what kind of person we want to be then, so that we can begin to be that kind of person now.[10]

Since CMA began our Q4/Fourth Quarter ministry six years ago we have interviewed more than three hundred Australian Christians in their retirement years/fourth quarter. The common denominator in all their lives has been the determination to continue to make a difference for the kingdom of God no matter how old they are. More than 80 people have now completed our seven-session course, **Engaging Q4**, built around seven spiritual disciplines designed for people in their fourth quarter. They are involved in a wide range of ministries and activities from serving in and through their local church to Kids Hope, Mainly Music, Men's Sheds and visiting nursing homes.

Often people protest that they're not yet retired, which isn't the point. The fourth quarter begins for men in their early 60s and for women in their mid-sixties. It's not about whether we are in paid or voluntary work. Many of us will live for twenty-five or thirty years past retirement age. The real question, the biblical question, is what use will we make of that time as followers of Jesus?

1 - Robert Banks & R. Paul Stevens, 'Aging', *The Completer Book of Everyday Christianity* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997) 30-31.
2 - Quote by T. S. Eliot: "Humankind cannot bear very much reality." (goodreads.com)
3 - Banks & Stevens, 'Aging', *Book of Everyday Christianity*, 31.
4 - Billy Graham, *Nearing Home: Life, Faith and Finishing Well* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2011), 33.
5 - Graham, *Nearing Home*, 34.
6 - Graham, *Nearing Home*, 33.
7 - Graham, *Nearing Home*, 34.
8 - Graham, *Nearing Home*, 34.
9 - Joan Chittester, *The Gift Of Years: Growing Old Gracefully* (Katonah: Blue Bridge Books, 2008) 137.
10 - Chittester, *Gift Of Years*, 137.

Paul Arnott is the executive director of CMA's Q4: Rethinking Retirement (Q4 - Rethinking Retirement cma.net.au)

Seven clues for retirement for ministers of the Gospel

PETER CORNEY
VICAR EMERITUS OF ST HILARY'S KEW

Peter Corney

pictured

1. Start preparing well before you retire. Pastoral ministry is busy, and the deadlines are relentless; sermon and service preparation every week, constant pastoral needs to attend to, regular committee meetings, marriage preparation, funerals, planning meetings, etc, etc. This can cause one to keep putting off planning ahead for retirement. The constant demands can also mean we can lose contact with old friends and valued relationships, neglect hobbies, and other interests, that will be important in retirement.

2. During full time ministry it is important to keep up other interests, relationships, hobbies, and ministry activities outside the parish. Many of these can be continued after you move from full time ministry. Retirement doesn't mean we cease ministry! The pace and the pressure changes and the influence may narrow but our vocation can continue. In my case I have always been involved in training, coaching, and mentoring younger leaders, both within and outside my parish ministry, and that has continued into my retirement from full time ministry. The Arrow leadership program which I was privileged to head up, happened while I was still in parish ministry and when I moved from full time ministry gave me a continuing field of very meaningful service at a level appropriate to my energy at that stage of my life. In retirement I and a small group of retired friends from the church we attend, started a 'Shed' for men and women that is focussed on woodwork projects, musical instrument making, furniture projects both new and restorations, etc. The core group also act as a maintenance team for the Church. The group is open to anyone to attend and has become a great opportunity for members to invite their retired friends who don't attend a church. The level of fellowship enjoyed shows the need for ongoing relationships for retirees.

3. Be prepared for loss, particularly a loss of recognition, status, and perceived significance. Parish ministry is a very public role. You are known, recognised by many people, and appreciation is often expressed. Retirement can bring a sense of loss of the recognition that comes with belonging to and being a significant person in that community. Someone said, "*you know you're irrelevant when no one knows or speaks your name.*" That is what many older people feel in some nursing homes when no one visits them anymore. It is also why the federal governments initiative and funding to assist people where possible to live longer in their own homes and street is so important. Retirement usually means physical relocation to a new house and suburb for parish ministers which can also produce a sense of loss, loss of community, loss of a familiar place and contacts. Retiring to a beach house isn't always a good idea! It can seem ideal at first but can become very lonely and isolated from friends and family. This needs careful thought and planning.

4. As our retirement continues and our physical strength and abilities change, we can feel that there is not much we can contribute to the Kingdom now. Billy Graham, perhaps the most significant and effective evangelist of the modern era, wrote in his later years in a book entitled Nearing Home "*The time God has given you is not without purpose.*" That is an idea we need to keep hold of as we age, as Psalm 31:15 puts it "*My times are in your hands.*" So therefore they are not without purpose. Discovering that purpose needs to become part of our regular prayers as it will change as we age. There is also the challenge to avoid becoming too focussed on your own health and the aches and pains of advancing years rather than the needs of others!

5. Be prepared for a change in life structure. Full time work gives a particular structure to one's daily life and so it is important to develop a new one or one can drift into a vague boredom. At first the relief from the pressure of full-time work is welcome but eventually the need for structure and purpose asserts itself. It is important to maintain, even create new disciplines for your daily life. Especially in your devotional life of prayer and the study of God's word. I thought that once I retired that my daily prayer life would be easier now that I have more time and less interruptions! In my case I found the challenge to keep and grow in these disciplines didn't get any easier, it just changed in its form. I have had to develop new routines and methods and goals. Our new structure needs to also include regular daily physical exercise as our body ages. To keep mentally alert and relevant by reading, learning, and growing is as important now as it was in full time parish ministry. Supporting, mentoring, and discipling younger people is a great way to keep abreast of the new challenges contemporary culture presents to our faith and discipleship.

6. For those of us who are married there is another adjustment to being around more at home. The plus is that we now have more discretionary time to do things together, but we need to spend some time discussing this with our partner rather than making assumption's about what we will do!

7. Dr Robert Clinton, who taught and researched for many years at Fuller Seminary on Christian leadership, made the observation that Christian leaders who "finished well" observed five things during their active ministry: (i) They kept perspective. (ii) They had many spiritual renewals. (iii) They maintained spiritual disciplines. (iv) They adopted a constant learning posture. (v) They maintained a relationship with a mentor, and they also mentored others. It seems to me these five things are also worth pursuing into retirement.

Just Retired!

STEPHEN HALE AND GREG HAMMOND OAM

Moving into a new phase of life has been challenging for those of us who are recently retired from working for one organisation full time. Whatever we had planned or anticipated has been changed or put on hold by unforeseen circumstances or, more recently, thrown into chaos by the pandemic. It has been both an interesting and yet frustrating time.

In the early phase of retirement, the following is a random selection of observations.

1. Be open to God's leading

In this new season of one's life (even in the midst of the pandemic) it is critical to be open to God's leading and to being a part of what he would have one do. It is tempting to want to have a plan about the future before retirement occurs, but "letting go" is important and often requires time to reflect, listen and discern how you can best use your God-given gifts in fruitful ways.

When you have spent all or most of your career working for one organisation, it can be hard to think outside the lens or prism of that organisation. Shortly before "early retirement", I received some good advice – trust God and let go of the future, so you can think about it through a new lens, not the old lens of your first career (Greg).

This has always been tricky, but particularly so in the last two years for those entering this new phase of life, as lots of things have been on hold.

Stephen Hale Greg Hammond

pictured

Strengthening one's prayer and personal devotion is key to reflecting, listening and discerning.

2. A change in identity

Most of us get part (frequently a large part) of our sense of identity from our work and the offices or roles we occupy. It has been hard to get used to the idea that you no longer have a seemingly key role, place, influence or profile.

I think I'm still sorting this through and that includes moving in and out of locum roles (Stephen). In grappling with this issue, I have found Brian Rosner's work on being made in the image of God, being known by God and being in Christ as the Biblical keys to personal identity particularly helpful (Greg).[1]

3. Flying solo

One area we both find the hardest is working from home and having to do most stuff for oneself. We both miss the workplace and connecting with people, the informal chats over tea or coffee and the asking of questions of colleagues which can open up new solutions to problems. Juggling multiple involvements with no back up has been a challenge.

During the many lockdowns I lined up walks with different people most days in order to attend to my need to connect and be with others (Stephen). Before, during and after lockdown, I have needed to purposefully arrange time to meet with others for conversation and mutual encouragement (Greg).

4. Consider volunteering

It is unlikely in this new phase of life, that you will need to have a full-time paid role, not that a labourer should not be rewarded for their work. There are

many charities and other "for purpose" organisations that rely on volunteers to make the vital difference in the delivery of services.

Even if you do not "get outside the church bubble" as suggested below, consider giving some of your time to a local charity or other "for purpose" organisation. For example, could you volunteer in an aged care residential home to enhance the lives of residents through a skill you have, or simply spend time talking to residents to help relieve the scourge of loneliness.

5. Exercise more
During lockdowns there wasn't much else one could do, but it did have its rewards and is a key thing to build into one's life when it's not as dominated by paid work. It builds resilience and guards against the creep of inertia! (Stephen)

In working from home, and using public transport less (especially since the pandemic began), I have found myself walking less and missing the quiet thinking time that came with short walks to the rail station, between meetings etc. It is important to not only find time for exercise, but also find new ways to quietly think about the challenges of the day or week.

6. Keep reading and engaging
Coaching or mentoring younger leaders and professionals is a great way of keeping in the loop as well as listening to the many podcasts that are out there. They'll help you know which books to consider reading and you'll at least be aware of the ones that are out there.

7. Re-establish old friendships
Most of us have long term friends who we may not have kept up regular contact with due to demands of work and family. Reach out and reconnect. Chances are they were thinking the same thing!

8. Get outside the church bubble
This was important for me (Stephen) and something I've wanted to do for years. I'm volunteering with an organisation that cooks meals for those in need using food that would otherwise be thrown out. The level of professionalism and sheer hard work is amazing.

9. Be more available for your family
With more flexibility there is more of a chance to be a part of your parents' and children's lives and (if you have them) especially the grandchildren. If one isn't tied down every weekday or every weekend this is quite a new thing!

10. Learn to relax
It may seem strange, but it has taken a bit of getting used to having the occasional afternoon or day when you have nothing more to do than clear a few emails! Learn to relax and enjoy these moments. I still find this difficult at times (Greg).

1 - Brian Rosner, Known By God: *A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity* (Zondervan 2018).

Greg Hammond is a former partner of King & Wood Mallesons and since "early retirement" has served on the boards of several not-for-profit organisations - a second career. Among other roles, he is Chair of Anglican Community Services (t/as Anglicare Sydney) and a director of the Australian College of Theology, G&C Mutual Bank and Opportunity International Australia.

Stephen Hale is the former Lead Minister of the St Hilary's Network and a Regional Bishop in the Diocese of Melbourne. Stephen is the Victorian Director of Overseas Council Australia and Chair of EFAC Global and EFAC Australia. He doesn't really think he is retired as such, he's just not working for an organisation full time.

Retirement, when I can't keep doing as much

PETER BRAIN

Peter Brain

pictured

Having recently celebrated my 75th birthday means I have been retired from full-time ministry for five years. When I retired from Armidale in 2012 I joked, 'rooster today, feather duster tomorrow'! Thankfully, someone said to me, 'Peter, don't forget that feather dusters are still useful!' I value that comment because I have not found retirement an easy gig, even though it has been very fulfilling. I have had to work hard at reminding myself of truths which I have always believed – truths such as my worth not in being a pastor but as one justified by faith and adopted by God, and of the priesthood and ministry of all believers. I am also thankful to God for the example of many older believers and must be content, like them, to take a back seat and look for opportunities to minister in different ways. Retiring from stipendiary ministry does not mean retiring from ministry.

It is actually a great relief not to have all the institutional and local-church leadership responsibilities. Locum stints have reminded me of this, as I have once again felt the great pressures upon those who are serving as Rectors and Vicars. I have a growing appreciation of the demands of local-church pastoring, especially during the pandemic.

I have resolved not to fall into that most debilitating sin of being a grumpy old minister, which Hebrews 12:15 calls 'bitterness'. The antidote that I am learning to employ is thankfulness to God for what I *can do* rather than moaning about what I can no longer do, for the younger pastors under whose ministry I am privileged to sit and the people in the congregations who are there because of God's sovereign work of grace in them as in me. Hebrews' exhortation in 10:24-25 has reminded me that church is not about me – I am to intentionally consider how to help others to love and good deeds. It is a team game, where we run and train together, professing Christ (10:23) by turning up every week to spur each other on. Could we ever imagine Pat Cummins going fishing or water skiing when a Test is on?

We are conscripts in Christ's service. Where did the (mistaken) concept of believers being volunteers come from? I do know that it is the source of much discouragement to local church pastors and leaders, and a danger to those who have fallen into its seductive arms. The alternative? To recognise that the greatest gift we can give our brothers and sisters in Christ is to turn up every week (planning trips away or catch-ups with friends mid-week rather than on Sundays), with an expectant and considerate heart. Healthy congregations cannot be built on faithful preaching alone but on the backs of disciples who encourage each other with thoughtful words (Ephesians 4:29) and selfless actions (Galatians 5:13).

Many retired people have been a great blessing to me. One was Jean, whom I met in Wee Waa as she and the music team were tuning up. 'Bishop,' she asked, 'what do you think of all these new tunes to the old hymns?' I replied, 'Jean, there are many young people around the Diocese who are singing these old hymns because of the new tunes.' I was much encouraged when she replied, 'Well that's good enough for me!'

She gave up her 'druthers' because she was glad younger believers were benefitting from those older hymns. The second was Billy, who moved into an Armidale nursing home to be with his wife. The icing on the cake of that selflessness was his asking me to buy $100 worth of gospels and tracts so he could share Christ with the old people! I want to be like them. Retirement means I now need to consciously look for these opportunities, but they are there. Retirement gives me more time to pray for these opportunities to share, and for the people God has led me to.

I am learning to know my limits (the heart is willing but the boy is weak – oops I just noticed the typo – the *body* and the boy are weak) and I need to examine my motives. Mind you, if I had waited for my motives to be faultless in ministry I probably would not have done anything! So I tell Satan to get lost, whilst asking our Lord for forgiveness and grace (Hebrews 4:14-16 is so realistically encouraging). Self-care is vital so we can work and pray well until He takes us home. The line from Morning Prayer, 'whose service is perfect freedom', has been on my heart for 55 years; I thank God for it and for those who have exemplified its truth to me.

W H Griffith-Thomas's words remain true.

What I have, He claims;
What He claims, I yield;
What I yield, He takes;
What He takes, He fills;
What he fills, He uses;
What he uses, He keeps;
What he keeps, He satisfies.

Bishop Peter Brain is the former Bishop Of Armidale who these days has a great ministry as a locum. He is married to Christine and they have four adult children and multiple grandchildren. Peter published *Going the Distance* in 2004. Somewhat appropriately the sub title is 'How to stay fit for a lifetime of service'.

The Fourth Quarter

DR PAUL BARNETT AM

These are for Anita and me our twilight years. Ageing and loss are sad realities of the passing years but there is the joy of engaging with now middle-ageing children and vibrant emerging grandchildren. But most of all there is the existential anticipation of renewal in God's good kingdom. Ageing and loss deepens hope.

Apart from routine ailments of the septuagenarian and octogenarian years I have been blessed with good health, although all the while aware of slippage, including memory. What is it about names? You are poised to mention a name, and it just takes wings and flies away. Thankfully it mostly flies back later.

I was glad to retire as a serving bishop at 66. Freedom! No more meetings to attend or pastoral crises to resolve. My time was now my own and it was and is great to be living in our own home.

Anita and I joined a church and threw ourselves into various forms of ministry through which we have developed deep and abiding friendships. Our church family is a much valued parallel to our personal family. In both we are deeply blessed and feel appreciated and valued.

For Anita that means pastoral fellowship and support of some older ladies as well as having served on the board of what was Anglican Retirement Villages. Her

Paul Barnett

pictured

nursing experience and involvement in geriatric care at St Vincent's were very helpful on the Care Committee of the ARV. For Paul it means preaching periodically, leading an annual mid-week congregational teaching series, leading a largish weekly Bible Study group and being member of a small, monthly men's group.

Until covid I was leading a fortnightly Bible Study for a dozen or so Supreme Court judges. This has been quite a challenge as well as a privilege. These are highly intelligent and experienced men and women who provide superb service to the community.

I am grateful to successive principals of Moore College for opportunities to teach. This is my final year. Apart from our six years in Adelaide I have had unbroken connection with the college since 1960 — as student, lecturer, half-time lecturer, part-time lecturer. Lecturer emeritus.

I have also been part of a small Macquarie University committee that publishes the journal *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. My association with high level scholars of classical antiquity along with travels to the lands of the Bible have contributed to my understanding of the texts of the New Testament.

My main work 2002-2022 has been writing. Since retirement I have had published sixteen papers in peer reviewed journals and twenty books including five commentaries.

In these past twenty years Anita and I have travelled overseas, mostly leading study groups to Jordan-Israel, Turkey-Greece, and Malta-Sicily-Italy. It has been rewarding to see group-members deepening

their Bible understanding in the setting of visiting the actual biblical sites. We have also visited the cities of the great reformers Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and also to Oxford, to be reminded of the faithfulness of the martyr bishops. One highlight was to visit missionary friends in Damascus and to travel throughout Syria. There have also been ministry visits to Canada, the US, South Africa, the UK, Singapore, Thailand. I also visited China twice to teach at universities in Chengdu, Wuhan, Shanghai and Shangchun. We also visited Uberaba in Brazil, where Anita was born and visited the grave of her missionary father, Alexander Simpson.

The pandemic probably means the end of overseas travel.

There are many challenges at this stage of life. Not least is the sense that our country along with other western cultures are moving away from Christian faith and values. I remain confident in the power of God working through clear and strong preaching in the setting of insightful pastoral ministry and warm-hearted congregational fellowship. Today many instruments for ministry seem closed off to us, crusade evangelism or street evangelism, for example.

Bishop Paul Barnet is the former Bishop of North Sydney and has lectured at Moore College for many decades. The author of many books. He is married to Anita. But the local church is and always has been a potential for reaching the outsider. That, certainly, was my experience many years ago. Likewise, very important are the many faith-based schools.

In one of his Synod addresses former archbishop Mowll encouraged Anglican laypeople to consider engaging vocationally in public office, a call I believe issued in a number of laypeople seeking election in local, state and federal politics. The standard of political discourse and service is and always will be open to improvement, so the challenge is there for our laypeople today.

So for us the 'Fourth Quarter' has been a challenge, as for others, but also very fulfilling. Our 'golden' years.

Bishop Paul Barnett is the former Bishop of North Sydney and has lectured at Moore College for many decades. The author of many books and is married to Anita.

Death and Disease in the Fourth Quarter

MOYRA DALE

Moyra Dale

pictured

Here in hospital, nurses taking observations mark the passing of the hours: they issue medicines, meal trays are brought and removed: pigeons flutter outside the window.

Disease and death, if they haven't visited us earlier, come calling on all of us in the fourth quarter of our lives. For me it came earlier than I'd been anticipating.

At fifty-seven years, a non-smoker, my prolonged cough was diagnosed as Stage 4 lung cancer, with probably just months to live. My oncologist suggested that with new targeted therapy I could see two years. Nearly six years on, I'm surprised to find myself still alive, albeit with reduced health and energy. Tumours which have grown in my bones, brain and liver, as well as the base growth in my lungs, have been contained or removed by different forms of treatment (targeted chemotherapy, radiotherapy, brain surgery, immunotherapy). As one treatment stops working, my doctors offer another one – until they run out.

Diagnosis came at a time when career and work opportunities were expanding. A masters intensive I was to be teaching in the USA had to be cancelled, together with my part in a major international conference. I'd just accepted the role of leading an annual six-week international intensive course, and had to let that go, with other plans for wider travel and work. There wasn't much time to grieve – I was focused on the prospect of imminent death and preparing for that with my family.

Targeted therapy enabled me to continue with my basic teaching load for a while and recover energy to enjoy more normal life (while recognising that things like teaching intensives were now beyond me). The years since then have seen losses and gains but overall decline, sometimes from cancer, more often from treatment or other health conditions that cancer seems to make room for.

A diagnosis of terminal illness is always challenging, but maybe less so in the final quarter of our lives than if it had come earlier. We have the privilege of looking back on a full life, of many different opportunities, of long years knowing and experiencing the goodness of God, as a foundation for resting on that now. It's harder when it comes to young lives full of unrealised promise, life not yet lived, chances not able to be taken up. The task now becomes to live and to die as well as possible: for us and for those around us whom we leave to grieve. How to care for them in their costly care for us, emotionally and physically, in time and help?

It brings both challenges and opportunities.

The challenge to accept this as the Sovereign God's gift to me, to be received with thanksgiving. Not so much a fight, this is a context within which to seek to live for God, learning to meet Christ in my cancer.

The challenge to hold my ambitions lightly: together with the challenge of living in uncertainty, unable to make long term plans. Do I have months left or years? How much energy will I have at any given time? And I live with the bewilderment of seeing younger friends die earlier, go ahead of me.

The challenge to maintain a wide perspective, focused on God and others. The lockdowns of covid and of cancer blurred together for me, and it was easy to let my view diminish to the small world I inhabited. This is especially as discomfort and disability increase: pain tends to preoccupy our consciousness.

Familiar disciplines, daily prayer apps prayed with family, become an important part of maintaining perspective. It's been good to immerse myself daily

in the Psalms, a discipline of the church from ancient times. Meditating on/memorising scriptures is a gift especially when I haven't capacity for much more. The challenge is not to let those slip when I am strong enough to engage in other projects.

There are also new opportunities. All time and energy becomes more than ever a gift from God. For me, this has included the unexpected gift of more years than I thought I had – time to spend with family and loved ones, time to work on projects.

A focus of the fourth age is equipping and raising up others. The need to hand over is expedited by the prospect of imminent decline and death, and so we get the joy of seeing others take up the baton from us and run with it as God has gifted them to do.

Having to let other things go and retire from teaching, has given me the opportunity to do more writing in the last few years. As well as journal articles, it's been good to work on a book that had been simmering at the back of my mind and my computer files for over a decade, and pursue it through to final publication and launch. I'm thankful for the gift of all those who supported me, for wise editors, illustrators, and all who joined in the celebration of its launch. It has been a blessing to receive the generosity of so many in community.

As Christians we are called to live lives characterised by gratitude. The more helpless I get and dependent on others the more I am thankful for God's care and love shown through the prayers, care, medical expertise and wisdom of people.

Moyra Dale spent over two decades in the Middle East working in education and ethnography. She has taught courses in Islam and cross cultural anthropology in Australia and the USA. She was on the staff of St Andrews Hall for many years. She is married to Dale and has adult children. *Islam and Women: Hagar's Inheritance* was published recently and is available through Regnum Press.

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self

CARL TRUEMAN
WHEATON: CROSSWAY, 2020
REVIEWED BY RHYS BEZZANT

I don't often say it, but this book was so good I read it once then listened to it as an audiobook! Carl Trueman, an Englishman teaching in the US, has written an extraordinary overview of the last three hundred years of Western culture, to help explain how the sexual revolution came to pass, and how transgenderism can be understood philosophically within that story. I am a sucker for grand vistas when they help me to investigate the minutiae of an event, and that he admirably achieves. The heart of the book is an evaluation of Rousseau as the fountainhead of modern views of the self, but he goes on to explain how the great Romantic poets Wordsworth, Shelley, and Blake reinforce the subjective turn, with Marx, Darwin and Nietzsche rendering the subjective a political force. All that is then needed is the contribution of Freud to sexualise the political. This layering of cultural sediments is a fine example of intellectual history, explaining where great thinkers got their ideas from, how they reshaped those ideas given their own historical moment, and how they passed them on. Ideas matter, for it is not just our material environment that impacts who we are.

Trueman takes up the language of "expressive individualism" to capture the goal of the modern search for identity, with questions of sexuality a case study. So many in the West work with a default position, like Rousseau the French educationalist, that culture is corrupting, so we long for the "state of nature," in which we were free to express ourselves without the shackles of social expectations. The great Romantic poets worked initially within this mimetic frame of mind, which assumed that meaning was given to us (rather than created by us) and discovered through art. This was in time overturned, as philosophers and poets came to understand that what we had previously accepted as universal and static was actually the dynamic and local product of oppressive historical forces, from which we needed liberation. Christianity was regarded not as offering freedom, but something from which we needed to be freed! As Shelley wrote, "Religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude" (p155).

Expressive individualism, in Trueman's estimation, therefore doesn't assume a worldview but instead a social imaginary, as Charles Taylor the Canadian philosopher has argued. We create our world and create ourselves within it. We become plastic people, who find meaning in self-expression: "Freedom for Nietzsche is freedom from essentialism and for self-creation" (p174). If Marx believed we need a new social self-awareness, if Freud believed we should be open to deep sexual motivations that lurk just beyond our recognition, and if Darwin undermined an exalted and purposeful role for human beings in history, then together they set up profoundly modern ways of grasping what a human being is. Better to begin within ourselves, and from there to invent our own identity according to our own lights. Though with any model for understanding what it means to be human there are philosophical challenges, in this model there is a new danger: "Where once oppression was seen in terms of economic realities (eg poverty, lack of property) or legal categories (eg slavery, lack of freedom), now the matter is more subtle because it relates to issues of psychology and self-consciousness. The political sphere is internalized and subjectivized" (p250). Learning to express ourselves as individuals has a deep pre-history.

Set within the development of expressive individualism, and against the backdrop of longer and larger philosophical shifts in the West, Trueman ultimately wants to explain how a concept like transgenderism makes eminent sense to our contemporaries though it made no sense to his own grandfather. This change within a generation is not to be explained by referring to the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s alone! He sets all these particular concerns (and others!) within the sociological analysis of Philip

Rieff, who has generated categories like "the triumph of the therapeutic" or "the anticulture," and the ethical reflections of Alasdair MacIntyre, who has argued that in the modern world truth claims are more like "expressions of emotional preference" (p26). Trueman's breadth of reading gives great depth to his analysis, even if along the way we might want him to explain or qualify a point further.

This book has won notable awards, for its prose is lucid and its argument coherent, as it tries to guide Christians through a short course in intellectual history and an outline of a way of understanding the process of secularisation. His concluding reflections may at points highlight the weakness of a historian trying to be a prophet, but he is surely right when he concludes: "If sacred or metaphysical order is necessary for cultures to remain stable and coherent, then we currently face an indefinite future of flux, instability, and incoherence." (p394). I recommend the book to readers who want to find ways to understand the pressure points in contemporary culture.

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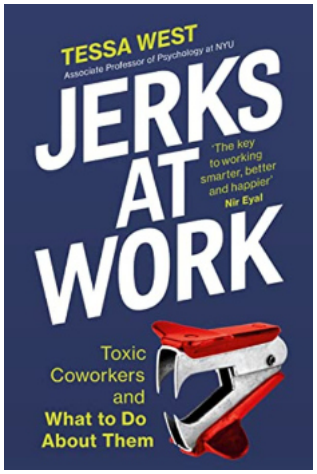


Jerks at Work: Toxic Coworkers and what to do about them

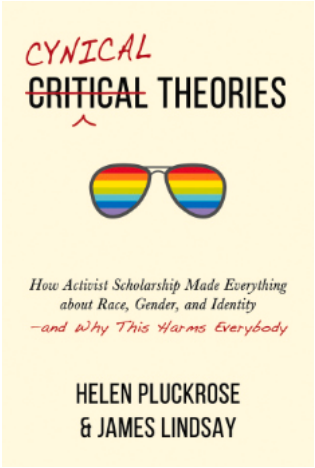
JESS WEST
WHEATON: CROSSWAY, 2020
REVIEWED BY RHYS BEZZANT, RIDLEY COLLEGE

This recently published book offers excellent advice to church leaders. It's great to see a non Christian writer who recognises the impact of sin, both on the way we lead and on the behaviours of others. You can substitute 'parishioner' here for 'co-worker' and find good advice on how to deal with challenging people who sap our time and emotional energy. As a social psychologist West categorises different kinds of toxic co-workers (the kiss up/kick downer, the free rider and the gaslighter, to name a few) and describes how best to engage with each of them.

Tim Foster is the Vice Principal of Ridley College and the Director of the Ridley Centre for Leadership

Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity — and Why This Harms Everybody

BY HELEN PLUCKROSE AND JAMES LINDSAY, 2020. REVIEWED BY TIM HORMAN



Helen Pluckrose, editor of Aero magazine, and James Lindsay, a mathematician and cultural critic, have written *Cynical Theories* to explain how Critical Theory has become a driving force of the contemporary culture wars, and to propose a "philosophically *liberal* way to counter its manifestations in scholarship, activism, and everyday life." Their book traces the evolution of postmodern and post-structuralist theory over the last 50 years, showing how these theories have moved beyond the academy and into popular culture, particularly the modern Social Justice Movement. *Cynical Theories* is a story about how the "despair and nihilism" of postmodernism found confidence, which then developed into the sort of radical conviction "normally associated with religious adherence."

The story, as Pluckrose and Lindsay tell it, begins with the 'postmodern turn' of the late 1960's. Postmodern and post-structuralist academics such as Jean Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault, began to deconstruct what the authors call the "old religions" of human thought, which included traditional religious faiths like Christianity, secular ideologies like Marxism, and "cohesive modern systems, such as scientific approaches to knowledge, philosophical liberalism, and the concept of progress." Early postmodern theory achieved this by questioning the capacity of language to produce meaning, by rejecting the legitimacy of metanarratives, and emphasising the endless deferral of truth or objectivity, since 'truth' is merely the socially constructed effect of language games. Such ideas were effective at dismantling those 'old' modes of thought, but not particularly useful for reconstructive social change.

However, the work of Michel Foucault was instrumental in the shift from Postmodernism to Critical Theory, because he recognised the "political implications" of postmodern theory and particularly how those addressed questions of unjust power-relations in society. Foucault's groundwork has become what the authors call *applied Postmodernism*, or Critical Theory. *Critical*, so-called, because it is concerned with "revealing hidden biases, underexamined assumptions, and unearthing the dynamics of power and privilege in society and discourses." Proponents of Critical Theory, say Pluckrose and Lindsay, "are obsessed with power, language, knowledge, and the relationships between them." The authors trace the application of these dynamics through a range of academic disciplines: post-colonial studies, queer theory, feminism, gender studies, critical race theory, disability and fat studies.

As Critical Theory has been applied to questions of societal injustice, it has morphed into the contemporary Social Justice movement that wants to "interpret the world through a lens that detects power dynamics in every interaction and utterance... even when they aren't obvious or *real*." Under this rubric, belonging to certain identity groups designated by race, sex, gender, sexuality, and many others, determine either one's complicity in injustice or experience of marginalisation and discrimination. Furthermore, these power dynamics are impossible to escape, since all knowledge, including identity, are social constructs that function to protect and advance the interests of the privileged. The Social Justice movement thus "centres on social and cultural grievances and aims to make everything a zero-sum political struggle."

According to Pluckrose and Lindsay, the intention behind all this is to initiate an ideological revolution that will lead to a *cynical* and *radical re-ordering of society*. *Cynical* because Critical Theory and the Social Justice movement it has spawned seek "...remaking society according to their moral vision", all the while quoting

the postmodern theorists, who reject the idea that objective knowledge is obtainable. In other words, Critical Theory operates on the same unjust power-relations as those "old religions" it critiques, and is itself *like* a religion because it is *prescriptive* rather than *descriptive* – it puts the 'moral' cart before the 'empirical' horse. This means it cannot be easily argued against, at least, not by empirical or 'western' modes of knowledge, since those are simply viewed as tools to ensure power remains entrenched in (for example) white/male/heteronormative discourses.

Pluckrose and Lindsay write that "...in the face of this it has become increasingly difficult, and even dangerous" to raise objections to these "divisive and constraining identity politics. Since objections to irrationalism and illiberalism are often misunderstood or misrepresented as opposition to *genuine social justice*." This is perhaps the key point that Pluckrose and Lindsay make in their book, that a rejection of Critical Theory is not a rejection of the need for social justice *per se*, but rather, a rejection of Critical Theory as a helpful means by which to achieve it. In fact, the authors argue that Critical Theory "allots social significance to racial categories, which inflames racism. It attempts to depict categories of sex, gender, and sexuality as mere social constructions, which undermines the fact that people often accept sexual minorities because they recognize that sexual expression varies naturally." In other words, attempts to advance social justice by means of Critical Theory, end up making the situation much worse and this harms everyone.

Instead, the authors believe that the best means to achieve ongoing advances in social justice is to strengthen secular philosophical liberalism and the importance of "empirical and rational concepts of knowledge." In their view, secular philosophical and political liberalism works because, since the Enlightenment, it has provided an arena for the marketplace of ideas to be debated openly, leading to such developments as universal human rights, legal equality for all adult citizens, freedom of expression and religion, and the separation of church and state. This has created, the authors argue, the most diverse, equitable, and least discriminatory culture in human history. Secular liberalism, "despite its shortcomings, is simply better for humans. It is astonishing that over the same twenty- year period (1960–1980) during which women gained access to contraception and equal pay for equal work, racial and sexual discrimination in employment and other areas became illegal, and homosexuality was decriminalized, the postmodernists emerged and declared that it was time to stop believing in liberalism, science, reason, and the myth of progress."

Cynical Theories is an extremely well-researched yet accessible book, that provides a clear and compelling overview of Postmodern thought and the importance of secular liberalism as a counter to the excesses of the Social Justice movement. The concluding section is particularly helpful, as it suggests a practical framework for doing "fair battle" with Social Justice ideologies when engaging with real-world issues of injustice, be it racism, sexism, or homophobia. One minor critique is that *Cynical Theories* does not address from where the Enlightenment values the authors believe are so important to liberal democracies, have emerged. They are largely taken as given, and this seems to miss a crucial question: why are those values under threat of being supplanted, if they were so effective? As a Christian, the answer seems obvious: many of those Enlightenment values themselves rest upon the foundation of the gospel, without which they cannot be sustained. This is not a Christian book, however, so putting that critique aside there is much in *Cynical Theories* that can nevertheless help Christians to both understand the cultural landscape we are in, and be equipped to offer a thoughtful response to Critical Theory when we encounter it.

Tim Horman is Senior Pastor of One Community Church of Christ in Blackburn, Victoria. He was previously an Assistant Minister in the St Hilary's Network and is a graduate of Regent College.

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