

About this Journal

Updated Editorial Board

as at May 2021

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Professor Philip Hughes- CRA board representative; Chair of Ethics Committee, Alphacrucis College.

Dr David Jakobsen - Assistant Professor at Aalborg University working on a postdoctoral project on The Primacy of Tense: A.N. Prior then and now, as part of research in the history and metaphysics of time and tense logic.

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EDITORIAL

Journal of Contemporary Ministry Issue 5 June, 2021

Dear Readers

It's been a few years since the last issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Ministry*. There are good reasons for this hiatus but we are back "with a vengeance."

The journal was initially begun under the auspices of Harvest Bible College. However, at the end of 2017, Harvest entered into a merger with Alphacrucis College and everything from Harvest had to be reconsidered. In the end, Alphacrucis had no space for this journal in addition to *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* and the visions of the two journals were too different for a merger to work. For a time, it looked like this journal would cease. But several of us (especially Professor Philip Hughes) resisted such a conclusion. Negotiations began with the Christian Research Association (CRA) and this journal now has a bright new future under the oversight of CRA but still with its own distinctive vision and identity.

This new space for the *Journal of Contemporary Ministry* has several advantages. It broadens the potential audience and reach of the journal since CRA is an ecumenical ministry. This also means a greater breadth of scholarship being exposed to view. It frees up contributors from any false fears about denominational loyalties or bias. It also allows us to "dream again" about what such a journal as this can achieve.

Our goal is to stimulate discussion about contemporary Christian ministry in the broadest sense of that term, that is, any current activity of Christians with the goal of helping other Christians or the broader community. Obviously, we are particularly interested in "contemporary" forms of ministry adapted to the current situation in Australia and other places but, as this issue exemplifies, such discussion topics can be highly diverse. However, such a conversation is imperative when new forms of ministry are emerging everywhere, sometimes making great contributions to Christian progress.

Resurrecting a journal after a few years of silence is not an easy task so I want to thank all those who helped make this possible, including the board of CRA and the new editorial team of Professor Philip Hughes, Ashley Manly (journal manager), Stephen Parker (book review editor), and Stephen Reid (CRA). I also want to acknowledge the

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help of the previous journal manager, Kerrie Stevens, who contributed the list of recent theses and helped transition to this new arrangement, and the ongoing support of our Editorial Board, which includes a wide range of scholars from all over the world, some of whom have supported this journal from the start (you can read the list of current members on the website). I am continuing, at least for a season, as the editor.

The new look journal still includes “double blind” peer-reviewed articles, research notes, book reviews and a list of recent theses in the field of contemporary ministry. We intended to include a pastoral reflection and an outstanding student essay, but this was unable to be achieved in this issue. If you are a pastor with a good reflection to share about one or more aspects of your ministry experience, please consider submitting it to us. If you are studying at post-graduate level in a field related to contemporary ministry and gained a very high mark in a recent essay, you might like to submit that for potential publication here.

I am excited to commend the contents of this Issue 5 to you.

The five peer-reviewed articles are highly relevant given the state of contemporary ministry around the world, especially (but not only) in Pentecostal and charismatic streams. It's well known that these are the fastest growing forms of Christianity around the globe and even here in Australia (and much of the western world) Pentecostal churches like the Australian Christian Churches and Hillsong are still growing, though much less dramatically than in the 1980s and 1990s. But sympathetic (and unsympathetic) observers know also that all is not well in these streams. Our first two articles expose two major issues with Pentecostal and charismatic churches which are found well beyond the territory that the articles focus on.

“Why Gen Y are leaving Pentecostal churches” is written by **Dr Mark Bohr**, the Director of The Emerging Church (Australia) and Emerging Ministries (Uganda) and **Professor Philip Hughes**, a Research Fellow with Alphacrucis College and ordained minister of the Uniting church in Australia, who for more than thirty years was the senior research officer with the Christian Research Association. It exposes the problem that, while many people are joining Pentecostal churches, a large number are also leaving them for other churches or even for a post-Christian life. The article explores several kinds of research into the issues especially related to so-called “Gen Y” and draws specifically on Bohr's Australian research project to analyse why this is

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happening. My own experience aligns with what the article concludes and it is sobering reading.

Perhaps the fastest growth in Christianity generally, and Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity in particular, is happening in sub-Saharan Africa. Building on the sacrificial service of western missionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, African-led Pentecostal/charismatic churches have exploded in size in nearly every African country, partly because of their unique ability to speak into the African worldview and spirituality. One of the major features of this stream has been leadership by charismatic prophets. Often such leadership is very beneficial in terms of helping Africans respond to, and manage, their struggles with poverty, illness and other daily issues. Such prophets have been very skillful at speaking into their people's mindset and encouraging faith, leading to breakthroughs for their benefit. But as Isaac Boaheng points out in his article on **prophetism in Ghana**, there is a dark side to this kind of ministry and discernment is called for by African Christians concerned about true Christian doctrine and Christian growth to maturity. While this issue is perhaps starkest in Africa, it affects contemporary Christian churches all over the world and therefore this article has broad application. The author, **Isaac Boaheng**, is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church Ghana, a part-time Biblical Hebrew and Old Testament lecturer at Christian Service University College, Sunyani Campus, Ghana, and a research fellow at the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies, University of the Free State, South Africa.

The other articles are less specific to one form of contemporary Christianity and more oriented to the individual help ministers and other Christians can offer to believers and the world at large.

In a world marked by increasing exposure of child abuse and violence against women (current investigations in Australia's parliament are getting a lot attention as I write), an underlying question relates to **forgiveness**. When and how (and why) can victims of abuse forgive those who have violated them? Too often in the past, pastors sent women back into abusive situations, under the guise of submission to their husbands, without attempting to bring those husbands to account and challenge them to change. Forgiveness does not equate to reconciliation or condoning cruel and sinful behaviour. But unforgiveness equally eats away at the victim's own internal life. Edwards and Lau's article seeks to find theoretical and practical answers for those trying to help victims find a path to peace. **Dr Tom Edwards** has been a Lecturer at Monash University in the School of Psychological Sciences, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at

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Eastern College Australia, Director of Research at Eastern College Australia and Senior Counsellor at LifeCare (Crossway Baptist Church). He is also the Chair of the Christian Research Association and operates a small consultancy with a colleague which seeks to use virtue principles to enhance personal, organisational and community success.

Amy Lau: Is a highly qualified and experienced counsellor practicing at LifeCare (Crossway Baptist Church). Her particular interests are working with children in the context of play therapy, sand-tray work and other projective therapies.

The final two peer-reviewed articles address aspects of Christian leadership and training leaders. One of the common ways of developing leaders is through a process of **mentoring**, either one-to-one or in small groups. The article by Parker and Brailey investigates some specific ways of mentoring young adults and evaluates them with a view to assessing the needed elements of effective mentoring. **Geoff Brailey** is a Social Researcher with McCrindle Research and Youth and Discipleship Pastor at C3 Church Rouse Hill, NSW. **Dr Stephen Parker** is the Academic Coursework Manager at the Australian College of Ministries and the author of *The Heart of an Elder*. He has previously served as State Youth Director for the Churches of Christ in Queensland and as an Associate Minister for Youth and Children at Springwood Church of Christ in Brisbane.

Dr Nathan Polley is a professional educator and consultant in education leadership and management, corporate training and project management with experience across Australia, Aotearoa-New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Egypt and Cambodia. His article investigates a specific leadership development program in Aotearoa New Zealand which incorporates the theology of **servant leadership with specific Maori cultural elements**. This is a distinctive approach which has potential application in other parts of the world, based on the reality that every culture has different ideas about leadership that can intersect with biblical Christian theology fruitfully.

All of these articles reveal the importance of good leadership in Christian churches and other organisations. Perhaps others may like to add to this conversation in future issues of the Journal. The next issue (Issue 7, for reasons given below) is already filling up with new articles but there is room for some more, especially from women, who are unrepresented in this issue (my only regret in commending it to you). A woman's approach to Christian leadership, for example, would be stimulating.

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Please read the book reviews and the list of theses in this issue. Such a list is almost unique and helps readers see where the field of studies in contemporary ministry is going.

We are also excited to announce that a **special extra issue** of the Journal will be released at the end of 2021 on **Mega Churches and Worship**, flowing from a conference on that theme in 2020. The articles for this are all in process but there is space for a student essay or book reviews.

So happy reading. Be blessed

(Associate Professor) Jon K. Newton