

cascade



The circle of healing cascades towards wholeness by the power of God

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PREPARING FOR THE LATER YEARS

by Dick Farenhorst

Many people have a fear of growing old. There is even a word for it called gerontophobia. Desperate attempts by some to postpone the inevitable is manifest in the increasing desire for plastic surgery for women, and creating “bucket lists” for men, to be able to do things before they are physically limited.

Maybe it's because I'm at that age, but it seems that a lot of the small talk socially is often around retirement plans, when and how to do it. Yet God has his own plan. My wife and I had plans and then suddenly discovered that she has cancer.

I can remember my parent's generation when discussing the future, invariably added the qualifier, “God willing” ...I'll do such and such. In truth of course each life stage, whether it be singlehood, early married, empty nesting – brings with it its own challenges and trials. However, the later years have unique trials of their own, the primary one being that the prospect of death gets thought about more often.

Ecclesiastes 12 is not very encouraging, although realistic in its depiction of old age – nothing to do, our faculties wasting away. In contrast, a Jungian existentialist psychologist, James Hillman, is optimistic regarding old age and exhorts us to face these years with courage. He asks, “What's the point of aging?”. A culture focusing solely on our bodies and physiological decay misses the point, he says. It's all about character – “as character directs aging, so aging

reveals character. This is what persists and endures.” There is truth in this. Those who adjust to the later years are those who are happiest when younger, those who have character. Inactive, judgmental, anxiety filled, critical people will carry these characteristics into the later years and be miserable. Their high expectations and hopes for a sudden change in the later years, in retirement, prove disappointing.

The older years are an opportunity to grow even more in character, a Christian maturation, a process where

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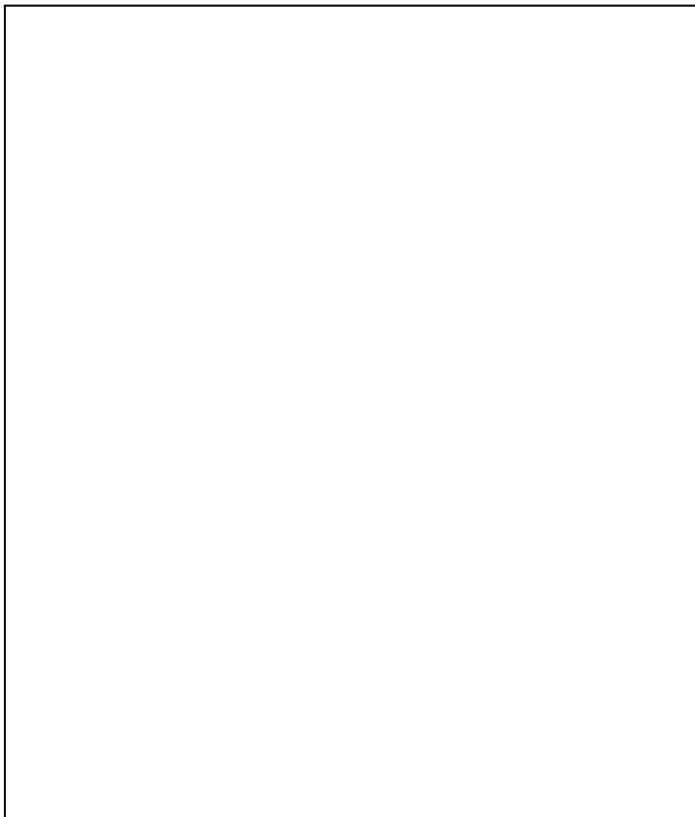
we experience God bringing us closer to what he has in mind for us as His people. For Hillman, however, death is unknowable, beyond the reach of logic or experiment, so he's not going to think about it. Christians in turn have a more comforting view, even if they have fears of death or dying, and have reassurance which gives meaning and joy to the older years. What we do in God's name, at whatever age, is not meaningless or vanity. Unlike Hillman, for Christians, how we mature and grow as his people in character is not self serving or even simply to be provided as an example for our children, but is part of God's intention for us, in bringing us closer and closer to what it truly means to be a mature Christian.



"Providing psychologically valid Christian counselling and consulting services to the whole community."



Cascade Christian Counselling is a non profit organization which relies on the generosity of the Christian community to help support its service of offering counselling to all income levels. 2011 has been **very difficult financially** for Cascade and in order for us to **meet our expenses** we are asking the Christian community to surround us with their prayers and financial support.



A small note:
That due to Dick Farenhorst's wife having cancer and her needed care, Dr. Farenhorst will only be available to see clients half time until further notice.

Cascade Christian Counselling Association

#201 – 14980 – 104th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R 1M9

SURREY: Phone 604-585-1411 Fax 604-585-1413 ABBOTSFORD: 604-854-5413 TOLL FREE: 1-877-585-1411
www.cascadechristiancounselling.com info@cascadechristiancounselling.com