EDITORIAL

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Guest Editor

Just a tree.

Its significance in 'the killing fields' however, was sobering. The notice at Choeung Ek stated its historic inhumane use. In an orchard Chinese burial ground, 15 km outside of Phnom Penh, the Chankiri Tree was brutally used to kill children, swinging them by their legs and smashing their heads against the trunk. Some soldiers carried out executions laughing, not wishing to convey any suggestion of sympathy that could incriminate them. Adult execution was by poisoning, bashing with digging tools or pointed bamboo sticks, methods designed to save ammunition. A Buddhist stupa containing 5,000 skulls is a sobering but confronting genocide memorial. Prior internment and interrogation, under extreme torture, occurred at Security Prison 21 (S–21), a former high school in Phnom Penh, and resulted from being accused of "pre-revolutionary lifestyles", including being lazy intellectuals (professors and teachers), in contact with foreigners through free market practices, or involvement with government agencies, missionaries, or NGOs. Yale researchers (Genocide Studies Program, 2010) estimate that in enforcing an 'agrarian' culture, 20% of the population died:

> The Khmer Rouge regime headed by Pol Pot combined extremist ideology with ethnic animosity and a diabolical disregard for human life to produce repression, misery, and murder on a massive scale. (para. 1)

Commentators acknowledge the 'gut-wrenching' experience for an international visitor, but question the impact of memorials on Cambodians due to government ambivalence to forming a cultural memory, reconciliation and adjudicated justice.

Choosing to be confronted by this evidence in July 2010 caused personal reflection on why viewing the sites, considering such brutality and suffering, seeing the disbelief and despair in the photographic record of the victims held in S–21, could be a beneficial experience. Concurrently, news revealed that "Duch", the director of S–21, previously a mathematics teacher in the high school, was on trial admitting his supervisory role and apologising to the relatives of victims, yet later making an appeal against personal responsibility. Duch, using aliases, went 'missing' for 20 years and had become a Christian prior to discovery by an Irish journalist and his arrest.

UN sponsored judicial investigations in Cambodia have begun to address the aching hearts of the nation, yet relatives of victims are unable to approve any graciousness in sentencing.

While editing *TEACH*, musing on how a teacher could behave in this way shaped my responses to articles. There was resonance with Bryan Cowling's "The Revolutions We Need to Have", acknowledging eight changes needed, especially in Christian schools, to move from promoting national productivity, to systemic changes for the development of sound character in each person. Engagement with Faull's critical assessment of the proposed National Curriculum, invited considered reaction to preserve the ethos of schooling.

How should I react to abuse within my culture? Kilgour, advocates being proactive in addressing child abuse as the "public health problem of the decade" and collaborates with Watson (author of *Finding David*, see the book reviews) in researching school-based mentoring as a preventive and restorative interaction. School roles, strategies and suitable resources could protect Internet users as clarified by Chadwick and Knight. Forming supportive attachments in early school experiences emerges from Clarke's case study, as some compensation for parental inadequacy.

Can school life be better? Ludlow justifies play in the early establishment of essential 21st century skills. Skrzypaszek commends "The Higher View of Education", an incarnational ministry suited to post-moderns, preparing students for service extending through eternity. Solomon's "rear-vision" is used by Rieger to illustrate a research methodology, but also conveys culminative 'wisdom'.

Protection from 'cultural' genocide needs the 'caring' mission and 'restorative' ministry of Christian teachers. Participation needs commitment to revolutionary behaviour motivated by recall of the Calvary killing field?

Remember the tree. TEACH

"Protection from 'cultural' genocide needs the 'caring' mission and 'restorative' ministry of Christian teachers"

References

Genocide Studies Program. (2010). The Cambodian genocide program. MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University. Retrieved 11 October 2010 from http://www.yale.edu/cgp/



[Photography: Glenys Perry]

[Photography: Joshua Moses, Sydney Adventist College]