

EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Popularly acclaimed Matt Haig, author of *Reasons to Stay Alive*, found motivation from his personal experience of depression to write another book *Notes on a Nervous Planet* (Haig, 2018). In premonition he asked:

Couldn't aspects of how we live in the modern world be responsible for how we *feel* in the modern world?

Not just in terms of the *stuff* of modern life, but its values too. The values that cause us to want more than we have. To worship work above play. To compare the worst bits of ourselves to the best bits of other people. To feel like we always lack something. (p. 8)

On the fly leaf of that book, the publicists ask, "How do we stay human in a technological world? How do we feel happy when we are encouraged to be anxious."

Haig in a very personalised narrative engenders the 'sharks' of modern lifestyles and asserts "You're gonna need a bigger boat" (citing Captain Brody in *Jaws*, Brown, Zanuck & Spielberg, 1975). His work addresses time, overwork, anxiety shocking news, priorities, sleep, reality and wanting, then moves to engage a positive future perspective guided by 'i-managing' *psychograms*, an innovative unit for psychological weight (p. 209). Yet, presumably to meet a populist audience, the values that might create guilt, an awareness of right and wrong, and how to deal with guilt, are couched in seemingly human(ist) responses (pp. 288, 289). He does refer to values and that "we always lack something" but does not introduce the supernatural.

An even 'bigger boat' then is needed. A more effective salvation ark. One including both the 'sin storm' and the 'salvation rescue' planned from outside humanity. The perspective of a Christian, shared through schooling, includes that supporting "good news" providing certainty, enabling an assured God-confident awareness of the potential of living an abundant life. A personal wellbeing.

Multiple authors in this TEACH issue sense this lack of visioning of the 'bigger boat' to meet society's needs. Brown recounts a potential response to schools being "asked to shoulder an increasingly complex set of social responsibilities" (p. 4) within the initiation of an Invictus program within schools. Graiege recognises the inadequacy in the preparation of *The Graduate Standards*, AITSL defined 'classroom ready' teacher, in missing a view that "foregrounds God's good, creational, covenantal, and holy character as key elements defining any

teacher" (p. 20). Reflecting faith-based school principals' concerns about reliably gaining new staff of 'good fit' (Baker, 2019, p. 3), Rieger (p. 42) evaluates initial teacher education, clinical training models, suited to meeting the needs of a school claiming special character.

Contemplating the practice of Christian educators, particularly in the early school years, Thompson and Beamish (p. 49) question the suitability of "no touch policies" that ignore the positive impacts on wellbeing of appropriate touch. They suggest a community conversation about establishing more informed differentiated policies, even with cognisance of a Royal Commission review of institutional abuse, that can enhance school experience.

Recent social changes, reflecting changed popularity of beliefs, led Fyson (p. 8) to warn teachers of expressions of human value that create divisive cultures of new caste-isms. Teachers are cautioned to be aware of attitudes increasingly isolating those with Bible based beliefs, and to prepare responses for students resolving challenges to national cohesion.

Young adults considering the consequences of their school's response to an earthquake crisis (Pratt, Fitzsimmons and Christian, p. 22) regret they were not supported optimally. As today's educators we accept the challenge to build an even "better boat". **TEACH**

References

- Baker, J. (2019, November 23). Private schools to train their own teachers with new classroom cadetship. *Sydney Morning Herald*.
- Brown, D., Zanuck, R. D. (Producers), & Spielberg, S. (Director). (1975). *Jaws* [Motion Picture]. USA: Universal Studios
- Haig, M. (2018). *Notes on a nervous planet*. Edinburgh, UK: Canongate Books.



“
teachers in the
21st Century
are confronted
with
mental and
behavioural
disorders that
now account
for about
one-third of
the world's
disability due
to all ill-health
”

[Photography:
Glenys Perry]