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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Graeme Perry

Death has recently dominated our daily commentary. Our community, from before Christmas, and then into 2015, has been consumed by one constant preoccupying theme, “death”.

Predictably, this year, the centenary of the Gallipoli invasion, would honour the sacrifices on the peninsula - 26,111 casualties including 8,141 deaths. Further, ANZAC day reminded us, that now, all the participants have died. The print, film and electronic media, including TV specials, have extended war journalism into potentially sobering entertainment such as *The Water Diviner* (2015). A few bent, sallow faced ninety year old veterans of more recent wars, now authenticate the battles and victories, registering their ‘lest we forget’ memories, accentuating their fortune in escaping death, even as ‘returned men.’

Yet before this focus on developing the ANZAC legend and WWI heroism, it had begun. Death was highlighted within an already conflicted community discussion of ISIS, beheadings and other atrocities, that included ‘new’ labels - ‘death cult’ and ‘radicalisation’. The tragedy of the Lindt Café was displayed in every home. In the background, the media amplified the stuttering legal process of the Bali Nine ringleaders, pressuring a communal ache, progressing to the ultimate inevitability of execution. Drought dehydrated animals to their deaths. Rosie Batty, Australian of the Year, voiced reform to combat violence against women, particularly domestic violence that kills about two women every week in Australia (Osborne-Crowley, 2015).

Emerging from this discourse of death were contrary stories of life. Benaud’s “Voice of Summer” assuring wellbeing, who according to his friend Bill Laurie “never put a foot wrong ... on or off the field” (McGarry, 2015, paras. 35, 48). Noel Pearson (2015) honoured Whitlam, far beyond ‘the dismissal’. Malcolm Fraser, renowned for asserting his personal values, spontaneously eulogised by Vietnamese refugees. Evangelists Robert Schuller and Gordon Moyes, bringing hope and redemption through large ministries, as Chan and Sukumaran did in prison.

These lives suggest there is a ‘radicalisation’ that is positive, transforming for good, enhancing for life.

It was Easter, in the middle of all this depressing outcome of evil, that invited renewed perception of ‘the victory’ over death. Worship of a resurrected Christ transcends the disappointing wages of life to reignite hope and awareness of eternity.

So, within this TEACH issue authors engage in promoting a ‘right radicalisation’, a process which will

“transform you into a new person by changing the way you think” (Romans 12:2. NLT). Michael Spence, Vice Chancellor of Sydney University introduces fundamental career choices in “The tough gig: Being salt”. Given values internalisation will support making wise choices, Watts, Christian and Greive share an exploratory study of Year 7 students, assessing these attributes at entry to high school. Parker, Gane and Parker claim a significant role for the school chaplain in ‘journeying’ through school, supporting students in an understanding of life and spirituality. Trim recounts Gwen Harwood’s personal succinct poetic perceptions, including a confession she “see[s] the God who goes with me,” and suggests her work will engage youth in considering these abstractions. To address a secular mindset, Miller and Krause show how a breakfast club subtly initiates “complementary learning” across a low SES community through a partnership of enterprises, including church volunteers.

For all teachers, Emma King’s shared “excursion through heart space”, the “Ah Ha!” moment during professional experience placement when “children spoke about deaths” and “I discover the real purpose of teaching”, will prompt your reflection. As will the life of William ‘Fighting Mac’ McKenzie.

Can you be radicalised too? **TEACH**

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[Photography: Nikolai Agafonov]