

Richard Carter
In Search of the Lost
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The sub-title of this book is, 'The death and life of seven peacemakers of the Melanesian Brotherhood'; the author went as tutor and chaplain to the Brothers, eventually becoming a Brother himself.

I loved this book - I loved its honesty and vulnerability and strength. Much of it describes the circumstances leading to the brutal murders of seven Brothers, after their capture and prolonged torture by Harold Keke, the leader of one of the warring factions in Melanesia.

It is based on Carter's diaries which he kept through this harrowing time. Parts are difficult to read as he does not hold back on the graphic details of torture - not that these are in any way gratuitous. It has all the more impact for being stark and factual. The background to the conflict is explained clearly, especially the reasons why the Brothers had become involved with the process of disarmament, at the risk of being seen as manipulated by the political and judicial systems.

After the seven murders, Carter describes very movingly and with great eloquence how the Brotherhood began to come to terms with the deaths and to work that terrible, traumatic experience into the fabric of their lives, both as individuals and as a community. I got the impression that his reason for writing this book wasn't merely to document the tragic martyrdom of seven of his Brothers, but to make known to the world how healing has happened, mediated by the gospel of Jesus Christ - and what a healing.

The book suffers a little from some poor editing. Carter seemingly quotes extensively from his diary, but has very obviously rewritten bits of it and added to it in hindsight. It would have been clearer if he had left his diary as it was and not interleaved it with his later thoughts and reflections. But this is a minor quibble. To quote Carter, "...if we have faith, even a crucifixion can become the means to life."

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