

# Middle East surprise

THE MIDDLE EAST has often enough defied human logic.

In ancient Iran the palace servant Hezekiah received help from a Gentile emperor to restore the Jews' heritage.

On the road to Damascus Saul the persecutor experienced Christ's conquest of his will.

Later the Muslim, Saladin, set an example of Christian charity to European Crusaders.

Confounding the experts by the greatest paradox of all, God placed a baby in backstreet Bethlehem to show His redeeming power to the world.

The struggle in the Middle East today is on three levels. First is the bid for a vital oil route by the powers of East and West. Second is the rival nationalisms of the area. But underlying these two conflicts, is the more basic ideological one. It is between those who practise God's forgiveness and those who would obliterate forgiveness in favour of a perpetual dialectic of hate. That conflict goes through every country.

## Sadat's visit

Sadat's astonishing visit to Jerusalem has been felt by many to be divinely inspired. David Holden of *The Sunday Times*, who was tragically killed in Cairo last week, described his approach as 'reminiscent of the moral re-armers'. Sadat in fact said to the Knesset, 'I come to you today on two firm feet, so we can build a new life, so we can establish peace for all of us on this land, the land of God—all of us, Muslims, Christians and Jews alike—and so we can worship God, one God, whose teachings and commandments are love, honesty, purity and peace.' He described peace in its essence as 'a great struggle against all lusts and ambitions'.

A response to this call is desired from many capital cities. Yet the response needs to be from all of us. For the Middle East is the crucible of the whole world's hopes and heartache.

In Deuteronomy, Chapter 30, are laid down the conditions for any nation's survival. Life and death, blessing or cursing, depend on whether nations love God enough to obey His voice.

This is the Christmas choice which the Middle East dramatises for us and our nation.

PETER EVERINGTON



## A joyful Christmas to all our readers

**WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS, MAN?**



by  
**Geoffrey Gain**

*What do you want for Christmas, man?  
Heigh-ho the Holly!  
You can have whatever you choose:  
Exotic goodies to jazz up a Jolly?  
They're here in Santa's van;  
Food and fags and unlimited booze,  
And pills to stave off melancholy  
In case you should find you've a bill to pay  
As a fee for folly.  
Who cares? Live it up more and more,  
And there's always a final binge in store  
On New Year's Day....  
(But Oh, the sky looks awful grey).*

*Some folks, of course, would much prefer  
Gifts of a different kind—  
People of culture, like you, Sir  
And Madam—pleasures of the mind.  
Escapist? Sure, but relaxation.  
Off-beat? Maybe, but how absurd—  
Your tastes are not those of the herd,  
You are the cream of civilisation.  
No call for you to give a reason  
For private thrills in the Festive Season....  
(But an inner voice is jeering, hark,  
'You are only whistling in the dark').*

*Lord, when on Christmas Day I leap,  
Like a kid excited,  
To rouse the house from slumber deep  
With shouts delighted,  
One gift be mine above all gifts  
That bring me pleasure:  
The boon of a grateful heart that lifts  
To you its treasure.  
You gave Yourself to meet my need,  
No thought of cost;  
May I then give myself indeed  
For a world that's lost.*

# NEW WORLD NEWS

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# The gift of receiving

by Naomi Echlin,  
an Australian nurse

MOST OF US have been brought up on the adage: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Yet I find it difficult to be on the receiving end, in spite of the obvious fact that in every act of giving there has to be an act of receiving.

Jesus was a good receiver. With grace he received little children, insatiable crowds, anointment with spikenard. He responded to the call of the lost, accepted His humble parentage, His trade and His Cross-ward destiny.

Almost without question I expect God to receive my endless petitions, praises—hopefully, eventually my soul. He encourages us to receive. 'Ask and you shall receive.' On the whole I accept His power, plan and direction;

and with wonderment the Eucharist.

It's further down the line that demand comes in to sully the pool. I elect to decide what I think will satisfy me, on my terms, in my way and in my time. Demand cuts across the very fabric of other people's generous giving. How easy it is, while appreciating the 99 letters that arrive in the post, to niggle over the one that doesn't come; and while rejoicing over the nine visitors who generously call, to gripe over the one who fails to turn up. It is crying to the moon to demand from people the satisfaction that God alone can give.

Seven years ago God said to me, 'You have no rights and no dues. I will give you exactly what you need. No more and no less. With that be satisfied.'

It seems such a pity to wait for illness and advanced years to begin to learn the art of being in need, and the grace of undemanding receiving on other people's terms.

Pride misleads me into thinking I'm self-sufficient. It may appear commendable to fight a lone and silent battle in the face of adversity, oblivious to the disconcerting effect on those around. Belatedly I'm finding it's far more sensible to express specific need at the time and just ask for help. Faith grows all round, and to God goes the glory.

In order to receive, there does need to be a vacuum. That insufferably boring condition, a self-engrossed heart, is so stuffed up there's no cranny for intake. But a heart at leisure from itself is fully available for Jesus and the whole wide world, with zestful creativity.

There is a direct ratio between commitment and need. A pint-sized commitment is self-managing. God's commitment to remake the world calls for the acceptance of the whole gamut of His almighty power, plus the fullest need of one's colleagues.

I regret my past self-important activism that provided no time for unhurried listening, with courteous respect, to the offers of help and advice from those who were older and less strong, and to whom wanting to give must have meant so much. We do need to claim the three-fold grace of humility, compassion and generosity of heart in order to develop the three-fold requirement of being a good receiver—to listen, encourage and respect.

And just one word on giving. While material gifts have their place, possibly the most precious gift is the passing on of the bounteous treasure-trove of God's unfolding truths.

'Where meek souls will receive Him, still  
The dear Lord enters in.'

## From a dead-end street — by Graeme Cordiner from Australia

WE HEAR of solitary confinement in the Soviet Union and during the early convict era of Australia.

But my story is one of 'voluntary solitary confinement'.

No guidelines were given me when I started adult life. I didn't understand I was supposed to have any. There were divisions in our family—to which my solution was silence. Ill-will developed into hate. I left this unsolved family situation; but still I found it convenient to blame all subsequent mistakes on it.

I entered university shy, sheltered and self-centred. I spoke of independence, but did what most others did—lived permissively and on the get. Behind my somewhat forbidding appearance I drifted from one unsure relationship to the next, searching how to be free of doubts, fears and hurt, and be free of habits that I couldn't shake off.

### Misplaced search

Travelling half the world to find answers was a misplaced search—I took my problems with me. But the physical poverty in India revealed to me my spiritual poverty; though I longed to help, the gap between good intentions and practical unselfish care was too great. Lust and self-seeking had the day.

In frustration and despair I cut myself off. It was the easy way out. I seldom spoke and went often on long walks, alone, meditating. To my mind, this was looking for 'truth'. But it only served to focus me more on myself

and it failed. When I was 21 four years after leaving high school, I had a total nervous and mental collapse. I had run away from life, from my fears. I had tried to escape and I had failed.

The return journey from a dead-end street is not easy. But you have little choice—there is only one way out. Two years followed of what seemed total darkness. I carried on because I had had an earlier touch with Moral Re-Armament and I knew that if I lived by moral standards and sought God's plan, my life would be remade. Slowly, it has been.

In high school, some of us used to argue that God wasn't real. After an experience like that you stop arguing. God is not an old man in the sky, but the very spirit that lives in and guides creation.

To be remade had a cost:

To be totally honest about my past to my family: it was not an easy life to face.

To live by absolute moral standards as the guiding stars for my life—absolute honesty, absolute love, absolute purity and absolute unselfishness.

To live with my family again where there were deep divisions.

To take responsibility—which for me meant to begin teaching, a thing I had avoided.

To turn to God in all decisions.

It was two years before a first step was established, but it has been done.

There was a cost, but there were also promises:

- Teaching would provide a passion and purpose for my life.
- The family would be rebuilt.

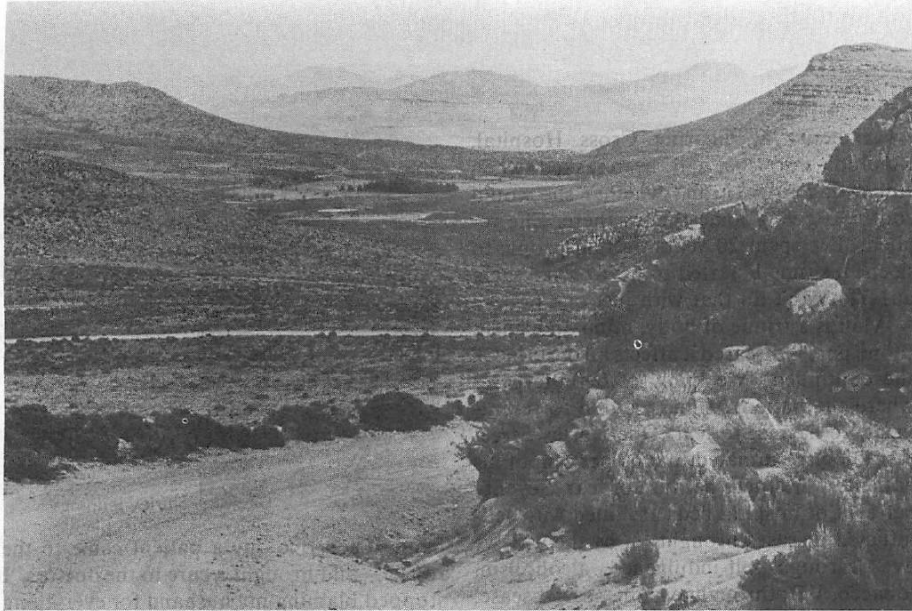
This is a story of triumph: of the power of love through total darkness, of the still small voice, of the hope that anyone from whatever background or past can become a what man.

I am grateful that I had little choice left. The choice was between despair, suicide, fear, drugs, hate, jealousy, lust, blame (and I have known them all)—or the still small voice.

**CHRISTMAS GIFT**



**This double album, 'Oratorio for our time' by Francoise Caubel and Felix Lisiecki, is available from 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ. Cost £5.95 p&p 75p.**



Northern Cape, South Africa

## No room at the inn

### Conrad Hunte

**former Vice-Captain of the West Indies Cricket Team, visited South Africa this year at the invitation of people of all races. The following extract from a speech to the South Africa Society, London, on his return was the subject of an editorial in the Johannesburg 'Rand Daily Mail' calling for the ending of racial discrimination.**

MY RICHEST EXPERIENCE in South Africa was in a small town called Colesberg in the Cape Province. In March this year with an MRA force of 25 friends from 13 countries, I travelled from Johannesburg to Cape Town, a distance of 1,200 miles. We had decided to break our journey half way at a place called Gordonville. Due to a shortage of petrol 14 of us were forced to spend a night in a hotel in Colesberg, an hour and a half short of Gordonville.

One of our party went into the hotel to find out if we were all welcome there since two of us were black. He was assured that we were. But when we arrived at the reception desk the two black receptionists took a look at Sam Pono, the other black person, and me and said, 'You cannot stay in the front with the rest. We have a room for you at the back.'

I was shocked. According to the new South African policy I, as a visitor, could have had a room with the rest in the front, but there was no question of my abandoning Sam to sleep on his own at the back. I went with him.

Even as we thanked God for safety during the day and for shelter at night I could not stop the tears. I began to cry. Through my tears God spoke to me and said, 'Did I not promise you at the start of this visit to Southern Africa that you would learn to understand the suffering Christ?' My tears dried up and I saw that He was asking me to share the life of the poor.

The poor in this and every other land face shocks daily. They are forced to turn either to Christ for healing or away from Him in despair. Where would I turn? During the day I was a comrade with my other friends seeking to bring healing where there may be hurts. By night I became a non-person, not worthy of care and cleanliness, for the toilets were filthy and the bathroom was closed for the night. There was candlelight only and the walls were cold and bare. The blankets and sheets though clean were tattered. That is the life of the poor—the human side.

On the other side, there is the triumphant Christ. He appeared to me to help me bear this experience and to understand it, and to make it an ennobling experience, not an embittered one. Then I recalled what a

## Under a southern Cross

Around this Christmas season come the rains. The blue sky-oceans of this land-locked land Darken with warring thunder-clouds: the pains Of birth and change writ vast in nature's hand. Season of flame trees, flamboyants afire; Season of cleansing rains of forgiveness, Washing out the burden of blood; buyer Of new life, the fuel of fruitfulness. Birth-season in township, farm, suburb, kraal. Christ, new, in a million hearts. Life for all.

ANDREW STALLYBRASS  
in Rhodesia

leading Afrikaner academic had said to us just two weeks before. He said, 'Our country is in need of healing. We need your help, not as critics but as prophets. The critic sees from the outside and judges. The prophet sees from the inside and weeps.'

I was given a clearer understanding of the struggle in Southern Africa and perhaps in the world. It is a spiritual struggle between good and evil. This struggle goes on in your heart and mine every day. Victory must come at this level on a big enough scale before it will come at the level of politics, economics, social structures and other important aspects of life.

Through this experience I was given a greater love for South Africa and a part in helping her find her future.

## Because of people like me

by Suzan Burrell

AS AN AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING South African presently visiting Britain, the news reports from my country have pierced like daggers through my heart. It is as if someone whom I have loved and trusted has deceived me and shattered my faith. My instinctive reaction is not to believe what is reported, or to try and justify, or in the last resort to deny any allegiance and join the ranks of those who condemn.

But in my heart I know that I can do none of these things. I have only one choice—to accept full responsibility for what has happened and to ask God for His forgiveness and wisdom.

I too have been responsible for the suffering and injustices in South Africa. I preferred to cast a blind eye and to get on with my own life without too much interference. Because of people like me, we have got ourselves into a position where there does not seem to be any way forward.

Two-and-a-half years ago I qualified as a nurse and had everything I could wish for. Yet I was disillusioned and confused because of the way I chose to live. For the first time I seriously tried the experiment of MRA. It was a new thought to me that Christ honestly expects us to put things right

and live as He did. Putting things right has been the most painful experience of my life. But it freed me and opened my eyes to the world around me.

We need to tackle the injustices in our country. And we need to tackle the selfishness, the bitterness, the hate and the fear that rule people's minds. My own experience tells me that this is possible. Therefore I do believe that a totally new society in South Africa is possible, a society architected not by the white man, nor by the black man, but by God.

### Shaken

I am grateful for the people who have come to South Africa to help us in this task. One who has courageously challenged us is Conrad Hunte. To experience the agony of our society and yet fight without bitterness for every person he meets to become a living agent for God, has shaken me and hundreds of other South Africans. Over the years we have steered ourselves against criticism, but his straight talking coupled with an incredible compassion and care for all the peoples of South Africa, has opened our hearts to let the Holy Spirit come in.

## 'Wake them up'— anaesthetist

NEW MOTIVES IN HEALTH CARE was the theme of a seminar which drew 90 people from the medical and nursing profession to Armagh, the Australasian Pacific centre for Moral Re-Armament in Melbourne, recently. It was initiated by David Allbrook, Professor of Anatomy and Human Biology at the University of Western Australia; Will Davey, a surgeon and general practitioner in Portland, Victoria; Shirley Jennings, Director of Nursing Services at the Peter MacCallum Hospital, Melbourne; and George Wilson, Senior Physician at St George's Hospital, Sydney.

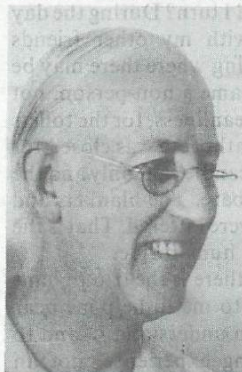
The invitation asks 'how best to care for people's needs in Australia and in the Third World', and continues: 'What are the motives of health professionals—and of health care consumers? How can the human face of caring emerge from the technological curing machine?'

Eleanor Russell, for 20 years Consultant

Anaesthetist at Charing Cross Hospital, London, said she had been asked when emigrating to Australia whether she would continue giving anaesthetics there. She replied, 'I've spent 20 years putting people to sleep. It's time I started to try to wake them up! You can't do that with just one prick.'

'Man is a trune of body, mind and spirit. If one part is diseased it affects all the others,' she continued. 'We know of definite cases where the patient's illness is due to resentment, to hatred, to fear. One Harley Street cardiologist estimated that 60 per cent of his patients were there because of fear. Seventy per cent of hospital beds are filled with self-inflicted diseases brought on by the way we live—through self-indulgence, alcoholism, tobacco, VD; through tension, heart disease, high blood pressure, ulcers; through accidents that could have been avoided with care; and with attempted suicides.'

She recalled the strains of living as a wife, a mother, and assistant to her doctor hus-



Weeks

Will Davey



Shirley Jennings

band. Then one day a patient came to the rescue—and brought a cure to the doctors. 'I stopped blaming my husband for everything that went wrong,' she said. 'Our motives for the practice became different. My husband lost his ambition and his insecurity in financial matters. We were prepared to have a smaller income, but it was a much more exciting way of practising medicine. Through our patients we began to take responsibility for issues in the nation. So our horizons widened. I feel this sort of responsibility is the destiny of all medical practitioners, nurses and physiotherapists.'

'What is happening to the heart of nursing?' asked Shirley Jennings. 'We live in a materialistic society. If you look at the history of the healing profession it has grown out of Christian concern and care. Can you actually teach the spiritual and caring aspects of nursing or medicine if they are not experiences in your own life?'

## at a glance

### PAY UP

REGINALD STOCKWELL, who this year became redundant from the giant Llanwen Steelworks in South Wales under a demanning agreement, told the following story at a Christmas occasion in Cardiff last week.

'I had been "on the dole" for some months when I received a letter from a friend who was in financial need. I glanced at it briefly without my glasses and immediately pushed it aside. How could I help? My wife was working for three days a week to help meet our mortgage commitment. I made a mental note to send a couple of pounds to my friend and leave it at that.

'Then a clear voice spoke to me: "Send him one week's unemployment pay." I rejected the thought immediately and did nothing. But the thought kept persisting. A couple of weeks later I decided to act on it. But by then the unemployment pay had gone up!

'Seeing the funny side of it, I wrote to my friend that if I had obeyed the thought I'd had immediately, what I was now sending would have cost me less. Now, on top of

everything, I've just received an unexpected cheque from the Income Tax Office. I believe God cares for us and wants us to care for the needs of others, however low our resources seem to be.'

### CONTAGIOUS

A MILITANT Brazilian dockworker who was once an undercover Communist and became a leading spokesman for Moral Re-Armament from Brazil died last month. He was Antonio Falcao from Recife in North-East Brazil.

The turning point in Antonio Falcao's life came in 1961 when he was sent by the Party to see how to undermine a Moral Re-Armament world conference in Rio de Janeiro. Later he said of his experience there, 'I had to face the fact that there was an ideology superior to Marxism.'

In Recife the Port Superintendent wrote in the daily paper of the contagious effectiveness of his new-style radicalism. 'It is a wonderful gift to the port. Workers who did nothing to help the smooth running of the port are today useful and enthusiastic men.'

Later he travelled widely, participating in the battle for moral re-armament in ports

and industrial areas from Rotterdam to Mozambique, from the United States and Canada to South Africa (see NWN Vol 22 No 38).

### ITALY



FOUR YOUNG MEN in San Basile, high in the Southern Italian mountains, have copied out sections of *The Black and White Book* and posted them around the village among the wall-newspapers for all to read.

Our picture shows two of them, their parents, and Ian Sciortino, whom they invited with his wife to San Basile. 'They had prepared a room for us in a disused school-house,' writes Mr Sciortino. 'They had brought their own beds and supplied light from a car battery.'