

Finding the Missing Peace



By Stephen G Baker

One Day – Two reactions

In April 2018 on the anniversary of the recommencement of the State of Israel, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that: “While Israeli Jews mark Independence Day with fireworks and barbecues, the flags that sprout everywhere in Jewish areas will be absent from Arab towns, and the thoughts of many there will turn to what they term the ‘Nakba’ (catastrophe) that they associate with Israel’s birth.”

The same date and occasion produced two different reactions from two diverse groups of people – gladness or grief, delight or dread, pleasure or pain.

Many events in history have produced diverse reactions, especially those that are related to events in the land of Israel. As regular readers of this column will know, one of my aims is to present to people the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sadly, the gospel often produces the same diverse reaction as events did in Israel last week. The cross, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ while producing immense blessing for those who are prepared to repent and trust Him, results in great depression and judgement for those who refuse to acknowledge what was done at Golgotha was for them.

This type of response to the gospel was expected. In 1st Corinthians, chapter 1, the Apostle Paul records that “*the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but to us which are saved it is the power of God*”. The same man writing in Romans, chapter 1, verse 16, states “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*”. The inference being in the latter passage that the God who has the power to save cannot do anything but condemn those who refuse to believe in Lord Jesus Christ.

The same message, which offers to all who are prepared to believe salvation, forgiveness, and peace with God when a person refuses to repent results in the opposite. The message of salvation will ultimately be the evidence that God will use to condemn unbelieving individuals on the day of judgement.

I wonder which of these two responses to the gospel will be yours?

My prayer is that you might enjoy eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. But sadly, the alternative could be that you face eternal judgment because you rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The choice is yours – please choose wisely.

Listen, watch or read more on my webpage,
www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk



Award-winning Wirral novelist, **Margaret Murphy**, who pens thrillers as **A.D. Garrett** and **Ashley Dyer**, recommends two books per month, across a range of styles and a mixture of new and old.

SWEET LITTLE LIES by Caz Frear
Zaffre ISBN-10: 1785763350



There’s a plethora of ‘domestic noir’ novels in crime fiction just now. You know the sort of thing: isolated woman, unreliable narrator, dark goings-on in suffocating relationships. Gripping reads, all. But if, like me, you feel the need to escape that claustrophobic world and glimpse a broader vista, *Sweet Little Lies* could be just the ticket.

A protagonist with a mysterious past and a slightly suspect memory of what went on 18 years earlier between her father and a vanished teenager may seem like more of the same, but Cat Kinsella bucks the trend. She is a cop, for one thing. Ambitious, analytical and insightful, she has the measure of just about everyone around her – except her father. Her closest colleague is an avuncular, happily married sergeant, and DCI Steele, her boss, is chirpy, droll, and given to rallying her crew with a blend of humour and flint, which makes a refreshing change in a police procedural.

Satisfying twists and turns and an accomplished writing style make Frear’s debut stand out as a rollicking good read.

CURE – A JOURNEY INTO THE SCIENCE OF MIND OVER BODY
by Jo Marchant
Canongate Books ISBN: 085786 8853



Don’t let the suspiciously New Age title put you off: Jo Marchant is a biologist with a doctorate in genetics and medical microbiology, a former editor of *New Scientist* and *Nature* – and *Cure* was shortlisted for a Royal Society science book prize.

Marchant presents the growing evidence that the mind has a powerful effect on illness and wellness in clear, accessible language. She takes a healthily sceptical view of the studies, her research is impeccable, and her evaluations are measured and rigorously scientific.

Since the 1950s, placebos (inert substitutes for drugs or treatments) have been used to compare the effectiveness of ‘real’ and ‘fake’ treatments, ruling out the use of some drugs because they are ‘no better’ than placebos. In *Cure*, Marchant investigates the positive value of placebos: talking to scientists who have recruited the mind to increase the potency of medicines. So, for example, lupus – a chronic condition which causes the body’s immune system to attack its own tissues – is often treated with toxic drugs which suppress the immune system. Marchant presents evidence that the brain can ‘train’ the immune system to respond to lower doses of these cytotoxic drugs – sparing patients from unpleasant and even dangerous side effects. By extension, the same methods may be adapted for transplant and cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Cure also scrutinises the medical value of hypnotherapy, meditation and yoga in a range of conditions including Parkinson’s, MS, depression, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and chronic pain, citing studies of meditators which show a measurable and significant increase of grey matter in areas of the brain which control learning, memory, and emotional regulation, with a corresponding reduction of the amygdala, which is associated with anxiety and stress. Marchant concludes that these simple, low-cost techniques which take advantage of the way our minds have been shaped by evolution could help us to live in tune with our bodies, harnessing the best of medical science with the ‘hard-wired’ communication between our bodies and our brains.

SPLINTER IN THE BLOOD, written as **Ashley Dyer**, is now out.
Margaret and her forensic collaborator, **Helen Pepper**, blog on writing and forensics on Facebook @AshleyDyerNovels.
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