

# Finding the Missing Peace



By Stephen G Baker

Someone said to me recently that it would be better to get cancer than dementia! Now I wouldn't like to make the choice, but I know where they are coming from. The prospect of beating cancer is higher than it ever was compared to the limited availability of treatment for people suffering from dementia. But having seen what friends have had to handle before they 'beat' cancer I wouldn't wish it on anyone.

As I look at loved ones who are suffering from dementia I am reminded of the brevity and uncertainty of life. The condition often arrives and develops rapidly. Both my father and father-in-law died with dementia. Until then I did not realise that dementia leads to death. *"While a person with end-stage dementia may technically die from an infection or other medical complication, it is their severe dementia that predisposed them to that complication and made them too weak to fight it off"*<sup>1</sup> Life is short and wise people value and cherish the important and enduring things of life.

Experience in life quickly teaches you that 'things' are not the most important part of life. You can replace 'things' but you cannot replace people and you cannot replace 'you' or as the Bible puts it – your soul!<sup>2</sup>

## What about people?

The Bible teaches that you should nurture and value relationships. You should love your parents, love your spouse, love your children and love your friends. We should be good neighbours, be kind, thoughtful and caring. Jesus taught that 'loving your neighbour as yourself'<sup>3</sup> sits just behind 'loving God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'<sup>4</sup>. Incidentally, if we took this first commandment seriously everything else would fall into its proper place. You wouldn't murder, steal, commit adultery, swear, etc., as all of this and more is not acceptable to God.

## What about your soul?

Jesus taught that your soul is the most valuable thing that you possess. Listen to the words of Jesus: they are pretty blunt and to the point. *'And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?'*<sup>5</sup> Jesus is saying that all that life can offer cannot be compared to the eternal value of your soul. That why Jesus died! Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus, wrote that those who pray, confess their sins to Jesus and trust Him to save them receive the 'salvation of their souls'.<sup>6</sup> This will outlive everything else in life. It gives hope to the sick and dying and strength to live for something that is of lasting value.

1 <https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-it-like-to-die-of-dementia-1132331>

2 Mark 8:36

3 Matthew 22:39

4 Matthew 22:37

5 Mark 8:36

6 Peter 1:9

Listen, watch or read more on my webpage,  
[www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk](http://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.

## ENGLEBY by Sebastian Faulks Vintage Press ISBN-10: 0099458276



I first read *Engleby* in 2007, its year of publication, and recommended it as an essential Christmas read. Although he is better known for his novels set in France, particularly *Birdsong*, Faulks writes cracking psychological suspense, too – and has even penned a well-received Bond thriller. While *Engleby* is a quieter affair, it still packs a punch. The story is narrated by Mike Engleby, a second-year student at an 'ancient university'. The narrative voice is simple, yet from the start we know that we are dealing with an exceptional mind – uncompromising, fiercely intelligent, wickedly funny – and deeply disturbed.

A fellow student disappears and Engleby mourns her loss, yet we feel uneasy: despite his eidetic memory for facts, there are gaps in his memory of events. *Engleby* is reminiscent of the early Barbara Vine novels: although there is relatively little incident, the writer keeps the reader in a state of constant dread. A truly masterful work.

## THE BATTLE FOR BEVERLY HILLS by Nancie Clare St. Martin's Press ISBN-10: 1250121345



How did actors metamorphose from uncredited players in silent 'flickers' to become powerful movers and shakers in politics? Apparently, it all began in the 1920s with the very first celebrity movie stars.

Nancie Clare charts the development of Beverly Hills from marginal rancho land to home to Hollywood stars. It wasn't a smooth ride: like the former owners of 'Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas' the movie settlers of the twentieth century would have to fight for their land, engaging in a bitter struggle with powerful and corrupt forces. The trouble, it seems, was water. Los Angeles had it in abundance, via the massive Los Angeles Aqueduct, which carried fresh water from the mountains to the rapidly growing city, while Beverly Hills, a city on the westerly edge of LA, had uncertain, and often meagre, supplies. The price of access to this precious resource was annexation – and high taxes to help pay for the aqueduct.

But after raising millions of public dollars in War Bonds for the US government during World War I, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks knew the power of celebrity, and the two (along with famous pals including Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix), used their influence to remain independent. Clare argues that these stars of the silver screen laid the groundwork for celebrities of the future to go much further in politics – taking mayoral office (Clint Eastwood), seats in Congress (Sonny Bono), and even the Presidency of the United States (Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump).

As a former LA journalist, Nancie Clare's research is impeccable, and the story she tells is crammed with fascinating 'I didn't know that!' moments; for example, did you know that the growth of the movie industry in LA was less about California's sunny climate and more closely aligned to Thomas Edison's jealous protection of his lighting patents? Enlightening and entertaining, this book will appeal to anyone who enjoys film, politics, history – or Hollywood insider gossip. Highly recommended.

**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. Twitter @AshleyDyer2017