

Andrew White
Iraq: Searching for Hope
ISBN 0 8264 8630 4
Continuum, 2005, £9.99

If you want an antidote to the wretched news we seem to get from the mass media day after day, here is a book with a different slant. Andrew White gives us a more positive picture. The author is well experienced in building peace, especially through personal relationships: he is President of the Foundation for Peace in the Middle East, and Director of the Iraqi Institute for Peace. He has spent years in the Middle East, both in Palestine/Israel and in Iraq, while that country and its people were still smarting under the repression of Saddam Hussein.

All the while he was busy sowing the seeds of peace well before the invasion. He has had his brushes with danger, but never stopped building contacts with peace-minded people. Much of what he has to recount is fascinating, especially his adventures after the Coalition's invasion and the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

He has managed to bring together Shi'ites and Sunnis, as well as Iraqi Christians, and the book concludes with the text of the two Religious Accords signed in 2004. There are too many people to remember mentioned in the book, but White includes a helpful Who is Who.

Any book of this sort, which is largely a first-person account of events, has its drawbacks for the reader, no matter how interested he or she may be in the subject. (And should not all of us be?) It easily becomes a narrative of 'Look what I have done, what danger I have been exposed to, what I have managed to achieve', etc. Neither did White make me change my mind about the justness of the invasion, in spite of devoting a chapter to the subject. Nonetheless, the work that he is doing, as part of the work of the International Centre for Reconciliation from its base at Coventry Cathedral, deserves to be better known and appreciated. Working for peace while the wounds of both oppression and of war are still fresh and raw is seemingly impossible, and we may never know the results of the effort, but, thank God that somebody is spending his life making the effort. If nothing else, we should keep Iraq a priority in our prayers.

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