



**CONGREGATIONAL CURIOS**

**RECOLLECTION OF A FIRST VISIT TO NORTH YEMEN, 1979**



I had been travelling around the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia for two years, but that didn't prepare me for what I found when I arrived in Sana'a, the capital, one October afternoon. I had contacted the charity, Concern, who had volunteers there from Ireland and they met me at the airport in their

Land Rover. The building architecture was very distinctive, the men wore skirts and the women, if you saw them at all, were all but invisible in their black burkas. At that time, the country had just emerged from isolation and a long civil war (shades of today!); with Egypt supporting one faction, the Saudis the other side. There was no hotel in the city at that time, so I stayed with the Concern volunteers. My job at the time was with the Irish Export Board seeking new markets for Irish products, but I'm not sure Yemen was ready yet for Kerrygold, Irish beef and Aran sweaters!

The accompanying picture is of a youthful me outside the souk, the name given to the local market in Arabia. This particular stall sold guns and ammunition. AK-47s were part and parcel of daily life in Yemen—the men all had one over their shoulders when they came in from the fields at lunchtime or in the evening. Daily life also included the consumption of qat, a narcotic leaf that is chewed and stored in the cheek, so that its juices can be swallowed. I tried it once, without much pleasure. It was a relief to spit it all out after an interminable hour or so. I did find, however, that my mind was very clear for the next few hours and problem solving was made simple! I even bought some to bring back to Ireland with me for a "qat party". Unfortunately, my suitcase got lost and when it finally arrived home a week later, the Qat was a brown, sticky mess in the bottom of the case!

On another trip to the country, I visited the port town of Al Hudaydah and the city in the south, Ta'izz.

Both had to be accessed *via* taxi. I was lucky to be allowed the front seat with the driver, while up to eight others were crammed into the two rows of seats behind me. As Sana'a sits at 6,000 feet altitude, the journey to Al Hudaydah or Ta'izz was an interminable four-hour drive, mostly down precipitative hairpin-dominated roads where the carcasses of cars, vans and trucks lay at the bottom of ravines. At least there was a hotel in Ta'izz, although the sign on the back of my bedroom door was sobering: "Guns and ammunition must be left at Reception"! When I see the current news coverage of the Houthis in Yemen, it brings it all back!

—IAN JACKSON.

**MARCH DUTY ROTA**

*3rd March*

<b>Keys</b>	Ashley O'Neill
<b>Welcome</b>	The Cronje Family
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Christiaan Schoombee
<b>Hospitality</b>	—

*10th March*

<b>Keys</b>	Ashley O'Neill
<b>Welcome</b>	The Cronje Family
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Christiaan Schoombee
<b>Hospitality</b>	Myrtle Bailey Sylvia Wallace

**Note:** *Childrens' Ministry*

*17th March*

<b>Keys</b>	Helen Dawkins
<b>Welcome</b>	Millicent Gateri
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Christiaan Schoombee
<b>Hospitality</b>	—



24th March

<b>Keys</b>	Helen Dawkins
<b>Welcome</b>	Roelien van der Molen
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Christiaan Schoombee
<b>Hospitality</b>	Joy Dolan Noelene Brown

**Note:** ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING; Childrens' Ministry

31st March

<b>Keys</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Welcome</b>	Roelien van der Molen
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Christiaan Schoombee
<b>Hospitality</b>	—

APRIL DUTY ROTA  
 7th April

<b>Keys</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Welcome</b>	Carolyn O'Neill
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Hospitality</b>	Valerie Hughes Jenny Collins

**Note:** Holy Communion; Childrens' Ministry

14th April

<b>Keys</b>	Alan Bothwell
<b>Welcome</b>	Carolyn O'Neill
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Hospitality</b>	—

21st April

<b>Keys</b>	Alan Bothwell
<b>Welcome</b>	Rudolph van Wyk
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Hospitality</b>	—

**Note:** Childrens' Ministry

28th April

<b>Keys</b>	Ian Jackson
<b>Welcome</b>	Rudolph van Wyk
<b>Free Will Offering</b>	Paul Collins
<b>Hospitality</b>	Margaret Conologue Heather Porter

**COMMUNITY NOTICES**

**EVENING PRAISE, CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST**  
 On the third LORD's Day in each month, our Anglican brothers and sisters at the Church of Saint John the Baptist, Seafield Road, Clontarf host an Evening Praise Service at 6.00 p.m.

This is a family-friendly service and may be ideal for those unable to attend our normal Service, or even those who are looking for something a little different.

Music is led by the worship band, Icthus, from the Raheny & Coolock Group of Parishes, and refreshments are offered afterwards in the Church of Saint John the Baptist Parish Centre. More information may be found on their website, [clontarf.dublin.anglican.org](http://clontarf.dublin.anglican.org).

**SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER**

Should you wish to submit an article, a personal reflection, a notice or some other update or correction to the *Clontarf & Scots Presbyterian Church Newsletter*, all submissions will be accepted by e-mail to [newsletter.editor@clontarfchurch.ie](mailto:newsletter.editor@clontarfchurch.ie).

In Volume XXI of the *Newsletter*, with the exception only of this January and February Issues, each Issue will be published on the first LORD's Day in each month. Therefore, all submissions are requested to be received by the Editor not later than the 25th day of the month for guaranteed inclusion. The Editor will endeavour to accommodate late submissions for inclusion as best as possible.

—DARRAGH JAUREGUI-HOGAN,  
 Editor.