

## **If only ...**

The wonderful thing about Christmas is that it has that unerring ability to transport us back in time and, often, to provide precious memories of our lives before they became tense, complicated and stuck in a rut. Christmas brings out the child in us.

The resident cynic within is given a few days' break and we are free to dream dreams of a world where peace, happiness and security can be experienced.



As a child, I loved Christmas Eve. The tree was decorated, and the presents had been wrapped and were hidden from prying eyes. Then there was the waiting, the anticipation. Perhaps we would be taken for a walk, leaving the warm living-room filled with the lovely smells of the pine tree and cooking turkey, and we would go out into the night with its dark blue sky illuminated by jewel-like stars and with the cold night air biting ears and nose. There really did seem to be magic in the air.



What I experienced was the 'Christmas yearning': that longing deep inside a child's heart for something more. That 'something' never actually arrived the next day, no matter how happy Christmas Day may have been. As the years went by, the yearning faded and attention then became focused upon wrapped-up things. But where was the magic?