



from Garth...

The turning of tables

First of all an apology, as it has been some time since the last newsletter. I aim for them to come out each month but I have been working on a book - that consumes a huge amount of time!

I thought I'd share a couple of parts that I am putting in the book, that come from a section on Holy Week called 'Turning the Tables' - one or two sections there I felt were helpful, but I didn't think it was quite there yet so I asked long time campaigner and friend David Haslam what tables need to be turned today. I felt his response was a real vision of hope, and reflected the prophetic challenge of the community or Kingdom of God.

His first line is about the current election which won't be in my book as the time will have passed, but I thought you might be interested to see it! I think he touches on some of the most important issues and says something about the way to live.

David Haslam's Vision of Hope

"I'd quite like to turn over Theresa's 'strong and stable' tables, just at present, to prove that they aren't – at least not for the poor..."

"Inequality is a very large and heavy table. The rich are getting richer all the time, there are about 100,000 people who could afford to buy a multi-million dollar super-yacht and I think Jesus would be upending super-yachts all over the world, as a symbolic protest at inequality.

"Tax havens are another long table, with many extensions. This table needs turning over so we can see all the hidden funds underneath, on which no tax has been paid, and either sequester the tax or put the traders in jail.

"Then there is the messy and smelly table of pollution, with legs of coal and oil, and a table top of energy companies –still searching for more oil, car firms - especially those producing diesel engines, airlines, builders - who don't create environmental structures, cruise companies, and all those who contribute excessively to carbon emissions – a heavy fog hangs around this table so it's quite difficult to find it

"The weapons manufacturers sit round another table, offering their wares and vying with one another as to how many people can be killed with their particular type of merchandise – approach with caution to try and overturn this table, Jesus approaches this one with caution to try and avoid being first either blown up by a landmine or bombed by a drone.

"There's the table of caste discrimination, where the Brahmins sit at the top, with their pure vegetarian dishes, the middle castes down the side, the Sudras (members of the worker caste, lowest of the Hindu castes) clustered at the far end with a basic diet, and the Dalits crawling round under the table picking up the crumbs. Jesus sends this table flying, the 'upper' castes all scatter in confusion, and he invites the Dalits now to be seated for a heavenly banquet, with the Sudras and even other castes also invited, providing they don't mind sitting down with the Dalits.

"There is also the table of individualism, which is a kind of four-poster table with curtains all round, behind which people sit round it with their phones, taking selfies, sharing them and other irrelevancies on Facebook and feeling very self-important; even if this table is turned over the people may not actually notice.

"There is also a foodbank table, spread with packets and tins, boxes and jars, with some fresh fruit and vegetables, around which those who have insufficient to eat are gathered; this table Jesus does not overturn, but sits down to chat and help share out the gifts."

David Haslam

Isn't that a lovely and generous vision of the prophetic and challenging way of Jesus - which is always a way of hope.

Powerful words from Rabbi Michael Lerner



Rabbi Michael Lerner speaking at the funeral of Mohammed Ali

There is a remarkable Rabbi called Rabbi Michael Lerner – he spoke at Mohammed Ali's funeral and took the opportunity to call for justice and peace in numerous situations – he was very funny, very entertaining, but also very challenging and prophetic. Twice in that speech he spoke up for the Palestinians.

He has an organization called Tikkun and in a recent newsletter he congratulated Christian peace and justice activists for using Good Friday and Easter to restore Jesus' message of love and non-violence. He is applauding a group of nine non-violent civil resisters of Upstate Drone Action who were arrested at the main entrance of Hancock Air National Guard Base, witnessing against extra judicial drone killings perpetrated from the Base; three people hung on large drone crosses representing victims of US drone strikes in seven majority Muslim countries. Eleven others held smaller drone crosses headed by the phrase, "Drones crucify." Rabbi Lerner says, "The Christians said this - Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus recognizing that 70% of our nation identifies Christian - we come to the gates of the Hancock Drone Base to make real the crucifixion today. As Jesus and others were crucified by the Roman Empire, Drones are used by the US Empire in a similar fashion... On this Good Friday we recall Jesus' call to love and non-violence. We are asking this air force base and this nation to turn away from a policy of modern day crucifixion. This is the seventh year of a non-violent campaign to expose the war crimes... Since 2010 there have been over 170 arrests at Hancock, of those campaigning."

Rabbi Lerner's Network of Spiritual Progressives is not only a network of prophetic voices of progressive Jews but also an interfaith voice, and he says, "Celebrate the work of the Christian activists as they reclaim the deep love, social justice, and non-violent message of Jesus' mission."

Both Rabbi Lerner and the Christian peacemakers are calling for turning the tables of injustice.

Martin Luther King at Riverside Church

Recently Gill and I were in New York to see our son Joe. We visited Riverside Church, where Martin Luther King gave one of his most famous speeches. He was pointing out that it wasn't only racism he was challenging, but also poverty and militarism. The church had an exhibition about his speech while we were there and I came across these words from it - it's strange how this presents such a challenge to our world today: the divide between the rich and the poor has never been so great, racism is apparent in all sorts of guises, and there is an obsession with armaments and war. Once again the great gospel of peacemaking should come to the forefront of our minds, certainly for those of us in the UK in this time of elections.

“Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores and thereby speed the day when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain... Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter – but beautiful – struggle for a new world.”



Martin Luther King speaking at Riverside Church, New York, 4th April 1967

Declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism

Martin Luther King in Riverside Church, New York, 4th April 1967

Strange Weapons

I am back on the Strange Weapons Tour again and just had two concerts that I really loved, one was at Reepham in Lincoln and one at Nottingham - I had the joy of great fiddle player Chris Rogers play with me on both occasions - Chris lives in Lincolnshire and tries to join me when I am in the area. I find he absolutely lifts me with his playing, making it both exciting and at times poignant. So thanks a lot Chris - Chris has also played on my last three albums.

You can see some of Chris' great playing on this clip of *No Injustice* - [click here](#)

More concerts coming up in the next few weeks - [Lacock](#) this weekend, and [Lindfield](#) in West Sussex, and [Gilwern near Abergavenny](#).

Prayer

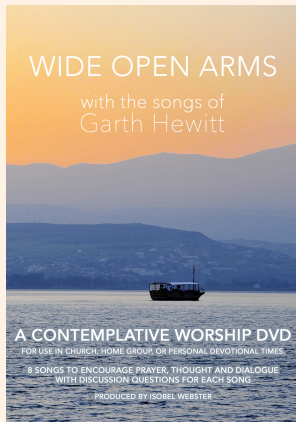


God of the passionate heart
Thank you for the values of your alternative
community
They give us vocation
They show us causes
They remind us to turn the tables
They show us the value of our neighbours
Our sisters and brothers from all around the world
They remind us how to love one another
Why one person being treated unjustly matters
Because you are the God of the passionate heart

You are the God committed to the poor
We are in a world where they are forgotten as the rich get richer
You are the God who called for purity of heart
You are the revolutionary God who calls for action
Who calls for us to do justice and show mercy and walk humbly
Thank you for the values of your alternative community
They give us our hope and our passion for life
May we never lose our sense of calling

*adapted from **Holy Dreams to Feed the Soul***

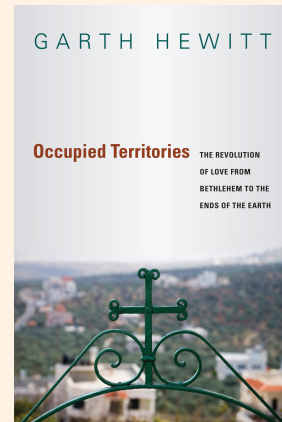
Guth Hewitt



8 of Garth's contemplative songs with lyrics and study guide - for use in personal meditation, small groups, or times of worship



Songs of encouragement and hope



Garth's recent book exploring theology underpinning the work of Amos Trust - the theology of justice



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