



from Garth...

Warm greetings for the New Year and may it be a year that journeys to healing, hope and peace

Quite a few people have been asking me, where's the new album *Easter Revolution*? **And apologies especially to those of you who pre-ordered a copy several months ago!** But Covid has struck even here - Kevin Duncan, producer, musician, and director of GingerDog Records, has had Covid and it has developed into a very difficult chest complaint, so he has been out of action for a while. He hopes to be back in the studio though today as I write this, and to do the final mixes of the album. But he has certainly been struggling with health so do remember him in your prayers.

Meanwhile you can get a taster of two songs from the new album, on YouTube - not the final mixes, but in both cases there were things happening that made me think it would be good to have them available now.

The first is a song called True Companion which is about the Holy Spirit.

In it I refer to Archbishop Tutu by name and quote him, so we put together some photos and made it a tribute to the wonderful Desmond Tutu, which people have been picking up and using.

My first meeting with the then Bishop Tutu was through my godfather John Taylor, who was Bishop of St Albans. Knowing I was inspired by Tutu he invited me to a



Garth & Gill with Desmond Tutu in Krugersdorp near Johannesburg

Clergy Meeting at St Albans Cathedral when Bishop Tutu was speaking, and introduced me to him afterwards. **That was a great gift from my godfather, to introduce me to Desmond Tutu!**

I met Tutu again when I was invited to a youth conference with him in Krugersdorp near Johannesburg. The conference brought young people from Soweto and other townships. Tutu's policy was to get them to talk about the horrors of living under apartheid and what happened to them day by day. They did, often using theatre, or a poem - it had a huge impact on me. As we sat quite shattered afterwards, someone said, "You can sing now." I thought, I'm not sure if I can! We felt we were hearing about the crucifixion that apartheid brought; by Sunday we were ready for the resurrection as Tutu led the Eucharist - **his joy and hope was extraordinary!**

Archbishop Tutu always spoke out strongly on Palestine, **"I have witnessed the systemic humiliation of Palestinian men, women and children, by members of the Israeli security forces. Their humiliation is familiar to all black South Africans."**

One verse of 'True Companion' has these words:
*There is a better dream comes from the heart of God
Says Brother Desmond Tutu, who says "All belong,
All belong and all are equal,
all are made in the image of God
Such a holy dream,
straight from the heart of God,
In God's family, all are equal,
all belong.*

Here I think you can see the legacy Archbishop Tutu leaves.

You can hear True Companion [on YouTube here](#)

Amos Trust are exploring the legacy of Archbishop Tutu in a free webinar on February 1st, which you can [register for here](#)

In the City of Jerusalem

I watched a Palestine Solidarity Campaign webinar about the ethnic cleansing of houses in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. They were interviewing the El Kurd



family - I've used some words of Muhammed El Kurd in this song. He was highly articulate and at Christmas I discovered he was a poet, as Gill gave me a copy of a poetry book of his called 'Rifqa'!

The recent attack on the house of the Silhiya family was very shocking news. For a while the family gathered on the roof of their house - then eventually they were forced down. Yasmine Salhiya said that the Israeli soldiers beat her 9 year old sister and her aunt, who is unable to move due to her injuries. The Palestinian Authority have accused the Israeli government of committing a war crime.

I felt it was important to make the song available as soon as possible to make people aware of the suffering in East Jerusalem - ethnic cleansing of Palestinians still goes on. Please watch the song [on YouTube here](#), and share it if you can.

Another taster from the album

With an eye on current events, a third song that we need to watch carefully is called *The Pope Went Down to Nagasaki !*

Pope Francis gave an amazing talk in Nagasaki late in 2019 saying
*Still too many wars, still too much violence in the world.
Loving God, you are our peace, help us to overcome
This terrible obsession with war.*

With the talk of war at the moment this song seems particularly relevant.

*Our world would be so much better
Without these instruments of death
He told the political leaders
"Please don't forget
They are not the answer
For stability, security or peace."
These moving words of Pope Francis
Are a cry for wars to cease*

We may put this song on YouTube and we'll let you know if we do.

The Easter Revolution booklet



We are producing a booklet alongside the album because we have too much to say about the songs and some of the thoughts that sparked them off!

So Isobel has been busy putting it all together. In it you will find not just the lyrics of the songs - we have poets, painters, writers and prophets woven throughout, and for now we thought we'd give you a taste of just one of them, **with a poem called Easter Revolution** - by the wonderful poet Martin Wroe.

The Easter Revolution will not be televised

It is not captured on CCTV because it is captured in the heart.

It is not a big event in history.

(It is too big for history. And also too small.)

The easter revolution may not even be recorded

But it is always sung,

Often by those who history forgets to remember.

The easter revolution is a beautiful disguise

It is brought to you by a woman in a flowing green dress facing down the riot police

And a shirtsleeved man standing before a line of tanks

But also in the patience of the person serving you on the checkout at Tesco

And your neighbour's love for her child, the one people name 'different'.

It is brought to you by all those who are seldom heard and routinely overlooked

In the fields someone picking coffee, on the sea someone

In an exodus, and in the forest, a nun,

Gunned down for protecting the trees, while reciting the Beatitudes,

'We're not burying you,' say her fellow revolutionaries at the funeral,

'We're planting you.'

No-one notices as the subtle bud rises defiantly from the earth,

Or as the man turns away from the powerful

And kneels to write something in the sand.

It is the very quietest sound this revolution,

It is almost not there

Like that ever flowing stream, somewhere, not far from here

The easter revolution takes no-one by force,

Except the force of love which is no force at all, and the greatest force of all.
It is the revolution we all long for but can't quite name
The one that is undated because it is every date that ever was
The one that is usually unseen but always, at every moment,
Hiding in plain sight.

Martin Wroe

That's Why We're Here - the fun version!

While I was looking around in YouTube I came across this very early song of mine - really nice to see and hear this one sung with such joy, enthusiasm and possibly mischief! [Watch it here](#). The school is in Menara, Kenya

Prayer for the New Year

Everloving God it is a new year full of new opportunities
As we ask forgiveness for the past
And make resolutions for the future
May we show your love and live your way

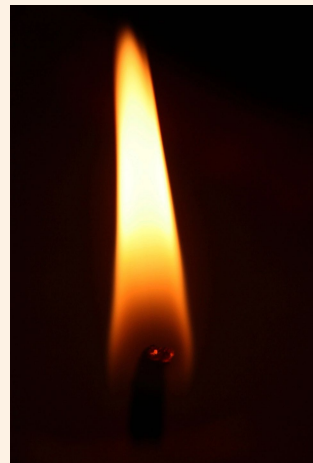
May we take time to pause and draw strength
And let our souls catch up
And be refreshed regularly through this year
May we show your love and live your way

May we remember the poor and the forgotten
The marginalized and the weak
And find ways to show your compassion
May we show your love and live your way

May the healing hope of the gospel be integral to our lives
So that the ways of justice and peace are reflected in us
May we show your love and live your way

May we take time to see the beauty of your world –
To see the beauty of trees, flowers, birds and animals –
To cherish them and work for the sustaining of our garden home –
So that we leave it in a good state for generations to come
May we show your love and live your way

May our hearts be refreshed by joy, music, creativity, love and hope

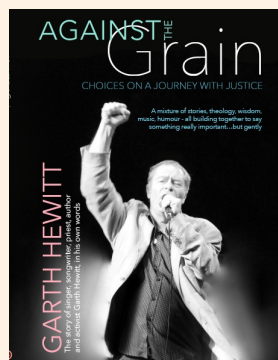


So we in turn can bring hope and joy to others.
Throughout this year may we show your love
and live your way.

Garth Hewitt



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of songs inspired by the people of
the Holy Land](#)



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