Habel Hymns

volume two

Songs to Share with Those Who Suffer

Norman C. Habel
C 2006

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“Why does God give light to the sufferer, 
Life to the bitter in spirit”?  
Job 3.20

‘I am a woman! I am abused! 
I am a Dalit, an untouchable! 
Why was I born?’
Habel Hymns 2

Songs to Share with Those Who Suffer

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c. 2006

‘Why did I not die at birth,
Come forth from the womb and expire’?
Job 3.11
Preface

To the
DALIT WOMAN
who was cleaning the shit
and the polluted waste
from a drain
in a remote mountain village
of South India,
a woman they said was
Untouchable,
‘born to work and not to read’,
a woman who had been abused
by a father,
a landlord,
a caste system:
a woman who now looked sixty
but was only thirty,
a woman
who had been set alight
by a jealous husband
and left to die:
a woman who seemed so untouchable,
so crushed,
without hope,
a woman of whom I asked myself:
‘How can I be Christ to her’?
‘How can I even begin to empathise,
put myself in her place,
in that drain’?
a woman who helped me see
that she was being Christ to me,
that she was
the least of the least of these
of whom Jesus spoke.
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Introduction

Sharing with those who Suffer

The songs in this collection are written to be shared with those who suffer.

A distinctive feature of these songs is their honesty, expressing in poetry and music the fears, questions, pains and trauma of people who suffer physically, socially or spiritually. These songs, hopefully, give people permission to express their feelings of anguish before God—whether with others or alone.

The songs come from a range of contexts or works written during my lifetime and reflect a variety of contexts where people experience disasters, suicides, trauma, loss or abuse. Some of these experiences are personal, others belong to people I have known. All are true to life in the raw.

These songs are especially appropriate for use in workshops, rites or contexts where people seek healing after experiencing senseless suffering or spiritual abuse. I use many of them in a workshop entitled Job, Jennifer and Jesus.

This workshop follows the healing journey of Job from denial to reconciliation. Especially significant is the way Job screams at God and vents his anger at the injustice and pain he has experienced as a result of his great loss. Job confronts God rather than meekly accepting his lot as a victim.

In addition to usage in such a workshop, many of these songs provide a healthy balance in worship to hymns that seem to express blessing for a Christian who is willing to say the words ‘Thy will be done’ under any circumstance. These songs, like Job, enable us to say ‘Why?’ with the full force of our faith or doubt.

I have written the lyrics to a number of these songs using traditional melodies or known tunes. This facilitates the immediate use of these songs in worship or retreats. In some cases, the wording I have written reflects an ironic counterpoint with the traditional melody. Musicians are free to write new melodies to these songs if they choose.
Songs Chosen

to Sing

With Those who Suffer

During the more than 50 years I have been writing songs, whether with youth in the 60’s or with the aged in the 90’s, a constant theme is the pain, anguish and despair that arise in times of crisis, disaster, grief and loss. The deep distress involved may be personal or public. Suffering may range from unexplained trauma to spiritual abuse, from a family disaster or a loss of meaning. The following songs are a selection of those that were associated with people, situations or challenges around me.

1. Why, O Why this Wild Tsunami?

_The Asian tsunami hit all of us emotionally even if not physically. The eternal ‘why?’ question surged across the globe. Thousands of innocent people died. Where was God in all of this? Oblivious? Absent? Non-existent? Impotent? Suffering? This song allows us to explore these questions in song. The melody chosen is Joyful, joyful, we adore you. The song reflects an opposite view of the world to this well-known hymn, a view of God who is empathetically present, but where grief and pain rather than joy and happiness are found._

2. The Crying Tree

_This song was written for Pamela Webb, a friend whose child committed suicide and whose beautiful young life ended without reason. The song reflects the world of cutting pain and senseless suffering found in the lives of so many youth. The empathy of Christ, our Wounded Healer, is present even in such tragic times. A melody has been written by Robin Mann. The song can also be sung to the tune of Nearer My God to Thee._

3. Song of St Stephen

_This song reflects the Lutheran empathy theology of St Stephen’s Lutheran Church in Adelaide, South Australia. St Stephen is the precedent, one who suffered cruelty at the hands of others but one who knew the suffering presence of God in the hour of pain. Many in our society know that cruel pain. God knows it too and in this song we affirm God’s sustaining and suffering presence in all human lives. The melody is written by Leigh Newton, also a member at St Stephen’s._

4. Deep, Deep Within

_This song reflects the way in which a number of people today express their faith. They are searching for a new spirituality, a spirit deep within that can connect somehow with the spiritual in their worlds. There is a sense that their spirituality is still new, like a child within searching for light, life and meaning. One melody that can be used with this song is The Lord is My Shepherd._
5. Adam, Look not Back

These verses are an expression of thanks for the compassion of Dr. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, my mentor and friend during times of ecclesiastical harassment. The song calls on the great heroes of the faith—radical prophets, passionate leaders and even Jonah the clown—to move beyond being victims and discern Christ at work ‘under, with and in us’. The melody was a favourite of Von, namely, Of the Father’s love Begotten.

6. How Far can you See with your Eyes

This song and the following song are taken from a musical called Thomas the Twin, written and performed in 1986 at Kodaikanal International School in Tamil Nadu, South India. According to tradition, Thomas went to India when the apostles took their respective commissions after Jesus’ ascension. Thomas learns, as do many others, that seeing is more than meets the eye. Seeing is only genuine when it takes in the reality of a people frequently ‘unseen’, the poor, the outcaste and the oppressed. The melody was written by Peggy Jenks, a music teacher at the school.

7. The Dark Side of Doubt

This song reflects the deep truth of the Thomas story, that expressions of the spirit such as doubt, faith and hope are complex realities that are not black and white. The struggles of Jesus and Thomas are not that far apart. And if God became genuinely human in the incarnation then God knows that faith has many dimensions and life is inevitably entwined with death. This melody is also written by Peggy Jenks.

8. The Way of the Wilderness

2002 was the 40th anniversary of the Holden Village Retreat in the Cascades of Washington State, USA. This song is written for that occasion, in honour of Dan Erlander, one of the leaders of the retreat over the years. The forty year wilderness theme reminds us of the struggle of many today who face a world of desolation. It also reminds us that the very wilderness itself is crying in pain. The melody chosen is The Ash Grove.

9. Hear the Land Crying

One of the common experiences of both the biblical prophets, like Jeremiah and Joel, and the Indigenous peoples of the land, is of the land crying because of what has happened to the people who were close to the land. This song invites us to empathise with the very land which has long been empathetic with those who suffer. The melody chosen hear is Morning Has Broken.
10. Little Brown Feet

One of the most painful memories of the Indigenous peoples of Australia and indeed of all Australians is the forced removal of Indigenous children from their parents to locate them in so-called orphanages. This song was written for Sorry Day, 2003, and included in a documentary for Sorry Day, 2003. Many are still searching to find the home from which they were stolen. The melody was composed by my daughter Anjali Habel-Orrell.

11. Voices Calling

This song was written to encourage church communities to recognise that the painful process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is an integral part of their Christian faith. Saying, ‘We are sorry’, is not optional but crucial to the process of healing through the cross of Christ. The melody is written by Sue Collyer.

12. The Least of These

The profound words of Jesus are still relevant: ‘Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me,’ Matthew 25.40. The full force of these words is apparent in a context like India where so many millions are suffering oppression, abuse and poverty. I wrote this song among the Dalits (formerly Untouchables) in the mountains of South India. The melody by Peggy Jenks was originally written for the Indian context.

13. Surrounded

This song reflects the reality of the experience of those around the table at The Last Supper. This is no quiet meal. After the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, he was surrounded—by crowds who wanted a Messiah, Zealots who wanted a freedom fighter, priests who wanted a scapegoat and Romans who wanted to impose control. Jesus and his disciples were at the centre of these groups—surrounded. A strong melody is written by Robin Mann. The tune of In Christ there is no East or West may also be used.

14. She’s Hot on the Hill

This song and the following are taken from the musical version of my book A Bloke Called Jesus, with paintings by Pro Hart and music by Robin Mann. The poem and corresponding song reflect the stark reality of a crucifixion in the Australian context in the heat of the Outback.

15. The Lament of Nicodemus

In this song, from A Bloke Called Jesus, Nicodemus takes the sun beaten body of Jesus from the cross and locates it in a dark cave deep in the bush. The lament of Nicodemus is a moaning at the death of Jesus, a moaning like the sad call of a curlew, a bush bird that cries out in the night. The melody is also by Robin Mann.
16. O Lord my Shepherd, Why such Want?

This song was originally written for use in workshops run for those who suffer spiritual abuse and deep loss. These healing workshops are entitled Job, Jennifer and Jesus and assist participants to follow the healing process of Job and a modern parallel called Jennifer. The words of this song echo the words of The Lord is my Shepherd, but in the context of extreme pain and spiritual loss. The words reflect the pain that preceded the words of the Psalmist: ‘He restoreth my soul’.

17. What a Friend!

In this song I satirise the modern equivalents of the three friends that tried to convince Job he was a sinner and deserved even more than he got. The three friends pretend to support Job, but in fact do not really listen to his pain. They presume his guilt and try to persuade him to repent of sins he did not commit. The obvious melody is What a Friend we have in Jesus. This song is also part of the healing workshop Job, Jennifer and Jesus.

18. I am Your Song

A third song from the Job, Jennifer and Jesus healing workshop reflects God’s verdict at the end of Job. In all his screaming, says God, ‘Job spoke the truth about me.’ Job is affirmed by God in spite of all evidence to the contrary and the words of well-meaning friends who see Job as a victim of sin and God’s judgement. The Melody chosen for this song is Christ is Alive.

19. Great is your Faith

This is a song of hope for those who suffer physically, socially or spiritually. All too often spiritual leaders suggest that suffering is the result of weak faith. Yet Jesus said to a Canaanite woman, a non-Israelite who was called a dog, that her faith was great! This song celebrates our faith as a gift that bonds us with Christ, no matter what others may imply and no matter how traumatic the circumstances. The melody is Christ is Alive or In Christ there is no East or West.

20. Born for Resurrection

The final song reflects a strong message of hope for those who are suffering. It brings together the themes of Job, Thomas and Jesus. Whatever our pain or terror, the reality of resurrection remains a living source of empowerment through Christ, not just a hope for the future. The melody was written in 1970 by Paul Weber in St Louis, USA.
Why?
Why does God give light to the sufferer,
life to the bitter in spirit,
to those who long for death that does not come,
who search for it more than treasure?
Why?

Yes, why is life given to a person whose way is hid,
whose way is hedged in by God?
What’s the point of living if your way,
the very purpose of your life
has been hidden by God? Yes, by God!

(Job 3.20-23)
1. WHY, O WHY THIS WILD TSUNAMI?

Written in the wake of the Asian tsunami

1. Why? O why this wild tsunami?
   Why this cruel mystery?
   Why? O why these raging waters
   Sweeping loved ones out to sea?
   Was our God consumed by anger
   As when Noah faced his rage?
   Or is there a deeper reason
   Earth has taken centre stage?

2. Why? O why this mass compassion?
   Why this change of human heart?
   Why amid the graves of thousands
   Do our hatreds fall apart?
   Even in the poorest village,
   Even where the outcaste live,
   Those with something sell their jewels,
   Those with nothing give and give!

3. Lord, you’ve suffered down the ages,
   Waiting for a surge of love;
   People of your planet hating
   In the name of God above!
   Now you speak in one tsunami,
   Stirring what lies deep inside.
   Is this how your son once suffered,
   Died when love was crucified?

4. Is that God among the debris,
   Weeping on a battered shore,
   Holding in her arms an infant—
   One! No, two! No, maybe more!
   God made flesh knows human grieving;
   God made flesh knows our distress.
   Help us, God, to find you weeping
   With an infant at your breast!

Words: Copyright Norman Habel, July 2005
Melody: Joyful! Joyful! We adore you!
2. THE CRYING TREE

Written after the suicide of a friend’s child

1. Beneath a crying tree,
   Sometimes I lie;
   Torn by my wondering:
   Why, God, O why?
   Why all this hurt within?
   Why such an empty sky?
   Why all these senseless wrongs?
   Why, God, O why?

2. Christ on the crying tree,
   Waiting to die:
   Why, God, forsake me now?
   Why, God, O why?
   God can you now forgive?
   God will you help me die?
   God do you feel my pain?
   God can you cry?

3. Christ, if I wound myself
   Under your tree,
   Will all the pain escape?
   Will I be free?
   Christ, help me find within
   Faith in myself again;
   Help me discover you
   Under my pain.

4. Is love the only way
   Someone survives?
   Is love the blood that heals
   Wounds in our lives?
   What if I took the leap:
   Claiming my painful cries
   Were simply God’s deep love
   Helping me to rise!

5. Beneath the crying tree,
   Christ knows my cry,
   Feels all the hurts I feel,
   Knows how I die.
   Deeper than bleeding wounds,
   Deeper than hidden veins,
   Deeper then death itself,
   Christ feels the pain.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2004
Melody: Robin Mann 2004
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Words: Copyright Norman Habel, 2004
Melody: Nearer my God to Thee
3. SONG OF ST STEPHEN

1. When Stephen was stoned
   The rocks fell like rain;
   With each heavy blow,
   Our God felt the pain.
   Yes, Jesus who died,
   Our God crucified,
   Felt the pain,
   Felt the pain.

2. When youths are rejected
   And treated like dirt,
   When children are crushed
   Our God feels the hurt.
   Yes, Jesus who died,
   Our God crucified,
   Feels the hurt,
   Feels the hurt.

3. When women are battered
   There is no excuse;
   When young girls are raped,
   Our God knows abuse.
   Yes, Jesus who died,
   Our God crucified
   Knows abuse,
   Knows abuse.

4. When people are cursed
   By notions of race,
   And treated like brutes,
   Our God feels disgrace,
   Yes, Jesus who died,
   Our God crucified
   Feels disgrace,
   Feels disgrace.

5. The men who stoned Stephen
   Would not let him live;
   But Stephen responded
   O Lord, please forgive.
   Yes, Jesus who died,
   Our God crucified,
   Please forgive,
   Please forgive.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel, 2001
Melody: Copyright Leigh Newton 2001
4. DEEP, DEEP WITHIN

1. Deep, deep within my human heart,
   Beneath where mem’ries hide,
   The spirit child within me cries,
   ‘Please help me find the light.’

2. Deep, deep within my spirit womb,
   Before I face the dawn,
   The spirit child within me cries,
   ‘Please help me to be born.’

3. My infant eyes are faced with lights
   That easily deceive;
   My spirit child cries out in pain,
   ‘Please help me to believe.’

4. God, when I take the leap of faith,
   Accept the child I am,
   What spirit love can nurture me
   With more than sacred spam?

5. Then when my spirit dares connect
   With dreamings in the land,
   Will I find God awaiting there
   To hold my spirit hand?

6. Deep, deep within my human heart
   My spirit child may rise;
   If Christ’s own spirit gives to me
   A spirit-filled surprise.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2003
Melody: The Lord’s My Shepherd
5. ADAM, LOOK NOT BACK

In honour of my mentor Von

1. Adam, look not back on Eden
   Longing for the tree of death,
   Offering a hidden wisdom
   Fashioned by the serpent’s breath;
   For if God’s creating Spirit
   Penetrates this dusty Earth,
   Life is under, with and in us.

2. Moses, dream not yet of Egypt
   When injustice ruled the land,
   Nor recall those luscious gardens
   As you face the Sinai sand;
   For if God descends in fire
   To transform this desert band
   Hope is under, with and in us.

3. Prophet, look not back with yearning
   To the good old days we own,
   When the poor and black and hungry
   Knew their proper place in town;
   For if God has sent Messiah
   Turning this world upside down
   Change is under, with and in us.

4. Jonah, wild reluctant prophet,
   Brag not like a chastened boy,
   Not of Nineveh in sackcloth,
   Nor the fish that spoiled your ploy;
   For the Rider of the Heavens
   Makes Leviathan a toy,
   Laughing under, with and in us.

5. Mary, linger not with angels
   Grieving at the empty tomb,
   Wishing you could rock your baby
   In some warm celestial room;
   For if God became incarnate,
   Pleased to grace a human womb,
   Christ is under, with and in us.

6. Christian, look ahead with passion
   To the kingdom of the Lord,
   Stirring under, with and in us
   Songs of mystery unheard;
   For each one who trusts tomorrow,
   Taking Jesus at his word,
   Lives on ever, with and in him.

Words: Copyright. Norman Habel 1978
Melody: Of The Father’s Love Begotten
6. HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE WITH YOUR EYES?
From the Musical Thomas The Twin

How far can you see with your eyes, Thomas?
As far as my bleeding wounds?
If you could see the wounds of the weak,
The bleeding of innocent people in pain
Whose blood is poured out on the ground,
You would see with more than your eyes!

How far can you see with your eyes, Peter?
As far as the nails in my hands?
If you could see the nails that are driven,
When brothers betray each other for fear,
Refusing to understand,
You would see with more than your eyes!

How far can you see with your eyes, Mary?
As far as the thorns on my brow?
If you could see the thorns in the heart,
Of children abandoned to die without love,
Or sold for the price of a cow,
You would see with more than your eyes.

How far can you see with your eyes, brother?
As far as the bruise on my back?
If you could see the bruising of God,
Who suffers with mothers oppressed by their men
And endlessly under attack,
You would see with more than your eyes.

How far can you see with your eyes, sister?
As far as the facts you can prove?
If you could see the trust of a child,
The mysr’y of God in a butterfly wing,
The hidden brilliance of love
You would see with more than your eyes.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel  1985
Melody: Copyright Peggy Jenks 1985
7. THE DARK SIDE OF DOUBT

*Taken from the Musical Thomas The Twin*

1. If truth has her throne
   On the dark side of doubt,
   Then the whisper of God
   But echoes our shout;
   A colour like blue
   Is a deep shade of white;
   And ev’ry new day
   Is the flip side of night.

2. If hope has its birth
   At the grave of despair,
   Then the promise of God
   Is the pain that we bear;
   And ugly mishaps
   That can fly in our face
   Are seen in due time
   As moments of grace.

3. If faith is a voice
   That sings deeper than sound,
   In the voids of our mind
   Where myst’ry is found,
   Then seeking for proofs
   Is like counting the wind
   And wanting just facts
   Is a sister to sin.

4. If Jesus the Christ
   And our Thomas are twins,
   Then wisdom and folly
   Are brothers again;
   The wonder of life
   And the terror of death,
   Together restore
   The sweet magic of breath,

5. If God became human
   And lived upon Earth,
   We’d feel for our God
   From the day of his birth;
   And he would be found
   In the silence of pain
   And beating as close
   As our jugular vein!

*Words: Copyright Norman Habel  1985
Melody: Copyright Peggy Jenks 1985*
8. THE WAY OF THE WILDERNESS

In honour of Dan Erlander

1. A voice in the wilderness calls us to gather,
   To come and discover the wilderness way,
   To love life with manna and share all we gather,
Embracing the call of the wilderness way:
   A way of forgiveness, releasing the Spirit
   To heal all the broken in body and soul,
Resisting the grip of a world craving power,
   We’re free to join Christ in the wilderness way.

2. The cries of the wilderness call us each morning,
The cries of the forest distressed by our greed,
The wail of rare species absorbing our poison,
The toxins that threaten the wilderness way.
The soul of this planet is suffering for us;
The groaning creation recoils from our sin,
And Christ from the tomb stirs the Earth with a quaking
To lead us anew on the wilderness way.

3. With love unconditional Christ bids us offer
Our lives to each other as partners in peace;
To love human enemies hiding in darkness
And millions with Aids on their wilderness way;
To host the untouchable, battered and starving,
Who live with but hope to resist brutal power.
So halt all those weapons that celebrate vengeance,
And walk with the poor on Christ’s wilderness way.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel  2002
Melody: The Ash Grove
9. HEAR THE LAND CRYING

Written with Indigenous friends

1. Hear the land crying, crying in darkness;
   Hear the land crying, crying in pain:
   “Where are my people, torn from their homelands?
   People, my people, come back again!”

2. Hear the blood crying, crying for justice;
   Hear the blood crying, out of the ground:
   “Massacres, murders, great names forgotten!
   Where is the healing? Where is it found?”

3. Hear mothers crying, crying for children;
   Hear mothers crying losing control!
   “Baby, my baby, why did they take you?
   Why did they steal my love from your soul?”

4. Hear fathers crying, sacrificed, dying;
   Hear fathers crying after their death:
   “We gave our lives for good and for country.
   We shed our blood here, lest we forget.”

5. Hear the land crying, crucified, crying;
   Hear the land crying, gasping in pain:
   “I share your suffering! I offer healing!
   Will those who love me, join my refrain?”

6. Hear the land calling those on the journey,
   Hear the land crying, calling you home:
   “All who know sorry, sorry for stealing,
   I bring you healing, cover your shame.”

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2000
Melody: Morning Has Broken
10. LITTLE BROWN FEET

Written for Sorry Day 2003

1. Did we really say sorry with all of those words?
   Did we really say sorry when we marched down the street?
   Did we really say sorry for stealing away
   The lives and the hopes of those little brown feet?

2. Did we mean what we said when we shouted that day
   When we shouted aloud, ‘You’re no longer alone’?
   Did we mean what we said when we promised to help
   Those little brown feet to find their way home?

3. If we really say sorry just what will it mean?
   Will we feel what they feel when walk down their street?
   If we speak true the shame on the journey to heal
   Will hope stir again in those wounded brown feet?

4. If we walk down the trail with those hopeful brown feet,
   If we join them no matter what age they may be,
   If we walk and we work on bringing them home,
   Those dancing brown feet once again will run free.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2003
Melody: Copyright Anjali Habel-Orrell 2003
11. VOICES CALLING  
Written for Reconciliation 2000

1. Voices calling from the shadows,  
Hidden stories of the land;  
Christ, you know our wounded hist’ry,  
Help us now to understand.

Refrain  
Battered through the wounds of time,  
Christ, your cross still reconciles,  
Reconciles.  
Christ, your cross still reconciles.

2. How can we embrace each other,  
Face with eyes we meet in fear?  
Reach out, Christ, in your compassion,  
Take the strange and make it dear.

3. Here we turn in due repentance,  
As we sense our parents’ shame!  
We are sorry! We are sorry!  
Lord, forgive in Jesus’ name.

4. Can we face the force of justice  
For a people dispossessed?  
Christ, you bear the world’s injustice,  
Heal this land and bring it rest.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 1997  
Melody: Copyright Sue Collyer 1997
12. THE LEAST OF THESE

Written among the poor in India

1. If you hope to be honoured like heroes and kings,
   Then perhaps you should pause now and see,
   When you care for the least of these in the slum,
   You are caring, says Jesus, for me.

2. If you seek Christ appearing in splendour and power,
   Then perhaps you should take time to see,
   That the load of the least you share in the field,
   You are sharing, says Jesus, with me.

3. If you long for the Spirit to flood you with gifts,
   Then perhaps you should slow down and see,
   That the spirit you stir in poor women abused,
   You are stirring, says Jesus, in me.

4. If you long for a feast with our Lord somewhere high,
   Then perhaps you should step back and see,
   That the food you are sharing with children with AIDs,
   You are sharing, says Jesus, with me.

5. If you wait for the water of life to be clear,
   Then perhaps you should breath deep and see,
   When you drink with Untouchables straight from their well,
   You are drinking, says Jesus, with me.

6. If you long for the day when Christ takes your woes,
   Then perhaps you should hold back to see,
   When you weep with the broken and cry out in pain,
   You are weeping, says Jesus, with me.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel  2005
Melody: From the High Holy Hills
13. SURROUNDED

Written for Maundy Thursday 2006

1. Surrounded by an anxious crowd
Whose palms waved in the breeze,
This Jesus was the one they dreamed
Would come to set them free.

2. Surrounded by a Zealot plot
To break the Roman lords,
This Jesus was the one they hoped
Would bid them take up swords.

3. Surrounded by a Roman band
Who crushed at any cost,
This Jesus was the latest threat
And destined for the cross.

4. Surrounded by a pack of priests
Who followed pious goals,
This Jesus stirred the crowd too much
For them to keep control.

5. Surrounded by a world of threats
That take away our breath,
This man is dining with his friends
And sharing his own death.

6. Surrounded now we come to eat
A meal of sacred food,
This Jesus sharing his own life,
His body and his blood.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2006
Melody: Copyright Robin Mann 2006
13. SURROUNDED
Written for Maundy Thursday 2006

1. Surrounded by an anxious crowd
   Whose palms waved in the breeze,
   This Jesus was the one they dreamed
   Would come to set them free.

2. Surrounded by a Zealot plot
   To break the Roman lords,
   This Jesus was the one they hoped
   Would bid them take up swords.

3. Surrounded by a Roman band
   Who crushed at any cost,
   This Jesus was the latest threat
   And destined for the cross.

4. Surrounded by a pack of priests
   Who followed pious goals,
   This Jesus stirred the crowd too much
   For them to keep control.

5. Surrounded by a world of threats
   That take away our breath,
   This man is dining with his friends
   And sharing his own death.

6. Surrounded now we come to eat
   A meal of sacred food,
   This Jesus sharing his own life,
   His body and his blood.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2006
Melody: In Christ there is no East 799
14. SHE’S HOT ON THE HILL

Taken from A Bloke Called Jesus

Introduction: At the sentence of death
the verdict was passed through the heat:

Chorus: She’s a hot one today.
She’s a scorcher, alright!
She’s hot on the crown of the hill.

1. He was led to a mound
   Where death is alive on the hill.
   From a bleached desert tree
   He was lifted up high in the heat.

2. The name carved in bark
   Read ‘King of the Bush’ on the hill.
   From the sun to the sand
   The word was passed through the heat:

Chorus: She’s a hot one today.
She’s a scorcher, alright!
She’s hot on the crown of the hill.

3. By his side in the sun
   Two bushrangers hung on the hill.
   Stripped naked of clothes
   His life was exposed to the heat.

4. From the slow setting sun
   Rose the wings of a throne on the hill.
   And the verdict was passed
   As the bushman was killed by the heat:

Chorus: She’s a hot one today.
She’s a scorcher, alright!
She’s hot on the crown of the hill.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 1982
Melody: Copyright Robin Mann 1982
15. THE LAMENT OF NICODEMUS

Taken from *A Bloke Called Jesus*

Introduction: The man who took Jesus’ body from the cross was Nicodemus. Deep into the night he sang his lament with his companions.

1. We took down his body,
   His whip beaten body,
   We looked at the face of his dying:

Chorus: And we moaned and we moaned,
   Like a curlew out calling the moon.
   And we moaned and we moaned
   ‘Til the dawn.

2. We took of his bush crown,
   His sharp sweaty bush crown,
   The mark of disgrace he was wearing:
   And we moaned….

3. Far back in the cave hole,
   The black haunted cave hole,
   We laid up his body for sleeping:
   And we moaned….

4. Engraved in the cave hole,
   The black haunted cave hole,
   Were images left from the Dreaming:
   And we moaned…

5. We bound up his body,
   His sun savoured body,
   And left it for waking one morning:
   And we moaned…

6. Outside ‘neath the gum trees,
   The wide weeping gum trees,
   We cracked his old stockwhip in parting;
   And we moaned….

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 1982
Music: Copyright Robin Mann 1982
After these things,
Joseph of Aramathea,
who was disciple of Jesus,
though a secret one because of the Jews,
asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus.
Pilate gave him permission;
so he came and removed the body.

Nicodemus,
who had at first come to Jesus by night,
also came
bringing a mixed of myrrh and aloes,
weighing about a hundred pounds.

They took the body of Jesus
and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths,
according to the burial custom of the Jews.
Now there was a garden
in the place where he was crucified,
and in the garden there was a new tomb
in which no one had ever been laid.
And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation,
and the tomb was nearby,
they laid Jesus there.

John 19.38-42
16. O LORD, MY SHEPHERD, WHY SUCH WANT?

Taken from Job, Jennifer and Jesus

1. O Lord, my shepherd, why such want,
   Such senseless wrong and pain?
   Lord, why this spate of random death?
   The world has gone insane!

2. God, why this screaming in my soul,
   This wound that will not heal?
   Lord, can you hear the bitter cries
   And feel the pain I feel?

3. I scream, I scream, I scream aloud,
   As bold as screams can be,
   To break the wall that blocks my way
   And set my spirit free.

4. I cry with Job who screamed of old,
   with curse, lament and wail.
   Like Job, may all my screams help me
   Walk down the healing trail.

5. Yea, though I walk through death’s dark veil,
   Through anguish, tears and loss,
   Grant me the faith still to believe
   There’s healing through your cross.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2002
Melody: The Lord’s My Shepherd

17. WHAT A FRIEND!!

A satire from Job, Jennifer and Jesus
1. What a friend we have in helpers
   Who know all the pious pap:
   “All your ills are one big blessing,
   Just a beautiful mishap!
   All your hurts are sent to try you,
   Guarded by an angel fence!
   When one day you get to heaven
   All your pains will make good sense!”

2. What a friend we have in churches
   Who pronounce the terms of true:
   “If you don’t believe things our way
   You’ll be in eternal stew!
   Hold the Bible words exactly:
   Sheep and goats divided clean!
   God won’t tolerate the lukewarm,
   Living somewhere in between!”

3. What a friend we have in preachers
   Who expose our ev’ry sin:
   “Come confess each little detail!
   God’s good patience weareth thin!
   What’s the sin that caused this suff’ring?
   You deserve to bear the blame.
   You have listened to the serpent!
   You have played the devil’s game!”

4. What a friend we have in chaplains
   Floating through the wards with ease:
   “We know just the way you’re feeling!
   Life is full of this disease!”
   O what joy we often forfeit
   When we coat the truth with cream!
   Spurning the advice Job offers:
   “Take it to the Lord and scream!”

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2002
Melody: What a Friend we have in Jesus
18. I AM YOUR SONG

Taken from Job, Jennifer and Jesus

1. I am your song, your God, your star,
   Creating you the way you are;
   You are no failure, fool or freak:
   My Spirit formed you quite unique.

2. Leave those who play the victim game,
   And make you feel that you’re to blame.
   Hear now my strong affirming word:
   Your name is clear, your soul restored!

3. Heed not the preacher bold and tall
   Proclaiming that your faith is small!
   Hear now my promise as I speak:
   Your faith can move a mountain peak!

4. Let no one say you’re but a worm,
   With sins like Ad’m and born to squirm.
   Feel now my strong confirming hand,
   To lead you tall across the land.

5. I am the God that Job once knew,
   Declaring that his screams were true!
   Pursue his journey to the end:
   Let Job and Jesus be your friends.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel  2003
Melody: Christ is Alive
19. GREAT IN YOUR FAITH

1. Great is your faith! Hear Jesus’ word!
The gift is yours, so be assured,
You have no need to cringe or hide;
Your faith in Christ lives deep inside.

2. Great in your faith! So make the move!
And learn to walk the path of love,
To welcome all who come each day,
With Christ your host, your song, your way.

3. Great is your faith! Go clear your name!
Go right the wrongs that bring your shame.
With faith in Christ you too can be
A partner in Christ’s victory.

4. Great is your faith amid your pain
When life is filled with stress and strain;
Far deeper than your hidden fear,
The Wounded One is always near.

5. Great is your faith! Come dine with Christ!
Come drink and quench your inner thirst.
Let Christ’s own blood and body heal
The deepest wound your heart may feel.

6. Let not the day when death draws near
Disturb you soul with burning fear.
Christ did not say ‘You’re weak so wait’.
Christ said, ‘Go live, your faith is great’.

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 2003
Melody: Christ is Alive
20. BORN FOR RESURRECTION

1. Did you hear a song this morning
   Bursting through the silent dawn?
   Did you feel an ancient rhythm
   From the day this world was born?
   Sing aloud with God on high
   As God spans this Earth with sky:
   Join the Lord and all creation
   In a song of celebration!

2. Did you hear a sound this morning
   Breaking through a silent tomb?
   Did you feel an awesome tremor
   Like the stirring of a womb?
   Rise and greet the risen Lord
   With God’s new triumphant word:
   Celebrate you bold election!
   You are born for resurrection!

3. Does the pain that tears your darkness
   Mock you like the plight of Job?
   Does it reach where death is laughing
   And no human hand can probe?
   Hear the song that sets us free
   From the dread of agony:
   Our Redeemer, Christ, has risen
   To release our lives from prison!

4. Has the subtle doubt of Thomas
   Bound your mind with chain and bar?
   Have you lost the deep assurance
   That affirms the self you are?
   Hail the man whose flesh was torn:
   Face in him yourself new-born;
   You are formed to bear God’s image!
   Bear it new in Christ, your courage!

5. Did you hear the news this morning
   Breaking through our petty strife?
   Do you feel our parents wonder
   If we know the Lord of life?
   Set us free to live this word
   From the free triumphant Lord:
   Celebrate your bold election!
   You are born for resurrection!

Words: Copyright Norman Habel 1970
Melody: Copyright Paul Weber 1970