

It is Finished!

A Good Friday Reflection

By Etta Kumar

On recommendation by tikanga Pacifica, Etta Kumar was our Provincial representative at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) for 2010 in New York. Etta passed away in January 2015 leaving a distraught husband and two teenage daughters. This piece was circulated to those of us who knew Etta by her husband Manoj just after Easter last year. He had found it in her diary.

During Jesus time there was one way a carpenter let the contractor know the job was finished. A signature, so to speak!

Imagine a hot afternoon in Galilee, Jesus finished a final piece of work he has been working on for several days.

The hair of his strong forearms is matted with sawdust and sweat. He takes a final and welcome drink of cool water from a leather bag

Then standing to the side of his work, he pours water to his face and chest, splashing it over his arms to clean himself before the journey home. With a towel, he pats his face and arms dry.

Finally, Jesus folds the towel neatly in half, and then in half again. He sets it on the work bench and walks away. Later, whoever arrived to inspect the work will see the towel and un-

derstand the simple message...the work is complete.

Christ's disciples knew this carpenter's tradition. On a Sunday of sorrow, three years later, after Jesus had set aside his carpenter's tools, Peter will crouch to look into an empty tomb and see only the linens that the risen Lord has left behind.

A smile crosses Peter's face as his sorrow is replaced by hope when he sees the wrap that had covered Jesus' face.

It had been folded in half and then folded in half again and left neatly on the floor of the tomb.

Peter understands. The carpenter has left behind a simple message... it is finished.



Equipping Women for Mission & Ministry

By Kaye Dyer

In this Decade of Mission the challenge we are all faced with is to find a strategy to disciple women so that they are equipped for mission and ministry. What environment do we need to create so that we all will feel empowered to minister in their homes, workplaces and places of recreation?

For the past two years, I have been engaging in a *three-dimensional ministry** discipleship learning community sponsored by Wellington Diocese. At our final debrief last November we were read Ezekiel 37, the vision of the dry bones coming alive, and challenged to ask God which dry bones he was asking us to speak life to. I immediately saw an army of women, some standing, some sitting, many lying down. As I watched they came alive and stepped into position. I knew God was challenging me to again pick up the task of discipling his women so that they hear their unique call in the mission of God.

I am so fortunate to live in Picton, a beautiful port town in the Marlborough Sounds. It is a lovely place to invite women to relax. On Friday night, over 40 women gathered together in Picton to watch the DVD *The War Room*. Many of us were challenged in our walk with God and especially our prayer lives. We began Saturday morning being led into the presence of God with beautiful sung worship. Deborah Paton reminded us of how much we are loved by Jesus and our new identity in Christ. After coffee and chat, Miriam Taylor lead us through reading Psalm 8 using *lectio divina*. We soaked in the glory of the Lord in creation.

Following a leisurely lunch and a walk to take in the scenery we came back together and talked about spiritual warfare: identifying our real enemy, not flesh and blood but powers and principalities, recognising his strategy to steal, kill and destroy all that Jesus has purpose for us through lies, gossip, slander, jealousy, weariness, isolation, broken relationships etc and the need to watch each other's backs by speaking scriptural truth and blessing over one another.

Next, the challenge: What is Jesus saying to you? How will you respond?

The DVD contained many challenges: forgiving others, having a prayer strategy, praying scripture, identifying the real enemy, taking authority over our homes, allowing the Lord, the King of Glory, to fight for us, passing on our faith experience by mentor-



The programme banner quoting Matthew 10:8 "Freely you have received. Freely give" demonstrating our we pour our lives into others.

ing others especially younger women etc.

We each left with a plan to put into action what God had said and a plan for accountability.

It thrilled me to hear the women confirming their accountability as they were leaving. I heard another was teaching her home group *Lectio Divina* the following week answering the call to make disciples who will make disciples. I am being asked when the next day will be.

I encourage you to read Ezekiel 37:1-10. You may also like to use our theme song as a prayer. Let us proclaim, "come alive!" to those we know and love who are no longer walking with Jesus

and to those struggling in our broken world.

* *three-dimensional ministry* refers to a discipleship structure; the three dimensions being 'UP' (God response), 'IN' (Church & Family response) and 'OUT' (Community response). We need all three balanced to be disciples of Christ.

"Come Alive" (Dry Bones) by Lauren Daigle

Verse 1

Through the eyes of men
It seems there's so much we have lost
As we look down the road
Where all the prodigals have walked
One by one the enemy has whispered lies
Then led them off as slaves

Verse 2

But we know that you are God
Yours is the victory
We know there is more to come
That we may not yet see
So with the faith you've given us
We'll step into the valley unafraid

Chorus

We call out to dry bones
"Come alive! Come alive!"
We call out to dead hearts
"Come alive! Come alive!"

Up out of the ashes let us see an army rise
We call out to dry bones "Come alive!"



Sarah Braunstein worshipping in dance to "Come Alive"

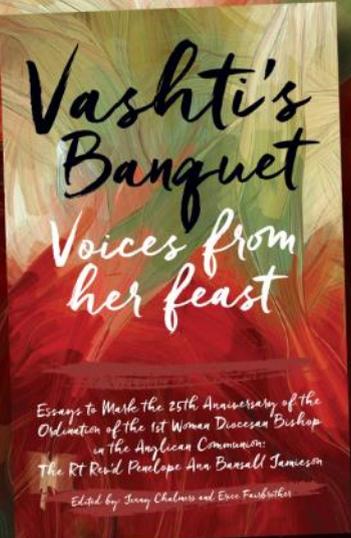
Verse 3

God of endless mercy, God of unrelenting love
Rescue every daughter
Bring us back the wayward sons
By your Spirit breathe upon them
Show the world that you alone can save
You alone can save

Bridge (2x)

So breathe, oh breath of God now
Breathe, oh breath of God
Breathe, oh breath of God, now breathe

CCLI Song #6573588



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Ministry Memoirs

From a Life of Ministry—Remembered Moments

A Parishioner's Story

A parishioner asked to be put on the prayer list as she was going into hospital for surgery on her back. She was very nervous as she had never had a sick day in her working life, nor had she ever been in hospital. As she was sent off to another city for the op, we only heard her story later.

The operation had been longer than the surgeons had thought, and her recovery time was going to be longer. She told me that what she thought was going to straightforward, turned out to have complications. Alone, in the night, in a

ward, in a city she didn't know, without friends or close family nearby, her sense of being far from God's presence grew larger, threatening her faith, shaking her soul. The Chaplain, she was told, was on call at night for emergencies only. Yet her need for faith's reassurance felt like an emergency, and despair began to deepen within her.

At this point a passing doctor saw the open door and dropped in on impulse. Soon the two women were talking together into the night. The doctor was a Muslim woman of faith, and quickly recognised the parishioner as a Christian woman of faith also. One was seeking the presence of God, the other brought that presence in to focus with love and respect for the faith of the seeker. And it changed everything! This all happened about 15 years ago, but the parishioner to this day has never forgotten the love of Christ being ministered to her that night. She saw for the first time how love helps us cross all kinds of prejudices and barriers. I was so encouraged by her story too as I hope readers will be.

Eleanor's Stoles

By Eleanor Lane



Craft work seems to be dwindling as people rely on cheap items from overseas so I was interested to read in our last newsletter how Revd Numia Tomoana and the group Gospel Weavers designed and wove stoles for Bishop Don Tamihere. I have often wondered about the inspiration that leads to a design. I know a lot of people buy their stoles or say they have had them made for them, so it was good to hear that these ones were especially special.

What made me interested in craft work? My mother taught me to knit when I was about seven. Umawera District School had a Show and I won second prize for my knitted doll's booties. They were red and green and not quite the same size. Marjorie, a



much bigger girl won first for her child's jersey. There were only two entries!

Many years later I learnt to spin wool fleece. My first spinning wheel was bought from a shop in Nelson. It cost forty-four guineas. (One guinea was one pound and one shilling.) On moving to Auckland after marrying I joined the Handweavers Guild, (now called the Handweavers and Spinners Guild) where I was taught how to weave as well as spin. This accomplished I wove many pieces of material to cover the simply dreadful old squabs we had in our church. They had been red but had faded to greeny-



brown. I don't think any people realised they were sitting on handwoven and hand spun material.

About thirty years later, our church voted to become a Local Shared Ministry Unit and I was asked to become one of the three priests. I was somewhat gob smacked to say the least. I had always been an Anglican but this was different. With much prayer and agonising, I agreed. (I kept thinking of Moses and Jonah and their indecision). We were advised to buy our stoles. LSM priests are non-stipendiary and so after I had bought an Alb and one stole, the cost was going up, so I bought three kit set ones with instructions. They were okay but I kept having this little insistent voice saying, "you could make better ones than these". I now make felt so I decided I would buy fine 19-micron merino fleece and silk and make my own. The other felt makers in our group were bemused to hear what I was up to and watched with interest and often shared their ideas too even ones who weren't Christian!

Much thought went into my first stole...the purple for Advent and Lent... Sun/Son. The midsummer solstice and the birth of Jesus and then Lent... for us Autumn when leaves change and branches are bare, but not dead. So, I had these ideas incorporated for this stole. It all seemed to work. The rising Sun is Jesus and the dying leaves are for crucifixion, but the twigs hold the promise of resurrection at the appropriate time while the cross binds it all together.

The white stole was awkward. White wool discolours after a

while so I decided to use a creamy wool with white silk overlay to lighten it. Somehow the brown silk moved more than I wanted but time was passing so I made it up anyway. It's a free form cross. I agonised over its imperfection and imbalance. Funnily enough my friends liked it best of all. After all, the Cross was not meant to be smooth and beautiful. Just some rough tree and presumably all crosses were different from each other.



The green stole, oh what a dilemma! All I could think of was the copious numbers of lemons and other citrus in my garden that grows so well in Auckland over the winter months. I like my garden. Some people say it's a terrible mess, but I like it. The grass is always green too and needs lots of mowing. Not very ecclesiastical I'm afraid. Well that's what I made. Lemons and tangelos, God made them too, so when I was castigated by one who knew better what church design was like, it was too late to change. Maybe figs would have been more biblical. I did it anyway and beaded it for greater emphasis.

I let my hair down with my red stole. I think of flickering fire for Pentecost. I had a beautiful paua shell and I wondered whether I could copy some of the amazing lights and shades in it. I had a great time gathering tiny pieces of silk and a strange slippery shiny blue stuff that looked just right but was diabolical to try to keep in place, as it bubbled up and did its own thing and gave it a different perspective that I would find hard ever to do again. After all Jesus was different too and did things differently so maybe my blue shiny stuff was sent to remind me of the unex-

pected way Jesus did things. It seemed to work, together with tiny pieces of real paua shell as a fringe. When I wanted to increase the shine or emphasis on something I used beads and sequins, or top stitching.

I made a black stole for funerals but I've never used it. It is too sombre.

What would I not do next time if I ever made any again. I forgot that wool is hot in summer. I forgot that fringing made with fine

wool is relatively tender and breaks easily if you kneel or tread on it. It would have been better to have put a stronger fibre like cotton or linen with it. Although I am tall, I could have made them shorter as they slip sometimes and trail. But I had so much fun. My first stoles went to another LSM church which hadn't any. They were perfectly good but I needed to set my seal on my work. I enjoy wearing mine when it's appropriate. I wonder who else has a story to tell about the designs on their stoles.

Soft Whispers

By Ruth Hammond

The writing began ...

One mid-winter night, when I found a new mystery gently interrupting my sleep. A quiet, persistent thought repeatedly invaded my mind. "I want you to get up and write." Mysteriously resigned, I slipped quietly from between the bedclothes, blindly felt for my dressing gown, fumbled for my glasses... and crept downstairs.

The night was silent.

With pen and paper gathered, I began to write. Words came tumbling into my mind... followed by blank spaces. I waited. More words... silence... and then even more words were followed by silence as if the silence was waiting for me to get the words on paper. It was as though a stream of knowledge had been sifted, sorted, untangled and presented with a crystal-like clarity.

Suddenly it was complete. I knew it.

And the writings kept coming. Words flew into my mind. Pictures filled my imagination with insights into depths of emotional hurts that people were carrying and entered the core of my being. I checked the writings through my spiritual mentor before even daring to share them. I was absolutely bemused by it all. And yet people were encouraged and refreshed by the insights the words conveyed.

In response to the first writing, as well as many more over the next three years, one person's reactions truly amazed me. They were those of my husband.

Over the next months, the writings continued. He became very protective of them, dated them and photocopied them. I was far more casual. If a piece got lost then I believed it had landed

where it was meant to go. This casualness was not for him. He treasured the writings and was strengthened by them.

Three years after the first writing my precious husband died from cancer. A few months after he died, I put my pen aside and carefully stored the collection of over sixty writings in a folder. I treated them as treasured mementos of a gift that had brought a depth of peace to troubled times which had turned our lives upside-down.

What did it take to relinquish those keys and free these words? As always, it is in the desert times of our lives, when we least expect anything good to happen that miracles occur.

A day came when my younger son died suddenly and without warning. I had gone to his home to pick him up and take him out to lunch. Instead, I discovered that death had claimed him. I believe it was as much a surprise for him as it was for me. For



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me, a desert time had crashed into my life uninvited.

I asked the Revd Peter Beck, who took the funeral, if he would read one of the writings I had given this son when he was a teenager. I knew I could deliver a eulogy but doubted I could read the poem. To my amazement, Peter asked if he could read the collection. After reading the writings, Peter said just one word to me.

'Publish'.

A few days later, words came into my mind again as they had all those years ago. The depth of the love for my son emerged from my soul to form a new writing. I decided it was time to reread the collection. To my utter amazement, I found many of them speaking directly to me. They brought a comfort and an even deeper peace.

I published. 'Soft Whispers ...small shouts ...deep waters ...' was born.

The 'Soft Whispers Book' - an unexpected ministry to women prisoners in New Zealand.

Thus, began a journey in which I trusted God every step of the way. Seemingly insurmountable doors opened miraculously as I followed the nudges I perceived He was giving me. In six months, the book was launched. Many sold, but many more remained stored under beds. I had obeyed God's nudge for the number to get printed and all I seemed to hear about the ones I had that remained was, "I have everything in place. Don't do anything yet. I will tell you what to do when the time comes."

Finally, the day came when it seemed as though He said, "I want you to give them to prisoners. Don't worry about selling them. You have already paid for them." I thought about it and recognised He was right. Not only that, He had waited twenty-eight years for me to publish the words He had given me. Once again, I needed to trust and obey the quiet inner thoughts which had led me to put pen to paper, all those years ago.

To cut an amazing story short, six hundred copies were accepted as a Christmas present for the women in two of our prisons. In one of the prisons the chaplain asked each woman to open the book at any page and if they didn't want it, they were to give the book back to her so she could give it to someone else. Not one woman handed back the book offered to her. I have been told the women treasure the books.

Last November it seemed as though God was nudging me again with the thought, "You realise new prisoners have arrived during the year, don't you? Have you thought about them for this

Christmas?" To tell the truth I hadn't. His next nudge was, "I want you to contact those prison chaplains again and ask if they would like some more books."

I'm learning to obey the nudges. To my amazement, I was told the women had been asking for the 'purple book'. Both chaplains told me the responses after reading the writings had been many and positive. One of the chaplains told me she had not seen one book desecrated in the following year. Somehow, the writings had touched the hearts of the women. In total, a further 288 books were delivered to the prisons in time for last Christmas.

The writing has continued...

God continues to nudge me with writing. A second book is about to be published. It is totally different from the format of the first book. He surprised me with His request and His guidance. The next book was to record conversations I had with God, where I asked questions about real life situations in today's contexts. As quickly as I could write them down, answers flowed into my mind. They are the important questions we all want to ask but seldom give voice to. God's unconditional love for humankind flows through the answers. Once again, I am learning to trust and obey His nudges.

'Being ...with God' is about to be birthed.

Ruth Hammond has been a parishioner of All Saints' Howick



since 1965. During that time she has been on the Vestry, Sunday School Superintendent, Vicar's Warden, Diocesan Young Wives Leader, Editor of AAW's *Circle* Magazine, guest speaker at 'Anglicans in Aotearoa', Synod Representative and Prayer Team Leader. Previ-

ously known as Ruth Clark (1964-1994), she became Ruth Hammond after remarrying in 1995. Currently the co-ordinator of the "Classy Crafts" Market and Prayer Team Leader. *Classy Crafts* website <https://classycrafts.wordpress.com> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/classycraftsmarket>

The *Soft Whispers* book is available online at www.softwhispersbook.com

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the **Anglican Women's Studies Centre** was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

**2017 AWSC
HUI DATES
25—27 October**

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Anglican Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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