



ICDF Networks

October 2020

Network for Dance Teachers



One of the creative ways a teacher kept her pupils going during the Covid-19 lockdown was to have a 'Dance at Home' photo competition. The winning photo is shown above.

Read the full article on pages 5 & 6

To become part of the ICDF Network for Dance Teachers contact Sue at ... hodsonsue@gmail.com
To find out more about the Network <http://www.icdf.com/en/dance-teachers>

Tragedy or Transition

As humanity, we know tragedy as an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress. Several years ago, as I was moving through grief from the death of my husband, the Holy Spirit spoke this to my heart. “Nothing is tragedy. All is transition moving towards transformation.”

These were strong, yet comforting words for my soul. During this time of global distress and great unrest, I have been reminded of the powerful truth behind these words. I, in no way, want to minimize the suffering of events that we are experiencing. Loss is real. Pain is real. Sorrow is real. But I want to examine this thought in the light of scripture and how this truth affects worship and our expressions of worship.

Isaiah and Paul speak to us regarding the supremacy of God’s ways.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55)

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8)



Photo: Yvonne Peters

Both Isaiah and Paul speak of this incredible and sovereign God of the entire universe, who rules and reigns in ways far beyond our comprehension and promises to be with us in spite of personal sufferings, demonic powers, or global circumstances.

Each suffering epoch of time in Israel's history was aimed toward transformation:
From slaves in Egypt they became nomad desert dwellers.
From nomads they transitioned to become conquerors in the Promised Land.
From conquerors they became settlers.
From settlers they learned what it was to be exiles.
From exiles they returned to the land and became re-builders.
Each tragedy transitioned and positioned them for a transforming moment in their history.

So, now my brothers and sisters, what about the 2020 epoch we find ourselves living in? There are a few questions that seem fitting for consideration:

1. Am I positioned for transformation?
2. Am I ready to participate in the process?
3. Where is this present transitional time moving me?
4. What do I need to release?
5. What do I need to embrace?
6. Am I willing to go the distance with Jesus from this moment forward?
7. Have I settled the question of His absolute sovereignty over my life in this epoch of time, in my eternity, and in my expiration date?
8. Have I considered the victorious and difficult words of Jesus and what they might mean? Most especially, "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death."
9. Under the present pressure, am I taking the necessary time to take stock of my thoughts, my actions, and my reactions?
10. Having taken a deep look, am I being transformed into the image of Christ?



About the author: Yvonne Peters is a movement artist, author, choreographer and a leading pioneer in Christian dance ministry. Her exuberance, and spiritual depth in worship, has been amplified by over 40 years of public and private ministry. She served as a dancer, choreographer and dance director for the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem for 26 years. She was the dance director for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. Yvonne has ministered throughout the United States, Europe, the Baltic States, the Caribbean, South America, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, Israel, and the Russian Federation with its associated States. Yvonne has been the keynote speaker for national and international conferences. Her biblical teaching style is both foundational and practical. She also continues to mentor worship arts ministers. She recently released her first book, "Beyond the Dance: Thoughts from a Journey of Surrender."

Certainly, some hard questions that require a deep dive into the state of our souls. Bringing these questions before Jesus in prayer has brought me to times of repentance, especially in the areas of my selfishness and pride. It's caused me to weep and become aware of how deeply I am blinded to myself and how much I need Jesus moment by moment. One of the most difficult questions for me is number eight, especially the "loving their lives not unto death" part. I pray to be strong enough to stand-up under the weight of that commitment. What, you may be asking, does any of this have to do with worship or dancing? In fact, everything!

We cannot lead anyone to where we have not been. We cannot deeply worship and express that worship without our identity resting solely in the Lord Jesus. Nothing reveals the weakness of character, the sustainability of endurance, and the depth of our identity in Christ, like pressure brought on by tragedy. And nothing brings the purity of worship into the atmosphere like the one who has completely died to self-interests and is identified with Christ.

Galatians 2:20 says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live, I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and died for me."

Author Richard Rohr enumerates five hard truths for understanding identity in Christ relative to this scripture. I believe they are important for us to consider as we move forward in our transformational journey:

1. Life is hard.
2. You are not important.
3. Life is not about you.
4. You are not in control.
5. You are going to die.

Not particularly uplifting or encouraging at first glance, but please keep reading for a bit longer.

Life is hard, yes, but it is also beautiful, precious, and wonderful. And while life is difficult, Jesus offers to us His yoke (His way and manner of being and doing) and demonstrates through His life a way of making the burdens -- the hardness of life -- bearable and light.

You are not important stands out so harshly relative to present culture that sells self-esteem as a commodity. Your life is precious and you are valued by God and those who love you, but I am referring to the many unimportant ways we build our own images and walls of defense that compel us to work tirelessly for perfection or at least the appearance that we have it all together. Whether we are self-aware or not, we work hard on living our lives through the image we have of ourselves. And that image is not important in the scheme of eternity and protecting image does not cultivate an atmosphere of pure worship. God introduced Himself as -- I AM -- to Moses. Jesus spoke to the religious community of His day and referenced Himself as "before Abraham, I AM. I AM is the all-important One. We are not.

It's not about you. We have been born into one small blip of finite time in the grand scheme of an infinite God. He is the Author of the story. We play a very small part. It is good to remember this when we do not get our way.

You are not in control. Our sense of control is very fickle. In reality, we only "think" we are in control when we like what's going on in our lives or we have someone to blame because we don't like what's going on.

You are going to die. Death comes to us with such shock and surprise mainly because we were never created to die. The fall in the Garden changed all that. The very good news is that Jesus came to give us back that lost life and for those who trust His work of redemption, we will live forever, just not here! Our days are numbered. Psalm 139 says our days were "fashioned when as yet, there were none of them." We have an expiration date. Psalm 90:12 instructs us to, "... number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Our Western culture shuns death at all costs, encourages us to run from it, not talk about it, not even think about it, and yet, we will all share this experience called death. Change is inevitable. There is no change without transition and there is no transition without releasing what has been in order to receive what will be. In truth, it is only a matter of time when life will lead us, as it did Jonah, into the belly of a whale, into a life circumstance that we cannot fix, explain, understand, or control. Paradoxically, that is where transformation happens most easily. In the hands of a loving, compassionate and gracious Father God, nothing is tragedy, all is transition moving toward transformation. May we rest knowing He is committed and in control of transforming us into the image of His Son.

Yvonne Peters



Painting: "Into the Light" by Ria de Wet

Challenges of Dance Teaching during a Global Pandemic

(A New Zealand Perspective)

2020 has and is one of the most challenging times to teach dance.

In New Zealand our government was swift to enact a national lockdown where everyone had to stay home for 8 weeks beginning in March of this year. The goal was total eradication of the COVID-19 virus in our island nation, entirely do-able as our closest country is three hours flight time away. We had mass advertising of our NZ COVID-19 Alert Levels 1-4 (4 being total lockdown; 1 being free movement within New Zealand plus contact tracing and closed borders). Since our initial national lockdown in mid-March we have been at Alert Level 1 with one regional lockdown in Auckland in September.

I am Principal of Agape Dance Academy, a Christian dance school operating in the rural village of Oxford near the Southern Alps of New Zealand's South Island. We hire our dance school studio rooms from our local council and had three days lockdown notice to shut our doors completely for an unknown period of time. Notification was given on a Friday so my husband and I spent the weekend converting our garage into a private home dance studio. We placed wooden pallets over the concrete floor, secured some plywood on top and mounted a spare ballet barre and mirrors along one wall. We did one day of teaching on the following Monday before total lockdown was enforced the following day. The home studio proved invaluable for Christian dance use during our lockdown season. I also took time to work through a GE Tap dance teachers' certification.

As we are in the Southern hemisphere our academic school year is February to December, with Christmas running into our summer holidays in January. We have four school Terms with a two week school holiday break in April/July/October. As a dance school we timetable a mini mid-year concert in June and an end of year Recital (full dance school production in costume) in December. We timetable our dance exams for the end of Term 3 in September. We use LDI (www.livingdanceinternational.com) Christian Ballet and Jazz & Contemporary curriculums and GE (www.generationedinburgh.co.uk) Christian Tap and Jazz curriculums for our dance classes. Upon lockdown we lost two weeks of Term 1 and four weeks of Term 2.



Lockdown private home studio in our garage

Once our national lockdown was in place, I spent the first two weeks getting all of our dance tuition online. As our internet speeds in Oxford are extremely slow, we decided not to do live Zoom dance classes as the screen would frequently freeze. We chose instead to upload pre-recorded dance exercises on an App called BAND (www.band.us). We also launched a Facebook group for parents and caregivers for pastoral care and encouragement. This was invaluable to some parents who suffered from depression during the lockdown period. We had a 'Dance at Home' photo competition for a dance creative pose at home, with a Royal NZ Ballet drink bottle as the prize. We found that families were very motivated to practice daily for the first few weeks then it dropped to a couple of times a week then by the end of our lockdown period no practice at all!

During this time, we lost about 20% of our dance school students due to financial hardship and a further 15% were drawn away by another dance school in the district. We found out who our loyal families were and who appreciated all that we had done over the previous years and the current free online dance class support that we offered during lockdown. We also had to cancel our mid-year concert in June due to the uncertainty of another lockdown, not exceeding an indoor audience of 100 and lack of rehearsal time in studio.

Re-entering the dance studio at Alert Level 2 was a challenge. Class sizes no bigger than 10 (including the dance teacher), strict hygiene, sanitizing hands, one entrance in/another entrance out, social distancing of 1m in the studio, no physical contact (difficult if you are trying to correct dance technique), use of dance props that can be easily cleaned between classes, classes 10 mins shorter to allow cleaning of the studio (barres/all surfaces). For us it meant no holding of hands for our prayer blessing at the start of each class too. I networked with other dance schools both regionally and nationally during this time via Facebook groups and social media messaging platforms and we all freely shared our problems and solutions as an industry.

Returning students to the studio had lost conditioning (expected) and were generally very tired (unexpected!). However, they soon picked up their dance technique once more so we decided to go ahead with our dance exam season in Term 3. We ended up doing video recorded exams with myself sitting in as the examiner and a videographer. This went relatively well but it was surprising that the students were just as nervous as with a live examiner from overseas (who couldn't come due to our borders being closed). One major challenge was with three senior students about to go en-pointe. By the time they had passed a pre-pointe assessment with a dance physiotherapist and been fitted with their first pair of pointe shoes we only had six weeks until the dance exam. The dance exam pointe work could have been stronger if we had had the usual amount of time in studio but we made it through!

Currently we are planning on going ahead with our full dance school end of year Recital. The theme this year is: SEASONS OF HOPE - Spring/Summer/Autumn/Winter based on the poem in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 'To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven.' The opening number will be 'Turn, Turn, Turn' by the Byrds (yep c.1967!). We are praying for us to stay in Alert Level 1 so we can have greater than 100 people in our audience.

Belinda Andrews

Principal, Agape Dance Academy

National Co-Ordinator, ICDF Aotearoa New Zealand



*Royal NZ Ballet
drink bottle*



Lockdown private home studio with worship flags & fridge!



*2020 Dance Exam Day:
Miss Belinda with LDI
Pre Intermediate dance
student*

Finding Young Teachers

When a movement such as ICDF has been going for many years it becomes necessary at some stage to pass on the baton. The upcoming online ICDF Youth Conference in November therefore plays an important role in giving young teachers an opportunity to take centre stage in an ICDF event. The ICDF Joint-Coordinators are working with the ICDF Network for Youth to bring this event to dancers in their teens and twenties. We have identified an exciting and versatile group of 4 teachers that cover a wide range of dance styles and experience. Some teachers work in a worship dance environment while others work on the secular stage but all have one thing in common ... their love for Jesus. We have asked each of the teachers to answer 3 questions and here are their replies below.

Daniel Baraka (Kenya)

Why do you enjoy the dance style you will be teaching?

I enjoy it because it is God's given gift to worship Him and to bring joy and encouragement to the children of God

What is your favourite dance move?

I don't know how to describe the movement in words but it involves my hands cleaning my body symbolising cleansing (African Contemporary)

What makes you excited about the upcoming youth conference?

I am excited about the upcoming youth conference because a prophetic word was given to me to reach out to the nations all over the world. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matthew 5:14



Deepshika (India)

Why do you enjoy the dance style you will be teaching?

Bollywood dance is one of the famous Indian dances. Whenever danced it brings lots of energy and lifts the mood. This is one of the very reasons I always love to do this form of dance.

What is your favourite dance move?

'Dipping' and waist movement.

What makes you excited about the upcoming youth conference?

After coming to know about ICDF recently, I wanted to be part of it. I didn't know how and prayed about it. When I got the invitation from ICDF, I almost couldn't believe it and I am really happy and excited that God made it possible.

Hannah Martin (United Kingdom)

Why do you enjoy the dance style you will be teaching?

The dance style I will be teaching is Lyrical Contemporary. I love this style so much because I feel I can express my emotions and really connect to God. I always remember when I was a young girl I would improvise to music at church and would be in this lyrical contemporary movement and it would be a way for God to speak to me. So that is why I love this style so much it really lends itself to express my emotions and be vulnerable before God.

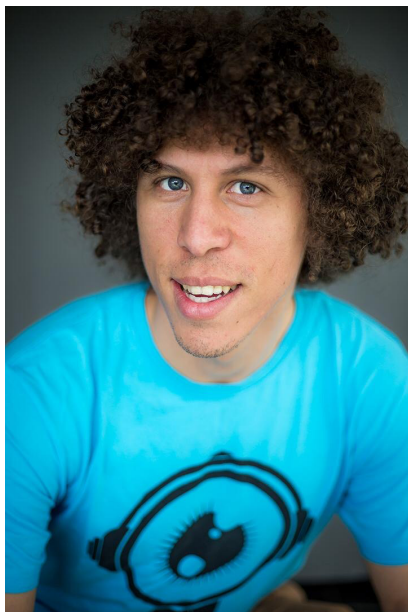


What is your favourite dance move?

This is the hardest question as there are lots of good moves I like to do. I am quite flexible so I like doing lots of leg flicks and tricks but I also like arm movements because they really again express that emotion. Something I love about dance is expressing emotion.

What makes you excited about the upcoming youth conference?

So excited for the upcoming Youth Conference mainly because it is a way for us to connect and worship Jesus. It's an outlet for young people to come together as a community and lift up the name of the most high God - all together. I also think there is power in numbers so let's come together and have an amazing time worshipping Jesus.



Jason Meyer (South Africa)

Why do you enjoy the dance style you will be teaching?

I enjoy the dance style I teach because it allows me to express myself from the inside out. Dance is a language that everyone can relate to and understand. I feel free and alive when I'm in my comfort zone and I give God all the glory. God has given me the talent of dance and the ability to share my God given talent with anyone who is willing to learn.

What is your favourite dance move?

This is very difficult to answer but it is probably a move I created that I use to compete in the solo division. I flex my arms to the back and drop into a so-called "split". I have never named the move, but I'll call it the "shaker flex drop".

What makes you excited about the upcoming youth conference?

I'm really excited to be hosting this workshop as I believe God has put me on this dance path to teach and give back to our youth/community. I love to teach the next generation and it inspires me to see our future talent grow. I love to see our youth dance like David danced.

Hosted by the ICDF Network for Youth

Network Leader - Steven Turner

Registrations - <https://www.cre8ed4ulord.com/icdf-youth-conference/>

Final Word: Dance Trends ... where are we now?

5, 6, 7, 8!! Those numbers were sounding off left and right as we danced our way through choreography in our beloved studios or inside our churches.

Six months ago, my plans for the fall season would not have been to spend time reorganizing my closet for the tenth time. It would have consisted of many days of rehearsals to prepare for our Christmas dance drama special, which would include picking out props, garments, and dance shoes for the event.

Now, we see ourselves and our plans get rearranged or even canceled. Most shows and events are now shown in a virtual format through most media platforms. Although this may work for some, others that lived for the stage are struggling to keep the fire burning.

Trends for this season are wrapped inside hyperlinks that lead us to a stage that is most desirable, yet it leaves us actually longing to be front row and center taking in that creative and powerful atmosphere.

Winston Churchill was quoted saying, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." No one planned to be here, but since we are here we should continue to dance no matter on what platform it is presented. So keep calm and keep dancing!

Medina Potter

