



# ICDF Newsflash

Special Edition *May2020*

## *Congratulations*



This month we celebrate the 80th birthday of Mary Jones, the Founder of the International Christian Dance Fellowship, the ICDF Foundation and the ICDF Diploma. We share this occasion with her as we bless her for her pioneering work and in turn she brings a blessing to us all.

# *Birthday Greetings from ICDF*

On behalf of us all at ICDF, we congratulate you Mary on this your 80th Birthday and wish you the happiest of celebrations.

May the Lord be with you; may the Lord bless you in unexpected ways; may the Lord fill you with new vision for the years to come.

May the beauty of the Lord ever shine through you, in His love, through the dance ..... dance that has become such a part of you... dance that is your heart for connecting with the Lord and reaching out to others.

As ICDF we have much for which to thank you and much for which to give praise and thanks to the Lord. As Founder of CDF Australia, ICDF would not be in existence today if you had not stepped forward in obedience to answer the Lord's Call - first to dance and then to start a Fellowship for Christian Dancers in Australia (CDFA) out of which ten years later, in 1988, the International Christian Dance Fellowship was born.

Travelling the world to set up national CDFs to promote, grow, and develop ICDF and, over the years, to pioneer other ICDF ministries - the ICDF Foundation, the ICDF Diploma, the ICDF Prayer Watch.

In addition to the work of ICDF, to develop your own ministry, CaraMayan.

You have been an inspiration to so many, Mary, not just within the Christian Dance Fellowship but more widely, too, as has also been acknowledged by the Award of the Order of Australia Medal for Service to the Performing Arts through dance in 2014.

As you look back on your achievements, we pray you will be blessed as we are blessed. We honour you as our Founder and thank you for your vision, for your prayers, and for sharing your life with us through your life's work and also through your 80th Birthday gift to us of poems, "Dance and Fellowship Musings 1978-2020" reflecting your experience and relationship with ICDF; and for the gift of your e-book, "Prayers through the Ages".

Thank you, bless you and once again, Mary, our heartfelt CONGRATULATIONS on this your 80th Birthday.

**Happy Birthday Mary**



# May 31 Pentecost/Shavuot letter

Dear Fellow ICDF-ers,

It's now been more than 40 years since the Dance Fellowship started in Australia and over 30 years for ICDF. Several memories come to mind when I go back to the beginnings. In the months after returning to Australia from the USA where we had been living on and off for 10 years and where I had received my calling and training in dance, I wondered how I could go about starting a group for Christians who danced. The vision was to bring together people from all denominations and types of dance, both trained and untrained, for mutual encouragement, support and teaching. I knew that dance was still not generally accepted in churches and often a dancer might be the only one in their church. As I didn't know other dancers in Australia, I had no idea how to go about starting what I believed the Lord was calling me to do. Looking back later, I realized this time was like a pregnancy lasting nearly 10 months from the time I arrived back in Australia and began praying about it until the start of CDFA. I heard about an international arts in education conference that was to be held in Adelaide where my sister lived at the time and so decided to go down and see what would happen. I felt the Lord say to me that I could start something if I was willing to pray for it. At the conference I got up at one of the dance gatherings, not knowing if there would be any Christians there, and announced a meeting. I was surprised and thankful when 15 people from nearly all the States in Australia came and agreed to begin.

## ALL IN IT TOGETHER



One of the important visions I had had since a teenager experiencing the sometimes bitter divides in the Church and knowing that Jesus' heart was for unity as expressed in his prayer in John 17, was the importance of working for the breakdown of barriers within the Church. I felt the Dance Fellowship should be an expression of unity between all sorts of Christians and all kinds of dancers – it was something we should always pray and strive for. In the early days we had Catholic as well as Protestant leadership which has since then sadly diminished. We had struggles between evangelicals, pentecostals and liberals, between trained and untrained dancers which at times nearly tore us apart and all of which gave us plenty of things to pray about and work through. Being the only organization at the beginning, it was both a challenge and a blessing to all be together learning about each other and working things out.

## ICDF

With the start of ICDF ten years later at an international conference CDFA organized for our 10th anniversary, we wanted to offer a way for other nations to start similar organizations. An international meeting at the conference decided to start the ICDF and soon after CDFs started in New Zealand, Singapore, Britain and South Africa. Early on, it also saw an acknowledgement that our faith had come out of Israel and the Jewish faith with Jerusalem, the city of our King, as our geographical and spiritual centre. Our constitution included the word Messianic along with Christian and our first ICDF conference in 1991 was held in Jerusalem as a result. Called Preparing the Way, we sensed a calling that we were part of preparing the way for Jesus'/ Yeshua's return.

Since that time other leaders have taken over from me and continued to develop the vision and the organization. All this is done in a voluntary capacity and I am so grateful for the work and dedication leaders and committees have given.

## PENTECOST

As I share this letter with you I am celebrating my 80th birthday on Pentecost Sunday. I will be dancing prayers on the labyrinth for the coming into faith and fellowship of Israel and the Church. Three ICDF dancers who have been part of the Prayer Watch teams who have prayed and danced in Israel during Pentecost/Shavuot will be with me. As part of my birthday celebration I have also shared a devotional on the ICDF Facebook page and am releasing two books –a book of my poems, “Dance and Fellowship Musings”, and of prayers, “Prayers through the Ages”. These can be downloaded from <https://icdf.com/en/publications-inspire>.

Thank you to all of you for being part of the vision, work and fellowship of ICDF. Thank you for putting your faith on the line as you have shared your calling in dance. I pray the Lord will continue to encourage, anoint and strengthen you in His service.

*Mary Jones*

ICDF Founder

P.S. My daughter Miriam is putting together a book of memories for my birthday. If any of you would like to contribute a story, greeting, photo, etc please send it to [miriamjoyjones@gmail.com](mailto:miriamjoyjones@gmail.com)



India, 2019



Ghana, 2016



Petra, 2012



Jerusalem, Pentecost 2015



## A LITTLE BIT of HISTORY and LINKS for those who are interested

May 31 2020 is my 80th birthday. I was born Mary Guinness, a mixture of Irish and English (yes, the Brewing Guinnesses) in Liverpool, England, during 1940 as the German bombs were falling; which is why, according to my late husband's jest, I'm a bit peculiar! I was peculiar to him in part because I am an introvert in contrast to his extroversion. It has always been easy to work out how old I am as I follow the decades; I have also noticed that my life in a way has gone in decades. With the present scare of the COVID-19 pandemic when all those over 70, the elderly, are being encouraged to stay home, I am having to come to terms with being an elderly woman although I don't really identify with being in that category. But as many die around this age, even though this is unlikely in my case, apart from COVID-19 or an accident, as my Uncle is 95 and my mother died at 104, it seems to be a good time to get some thoughts down on paper. As I said, my life has seemed to go in decades so it might be a good way to start the reminiscing.

**1940 – 1950 ENGLAND** Born in England then moved around during the war ending up in Oxford where my father was a chaplain to students. Knelt down and invited Jesus into my life at age 8. Everyone learnt a bit of ballet at the school I went to run by two maiden sisters. I was excited at being a fairy in "The Frog Prince" and leading the figure 8. At age 9 we migrated as a family to Sydney, Australia, where my father had been invited to be the Anglican chaplain to Sydney University students.

**1950 – 1960 AUSTRALIA AND EDUCATION** I started St Catherine's Waverley but was taken away by my parents before I was expelled and sent to Sydney Church of England Girls' Grammar School to learn some discipline. There I was a model of good behavior (most of the time) in order to wear the coveted merit medals on my uniform. I got involved in the Christian group and decided to be confirmed. I was also working at conquering my temper. In PE we had a student for a few months who taught us some creative dance. Another time we did a dance to Greensleeves and wore Elizabethan costume – I really loved both. I was House Captain and Prefect but must have been a bit bossy and with too many ideas of how to improve the school as the Head Mistress called me into her study one day to ask me: "Mary Guinness, are you or I running the school?"

I left school and worked for a year which gave me lots of motivation to go to University where I studied to be an English and Biology teacher. I also joined lots of clubs and sat around in the Union discussing important ideas while drinking coffee. After joining the Dramatic Society rather than becoming secretary in the Evangelical Union, as that's where I felt God was leading, I was suspected of deserting the faith by some in the EU. In my final year I had to dance as well as sing in an early opera and got a good review. Encouraged, I took a dance class but gave up after the first class.

**1960 – 1970 WORK, MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN** After university I taught in country boarding schools and met my husband who had just returned from England after working on designing large computers after completing his Ph.D. We left for the USA a week after the wedding for Peter to start a new job. We went backwards and forwards over the next fifteen years between Minnesota and Australia and had three children.

**1970 – 1980 CALLING AND THE START OF THE DANCE FELLOWSHIP** In 1971 I was baptised in the Holy Spirit and called into dance. We returned to Australia and I started CDFA (Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia).

**1980 – 1990 CDFA** I Led CDFA and started Prepare Dance Group (<https://youtu.be/6dGRV0NhlO8> - several dances including *Pentecost*) which travelled around to a variety of churches; I also taught at IICM and then Wesley Institute, wrote two books about dance, travelled, and with a committee organized an international conference in 1988 in Australia where ICDF was inaugurated.

**1990 – 2000 ICDF** Coordinator of ICDF, travelled, taught Dance Ministry at Wesley Institute, handed over as Coordinator of ICDF in 1997. You can view the video of the *1991 Conference* in Israel at ... <https://youtu.be/boGowuT5Gdo>

**2000 – 2010 SOME HARD CHANGES** Dean of Dance Studies at Wesley Institute until resigning in 2007; travelled, taking up leadership again in ICDF for just over one term in 2006 with Johanna Cardinal, resigning in 2010. At the 2009 conference in Scotland, I launched CaraMayan, the ICDF Diploma and, shortly afterwards, the ICDF Foundation.

**2010 – 2020 A BIG LOSS** I worked hard establishing the three initiatives launched in 2009. Then in 2016, a month after I returned from the ICDF Conference in Ghana, my husband Peter died, after being unwell for some time. Our three children Howard, Claire and Miriam were there for the funeral, two of them coming from California.

In 2019 I passed on the leadership of the ICDF Diploma and the ICDF Foundation and started to get ready to move house after nearly 40 years. I will be living an hour and a half west of Sydney in the Blue Mountains in a house my father built next to their retirement house and near my daughter Claire who wants to keep an eye on me!!