

April 2016



ICDF
International Christian
Dance Fellowship

Dance // Dancers // Art & Social Concern

Social concern is one of those terms that can seem to be a vague reference to something out there far removed from our everyday world. In these times of social turmoil we can read about it in the social media or the papers and catch up with world events on television. We may even feel a bit disconcerted when confronted with these events but then we get busy with the day-to-day challenges and we forget about them again.

Therefore we decided to 'look the topic in the eye' and find out how people we know in the dance ministry go about getting involved in social issues. In this newsletter the reader will find out about Andy Raine visiting a refugee camp, Belma Vardy walking in a covenant relationship with the Canadian Indians, Lucinda Coleman making a dance film in Myanmar, and what makes Andrew Park tick as a social activist. There are also references to other art forms used by Lucy Jarasius (poetry) and Iris-Mirjam Behnke (visual art).

Then we will take the reader on a journey to ICDF to show how we are already involved in social concern. These include forming partnerships with others as well as through the Project Awards of the ICDF Foundation and through the Prayer Watches. We trust that this collection of news, articles and views will be an inspiration.

To connect with the ICDF Network for Creative Arts and Social Concern, please contact Andrew Park at email LucyJ@bigpond.com

Jan & Saartjie



Title: Weeping Vietnam War Mother
Artist: Andrew Park

Networking in Social Issues

When we began the ICDF Network for Creative Arts and Social Concern 14 years ago, it was birthed out of deep concerns that a lot of what was called "Christian Creative Arts" had become polarised into epics of worship-focused hype and self-indulgence. It had very little to do with proclaiming the same Nazareth Manifesto and vision on which Jesus based his own mission and ministry.

Many in the Christian Creative Arts scene have rediscovered the voice of Jesus' Nazareth manifesto today. Art – good art – which changes the world for the better – usually comes with a counter-culturally redemptive voice or voices.

We need more voices of Spirit inspired "prophetic imagination" from our Christian Creative Artists which speaks to major social justice issues today. The best of those "prophetic" voices of artists will come from those who not only "say", but "do" – who immerse themselves personally in day to day acts of kindness, generosity and humble service, and who advocate compassion and fairness for those far less fortunate than themselves within their local community spheres of influence. Some of those "prophetically imaginative" artists will and must be Christian dancers! Jesus' alternative narrative and vision for a better world, compared to the one of ignorance, despair and godlessness that currently shapes things, matters and is in ongoing conflict with the dominant secular "status quo".

Good art – art which probes into truth, provokes us to hear, to see, to feel the truth, and to do something societally redemptive in response to it – is often provocative and inevitably offends some, if not in some instances many, people.

Andrew Park

Walking among the refugees - a testimony

Andy Raine is from The Holy Island of Lindisfarne, United Kingdom. Here he gives an account of his experiences while visiting a refugee camp in Calais.

I was in Calais with my friend Phil, his wife Anna, his youth worker Sam. These three were on their third visit to the refugee camps, but they also brought with them a young teenage lad called Craig who helps Phil's Anna with her bouncy-castle business. My daughter Martha, who is 17, immediately wanted to travel with us and my son Joel, who's 20 and at university, asked to come too. That's how my own Anna decided she must be involved. So 8 of us drove to Calais in our car and 2 vans full of donated food and clothes. It was a strange experience of feeling we had little to offer that was going to make any distinctive difference. Willingness and honesty seemed the most important qualifications we could bring unless we stayed long enough to be trusted with particular tasks. With 8 of us it was cheaper and easier to hire a holiday cottage out-of-season and sort our own meals from there. It also gave us somewhere to regroup and reflect together at the end of each day.



Photo: Tents in the refugee camp

Here's some of what I remember through meeting particular people:

HETTIE is British and a volunteer working with L'Auberge in conjunction with other agencies. They have a large warehouse space in Calais, where food and clothes donations are sorted for distribution. The aim is to bring thousands of people one hot meal each day, supply tents, build shelters; and have shoes, sleeping bags and other necessities available.

SOLOMON is Ethiopian and looks after the Orthodox church built in 'The Jungle' camp in Calais. He is a refugee himself and unsure where he may settle long-term. We were able to refill the gas bottles that heat the church. It occurred to me later that his real name may not be Solomon but what he is known as for building a compound and shelter there as a place for prayer, worship and refuge. It is dedicated to 'Michael the Archangel' and also has pictures of Daniel among the lions, especially the 3 young men in the fire.

JOHANNES is a large blonde quiet man from Iceland and was working as a volunteer in the L'Auberge warehouse, sorting gloves, socks and underwear quickly and efficiently.

DANNI is a young Eritrean, taken out from school one day at 15 and forced to become a soldier. He saw most of his young companions killed, and escaped crossing Sinai and other places before reaching Calais. He is a Christian, and we were able to leave a guitar with him, (that is probably now with Debora, who sang for us, and her husband). We were welcomed into the wooden shelter he shared with 3 others.

At the DUNKIRK CAMP not far away the story is different. There are many families, mostly having spent all their money, being brought there in hope of continuing to the UK. Often they have lived or worked in the UK in the past or have relatives there and know the language.

Read more about Hettie, Solomon, Johannes, Danni and the Dunkirk camp here ... <http://www.icdf.com/en/publications-inspire>

Since we came back, Martha has found A-levels even less appealing and says she may gap-year abroad with YWAM, and work as a birthing assistant before pursuing midwifery. Joel was very moved, angry and indignant; filmed conversations with some of the refugees but handed that footage to another film-student for a documentary as he no longer has the impartiality required ... I was proud of both of them. Soon after we got back Anna sang Ken Medema's 'Song of a Refugee' which I've often taught as a dance. It's very heart-wrenching, and could be a song for our time. In the dance people rush to and fro, freezing occasionally as the refugee moves instead. They are in a hurry; but he has nowhere to go, no-one to befriend or take him in. The song is his interior cry for help and his numbness, his preoccupation with all he has seen, the land he has left and its sufferings ... 'for I'm a stranger here in your land'. I'm crying or holding myself still; we check the bulletins and international news; and I may teach 'Song of the Refugee' for a long time to come ...

Last week my employer sent me to a Cultural Awareness training day

Andrew Park lives in Sydney, Australia and is the leader of the ICDF Network for Creative Arts and Social concern. This article can be interpreted as his testimony and his manifesto as a social activist.



"Empty of Hope" by Andrew Park

It's not surprising that my Christian journey has always had a social justice and artistic bent to it. From watching Dr Martin Luther King Jr's humble funeral procession as a 13 year old, hearing his amazing speeches, and being converted as a 17 year old through the highly social activist and artistic 1970's Jesus People movement, my faith journey has always had a counter-cultural and prophetically-inclined shape to it. My early choice of involvement in the Australian Baptist Church and later Churches of Christ – both movements which strongly emphasize the importance of engaging in incarnational mission involving social justice mission alongside the poor and needy – helped me to appreciate the enormous importance of Church speaking up for the rights of the poor and vulnerable as well as doing practical things personally and collectively to help people in dire need of social assistance, such as the homeless, the ageing, and those struggling with mental illness, addictions or in need of help in a crisis. Theological formation matters.

Something I also discovered along my 62 year long journey was that, when people speak up for social justice for the poor and needy, it usually offends more than it gets applause. And from my own observations that offence response more often than not today is from politically conservative, wealthy businessmen and, most unfortunately, evangelical Christians, who share large amounts of that wealth, power and influence with their secular peers. Courage matters.

Well, it was the same in Jesus' time. Jesus shared the Nazareth Manifesto, Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". Then after Jesus put that message into a 'home truth' context message to the religious folk of his hometown, they got outraged and then tried to murder him. They liked his message (Luke 4: 20-22) – that is, until Jesus applied it practically to them during his teaching which followed! (Luke 4:23-30). "Counting the cost" of being honest in telling others about things "as they are" matters.

To read the full stories of both these articles on this page please go to ... <http://www.icdf.com/en/publications-inspire>

Conversations on the frontlines of the body

Lucinda Coleman is one of our regular correspondents from Australia . In this paper she writes about a project she was involved in.

The Australian performing arts collective Remnant Dance has a partnership with a charity organisation that supports an orphaned community in Myanmar (Burma). The creation of a contemporary dance film with this community generated a performance in which young Burmese participants were encouraged to tell their own stories. The film was set in an abandoned glass factory in Myanmar, using glass as a metaphor for a surface that invites reflection as well as open transparency with the young people from the children's centre. The story of making the dance film, *Meeting Places*, offers a case study for reflection on ideas of interconnection through dance making; and a site for engagement with social justice concerns within diverse communities. The creation of new dance through cross-cultural, multi-arts forms and inter-disciplinary contexts enables narratives to emerge through the frontline of dance's unique communication.



Photo: Lucinda Coleman
"Meeting Places" premiere, Yangon 2014

The description above explains one of the recent works of Lucinda Coleman, who has been researching how dance-making can carve out space for empowerment and agency in social justice arts contexts. To read the full paper please go to <http://www.icdf.com/en/academic-publications> and click on "Conversations on the frontlines of the body"

Knowable Peace Price

©Lucy Jarasius 2014

I heard it... the story, tho many mouths muted and hotly disputed
of the God-True-Hue-man divested of glory
Friend, Liberator, Healer
to Freddy, Larry, Dora and her descendant daughters
The Friend
whose life, owned and laid down-payment on a future investment, love-testament
subjected to tests and lies, to the lies and testosterone
that rules our day,
yet paves The Way,
untangles our ankles if we rush head-bowed-strong to him for solutions that
chin-lift us
from the oh so common ground
skin-shared with us...
lovingly sick-repaired us,
earth-caring in spite of us, yearning to cosmos recreate with us
establish shalom deep-inspired in us

For the complete poem go to ... <http://www.icdf.com/en/publications-inspire>



For her MA (Arts in a Social Context), Iris-Mirjam Behnke made a series of installations around the theme of Child Soldiers. The name of this art work in the photo is "Fitted for War - I Am Gun"

Connecting with the First Nations People

Belma Vardy lives in Ontario, Canada. This article was developed through a conversation she had with First Nations teacher M. Karl King, BA, B.Ed — who teaches on the Six Nations Reservation—Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.



Photographer: Belma Vardy - View of the sun and tree was taken on the Indian Resevation

Since 1993 God has orchestrated my involvement with the Aboriginal/Indigenous/First Nations People. I developed a deep love for them and their teachings; and a desire to see them redeem their culture.

The key to any authentic relationship with a First Nations person or group is respect. The relationship between aboriginal people and Christians has been fraught with abuse, neglect, and efforts at subjugation, colonization, and assimilation since the time of Columbus and the explorers. The First Nations children are currently suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome as an effect of their grandparents and great grandparents attending church run residential schools. There is a loss of language and culture and much pain in many families on the topic of religion.

What works well is to develop a relationship with an Elder. If a group comes along that has missionary or conversion intentions, I would strongly encourage them to abandon those intentions. There is just too much potential adversity in my experience and it will only cause you, and them, pain and heartbreak. They have had an over abundance of evangelization in their lives already and it's been nothing but destructive. By developing a relationship with an Elder you can learn about their culture and you can understand what has gone on in their communities with colonization and efforts to assimilate.

Once you have received understanding and revelation of this, pray and ask the Lord to show you how to put together a drama/dance/movement to express the pain that they have experienced to relay it to the public.

The First Nations People would appreciate this type of approach as they see that we are making an effort to get their message out there. Their hearts start to open and soften and trust is built along with respect and that is the beginning of addressing social justice.

ICDF and Social Concern

ICDF as an organisation has taken up the challenge of being involved in issues of social concern in different areas. Here we tell you about some of them.

International Conference: In Partnership

Workshop Stream: Ability not Disability

Wheelfever Dance Company runs a programme of inclusive dance in the UK. From their experience they will share how dance is a tool for enrichment for all abilities and how dance can particularly empower disabled children and young people.

At conference, their workshops will be practical and lead delegates through a typical session format. This will include exercises and tasks that help make dance accessible to people with physical limitations and learning difficulties. As well as the practical element, during the workshop the Company will explain why exercises and choices are made and what enriching benefits they produce. Case studies will be used to demonstrate what a profound difference such work can make in disabled people's lives; and films will be shown of Wheelfever's work in the UK.

During the afternoon the Company will be spending time delivering workshops with groups in the local community. There may be an opportunity for a limited number of delegates who attend the morning workshops to join the Company. If you are interested, please let Paula Hocking know prior to the start of the conference.



Workshop Stream: Dance Movement Therapy

Release & Restoration for Survivors of Trauma

Trauma can happen at any age and from many kinds of life experiences, such as grief & loss, changes in relationships, family, employment and health as well as natural disasters & violence. Trauma can be public or private; individual or experienced by groups or communities.

These workshops will present principles and skills for supporting the process of strength building, resilience and healing that can be applied across various kinds of trauma, cultural and age groups, including methods used by the Wangu Kanja Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya.



*Top: Wheelfever Dance Company
Bottom: Wangu Kanja (right) at work*

Since 2014, Dance Movement Therapists & Counselors from Australia & the ICDF Dance Movement Therapy & Healing Network have been working with the Wangu Kanja Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya, to co-design and develop a group Dance Movement Therapy curriculum. This curriculum is being used by the Wangu Kanja Foundation to support the process of healing for women & children survivors of sexual assault and gender violence.

The Conference workshops will be co-facilitated by Wangu Kanja together with Dance Therapists & Counselors from Australia and from the ICDF Dance Movement Therapy & Healing Network.

On the Friday of Conference, there will be an outreach to a children's shelter where delegates will be able to see how these methods can be used. To listen to Wangu's testimony go to "My Dignity Restored" at ... <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCb6tTpFeKozfjh4Q1fK1g2w>



Photo: Ailyn Rodriquez and her team on an outreach in Cuba

ICDF Foundation: Project Awards

The Project Awards of the ICDF Foundation are given to dance ministry projects that are contributing to communities and particularly ones where the needs are greater. In a conference year, however, the project focuses on making conference grants available to dancers/teachers who have shown their commitment to the dance ministry and who have a relationship with ICDF or their country CDF. We believe that our Project Awards help to make a difference that is to the benefit of those causes that receive it. Previous recipients include Dance Link and Go D'Artiz in 2014, and Wangu Kanja Foundation and Ailyn Rodriquez Isaac on behalf of ICDF Cuba in 2015.

To find out more about the Awards and the work of the ICDF Foundation, go to the Foundation website at ... <http://foundation.icdf.com>

Prayer Watch

Starting in 2012 ICDF members and others from around the world have joined in an hour of prayer on Pentecost Sunday to pray for the nations. Two of these involved prayer journeys to Israel in 2012 and 2015 where a team interceded for the nations and for the church while, at the same time, there was prayer from individuals and groups in different countries from around the world. This tradition will continue in 2016 when we will be interceding for our countries during Pentecost weekend. The invitation to take part in this year's Prayer Watch can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

There will also be a Prayer Watch Team at the international conference in Ghana this year. Following in the footsteps of the ICDF Prayer Watches in Israel (2012 and 2015) our desire is to introduce a larger group to the planning and execution of a Prayer Watch. There will be times of teaching, preparation and prayer walks / watches on location. This elective will run across the mornings for the 3 days of conference with a Prayer Watch with the local intercessors of a church on Friday. Delegates can also sign up for an optional extended Prayer Watch that will continue on the Saturday when we will travel to the slave castle in Ghana for prayer.



Photo: Interceding for reconciliation between the Jews and Arabs at the Tomb of the Patriarch in Hebron, Israel, 2015

For all conference information go to ... <http://conference.icdf.com/>



Conference Update

Meet the teachers

Afternoon workshop profiles and 'who is teaching what' are soon to be announced on the website. Whether you are coming to Ghana or not, you may like to 'Meet the Teachers' on the Conference website at <http://conference.icdf.com/programme/teachers>

Tell Us

Getting exciting! The weeks are passing quickly and it will soon be time for us to be packing our bags and catching our flights. Before then, there is accommodation to book and travel boxes to tick so please tell us if you are thinking of coming to Conference so that we can keep you updated on Conference News via email. This is not a commitment at this stage but will help you not to miss out on vital information.

Fundraising

Huge thank you to those who have already offered fundraising help. This is greatly appreciated by us and by those who will benefit. We know the whole money transfer is a little daunting but, if you are thinking to help and this is so for you, please let us know and we will do our best to help work this out with you.

Prayer

Please pray for us in these coming months. Still lots to do. Nearer the time we will be inviting you to join our Conference Prayer teams. For now, if you would like to register for this or specifics for prayer, please email ghana2016.prayerpoints@gmail.com.

Prayer Watch 2016



Photo: Garden Of Gethsemane, Jerusalem

All are invited to take part in the ICDF Pentecost Prayer Watch, 14th – 15th May 2016. This is our fifth year of praying around the world together. Our theme this year will be praying for our nations' treatment of its land and people. We will also be remembering ICDF throughout the world and the international conference in Ghana. You can participate as a group or as an individual. Please contact Pamela Farmer at email farmerpamela@gmail.com to sign up. You will receive a script with the program and directions.

Lord, wherever there is mercy, justice, freedom, and kindness,
we know your good news is echoing in human history.
Give us ears to recognise the sound of glad feet coming
and grant us grace to join you wherever you are moving.
Amen.

<http://commonprayer.net/>

Pioneers of Christian Dance: Survey Results

When we sent out the notice for the Survey we were a bit nervous not knowing what the response would be, if any. The feedback however was a delight and now we would like to share some of the responses with you.

From 52 responses we received 173 actual nominations, ranging from King David of Israel to "my dad", and at least one ballet company. Of this total the following persons were nominated more than twice: Mary Jones, Paula (and Bill) Douthett, Annette Sundell Liljedahl, Yvonne Peters, Valerie Henry, Judith Stevenson and Randall Bane. Of course one has to keep in mind that much depended on the country of origin for those who responded.

The question "When was the first time you heard about dance in a Christian context?" showed interesting statistics. The answers ranged from 1970 to 2003 and not everyone pinpointed a year. Quite a number were exposed to Christian dance in the '70s; probably the majority quoted the '80s and the rest between 1990 and 2003.

Our conclusion to this survey has been aptly summed up by Lucy Jarasius. She wrote:

"On reflection, I think that everybody who has been seriously involved with ICDF/CDF ministry has been and/or still is a pioneer because dance ministry is always breaking new ground. People may be taking Christian Dance in to new contexts, whether that be in their local church gathering, or into non-churched spaces and places." We believe that each one of us is a pioneer in our own circles and as such we salute each and every one of you."