



ICDF Networks

September 2021

Movement in Prayer

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since the last movement in prayer newsletter – and what a strange year. Many of us have continued to experience lockdowns, limited travel and restrictions to workshops and classes. However it has been so encouraging to meet many of you on Zoom, to move and pray together and share the exciting things God is doing in each of our lives

The ICDF Network for Movement in Prayer aims to share ideas for movement and prayer; for members to support each other in prayer projects; to answer the call for prayer internationally through support in prayer or in person; to celebrate the outcome of prayer; and, where possible, to meet in our countries / localities to move and pray.

To become part of the Network contact Jackie at ... icdf.movementinprayer@gmail.com



The National Committee for the ICDF country Aotearoa New Zealand have been facilitating prayer events over the years. In this newsletter Belinda Andrews tells us about some of them (page 8). The photo above was taken in December 2019 on One Tree Hill, Auckland while doing prayer and declarations for ICDFANZ Kohatu Ora national Christian dance tours (Robyn Holland at left, Belinda Andrews at centre)

Worship without singing - Prayer beyond words

The restrictions of COVID have made 2020 /2021 so different for all of us. We soon realised how much of our Sunday meetings revolved around things we could no longer do - sing, share a communion cup, shake hands or give a brotherly hug.

However, being unable to use our traditional forms of worship and fellowship has opened up so many opportunities. Some people have been far more open to exploring other ways of worshipping including movement - few would call themselves dancers, but as the months have passed, they have experienced intimate encounters through watching dance and maybe starting to move themselves.

I have helped my son Steven lead several worship events where dancers, artists and poets have come together to worship creatively in their own homes on Zoom. This corporate event allows us to minister to each other. Singing together on Zoom just doesn't work - if you've tried you will know! It may be a joyful noise, but certainly not tuneful. However, we can move together - corporate movement works, even with time lags of Zoom!! The ICDF Youth Conference and Prayer Watch allowed many of us to come together from across the globe to worship and pray together.

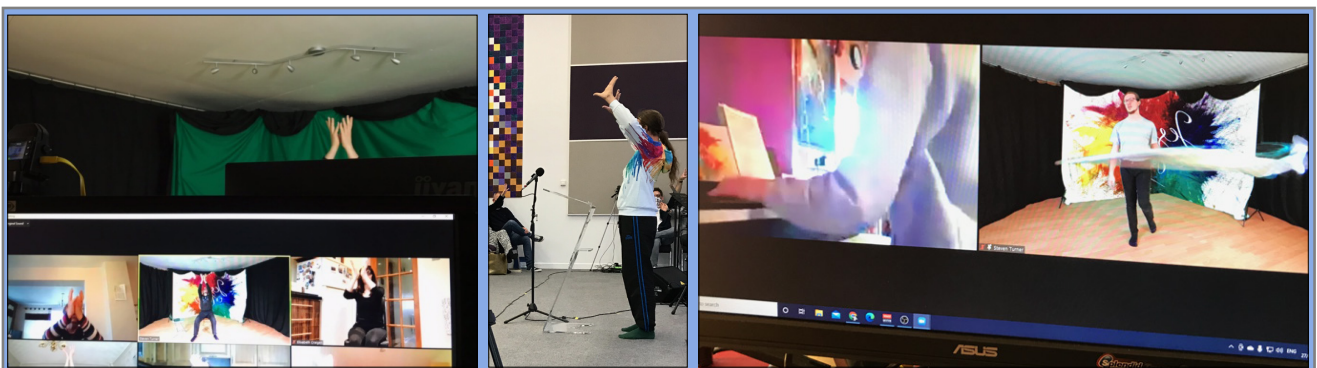
I have also attended Steven's chair dance courses which not only provide an opportunity for exercise, so needed in lockdown, but also times of fellowship, worship and even corporate prayer. Participants, many of whom had never danced before, enthusiastically moved to scripture and songs.

In church I experienced corporate movement - so emotional as 40 people masked and physically distanced united spiritually in simple movements to the Lord's Prayer.

This crazy "Zoom" season has allowed me to dance with people across the globe. It has been an amazing privilege to worship and pray with people from every continent over the last year. We have seen families dancing in their living rooms, others moved to tears - we have had people as far as afield as Scotland and Switzerland doing fun movements together at Christmas.

We may have spent much of 2020-21 locked down, but our desire to praise Jesus cannot be locked down - in fact new ways of corporate worship and prayer have opened up for many of us. Our freedom to move and encounter Jesus cannot be restricted, God cannot be socially distanced.

Jackie Young



When prayer is in your everyday

During August 2021, UC Grace ran a Prayer Movement Challenge. Its aim was to both show and share how simple it can be to integrate prayer and movement together. Prompting thoughtful reflection and encouraging self exploration.

During the challenge each day had a focus and we used Ephesians 6.10-18 as our foundation for exploring simple ways to experience prayer and movement together.

What did each day entail?

Day 1: We focused on Ephesians 6.10-13 and looked at acknowledging how we welcome God into our prayers, start our prayers and create a habit.

Day 2: We touched on Ephesians 6.14-15 and how we identify things that we feel insecure with or struggle with.

Day 3: We began to draw things together by considering Ephesians 6.16 and exploring why we struggle with the things we do and how we lean on God to be in the centre of our battle.

Day 4: Through Ephesians 6.17 we know that God gives us the things we need to fight with and part of our journey is learning to accept that.

Day 5: Considered perseverance - the chance to keep going, pressing in and giving it to God.

Acknowledging where in the journey you are

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6.10-13)

One of the things that I have struggled with during my journey as a Christian is connecting to God more - both through his word directly and in prayer. There can seem to be all these 'shoulds' as you go through your Christian walk. You *should* read the Bible every day, you *should* have a quiet time every day, you *should* soak in God's presence, you *should* be praying morning and evening, you *should* get up early to do it all. The list goes on. And whilst each one of those things has a place in our walk as a Christian, it took me a long time to realise that there are no 'shoulds' with God, there are only invitations and opportunities presented. We are after all made unique, that means each of our walks will be unique, there isn't a one size fits all. Often it's the smallest change that we make in our walk that creates the biggest impact. A change that is easily manageable day to day. For me this involved adding movement to my prayers and recognising the intention through doing this.

As part of the Prayer Challenge, I asked questions such as - how ready are we? What makes us move? How does God give us strength at the moment? Where are our priorities in our prayer life? How do we get ready to pray?

Close your eyes, open your hands out, pause, breathe and drop your shoulders? They are all movements!

At UC Grace I define prayer movement as the following -

“Prayer movement is your body's reaction to drawing closer to God. The external display of an internal feeling and preparation for a conversation. It's nuances that only you and God know. Fleeting moments when you choose to acknowledge your connection and conversation with God. The reality of moving through life sometimes 100 miles an hour but still always doing the same thing when you choose to pray. To have that conversation and allow intention into the time of response with God.”



The first step in moving forward in our prayer lives (literally and figuratively) is acknowledging where we are really at and recognising how God's word can help us.

An individual journey

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (Ephesians 6.14-15)

The journey that we take is different for each one of us. Some of us will be keen to apply movement to our prayers in lots of ways. Others of us may want the opportunity to see, explore and do just a little - to knock on the door.

Whichever your choice, that's fine. It's your individual journey. Part of creating a habit is giving yourself space to identify what you struggle with. This isn't something you do as a one off, it's an ongoing process.

For me this was something that took me a while to grasp. I used to figure that because I had looked at and identified areas of struggle or insecurity once that meant I was done and wouldn't need to do it again.

The reality is, just like we have to continually work at keeping our focus on God, we have to continually pause and recognise what we are struggling with and act on it.

God is always there to support and guide us but if we don't stop long enough to see that, things won't change. For me part of that process is being honest with God when I am in those insecure places. When I need to know his truths more and have the confidence to stand firm.



Exploring our journey

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6.16)

Part of any journey we encounter with our faith is recognising and acknowledging what is part of the journey. There will be many points along the journey where we feel like we are being attacked, don't know how to get out or just feel really down. God is with us and He will defend us.

The amazing verse in Exodus describes this for us. 'The Lord will fight for You' you need only to be still. In the high speed train of life we can often forget the simple actions this verse portrays. In those flight or fight moments you have a choice, to turn and move away or to pause, be still and let God work. Neither is an easy option. But the biggest difference I have found when I am in this position is activating a pause. A physical pause right there with my body but also a mental pause. A mental pause which allows God to speak, his word to enter my mind, the Holy Spirit to take control of the situation and to receive His peace. Two things have now happened in this moment. You've acknowledged that you need God in the situation, and you've also given the space for God to be in the situation.

Accepting our journey

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6.17)

For me to grow not only in my dance leadership skills but my normal leadership skills I have had to make a choice to grow in other areas of my faith. This has involved an acceptance that I need to action God's word and look for the impact it can make in my life and others. It's also stepping out and moving myself to God's word and not just telling others.

The armour of God that this challenge was based on is a springboard to help us to grow, to action God's word, the scriptures and see the impact. Those moments when we need to fight the flaming arrows, God gives us the things we need – his armour, his word, his spirit.

Perseverance in what's ahead

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6.18)

Our Christian walk is full of perseverance, the need to press on and seek God. Your act of pushing through giving God a place in all areas of your life, whether big or small, will all be different.

I've experienced it so many times - thinking that I am on track and focusing on God. But when I stopped long enough I realised that I needed help, a little direction, encouragement and joy in my journey, in order to keep persevering.

The opportunity to lift it all up to God, seeing and feeling the joy as God takes control, is a feeling to strive for. It's like you're putting a full stop in as you let God peel it all off of you. The perseverance you pick, is not to do it in your own strength but in God's.

Note from the author

The Prayer Movement Challenge was run as a lead up to launching the mentoring programmes of UC Grace. My passion for mentoring is to provide a safe space for people to grow in whatever area they need. That could be directly related to dance and movement or it could be about their faith, habits and life mindset. It will be an adventure as they invite God into the centre of that journey. You can read more about mentoring at ... <https://ucgrace.co.uk/membershipandmentoring/mentoring-overview/>

My journey to writing the challenge was a chance for me to really look at when I move, why I move and what helps me as I pray, focus, and build my conversations with God. My hope above anything else was to open other's eyes to the possibilities of how they can approach their prayers and deepen their faith.

Anna Gilderson



Photos for this article provided by the author

ICDF Prayer Watch

Every year on Pentecost Sunday, as part of International Christian Dance Week, individuals and teams from around the world are encouraged to pray with movement for the nations and ICDF.

History of the ICDF Prayer Watches

2012 - The inaugural Prayer Watch was held on Pentecost Sunday, with an ICDF team in Jerusalem and teams around the world praying for their nations, for ICDF and the peace of Jerusalem.

2013 - The Prayer Watch carried on from the previous year with teams and individuals around the globe, each aligned with the gate of Jerusalem nearest to them. There was a script provided with the different themes that were expressed in scripture, prayer and movement.

2014 - The script was used again in 2014 with the overall theme of “The Dry Bones” from Ezekiel 37. It included instructions for a simple version of each section as well as a more detailed one. This gave a choice, with the simpler version being more suitable for individuals who weren’t able to be part of group dances.

2015 - An ICDF Prayer Watch team returned to Israel this time travelling around the land and praying at strategic places, again supported by a prayer circle around the world.

2016 – After the conference in Accra, Ghana a group of delegates held a Prayer Watch at one of the Slave Castles on the coast, praying for healing and restoration as they repented and sought forgiveness on behalf of nations and the church. There was also a prayer initiative with one of the churches in the city during the week.

2017 – A team travelled to Israel to pray for relations between Christians and Jews and to commemorate the centenary of the Palestine Campaign and Balfour Report, which opened up the land for the return of Jews to Palestine, and the eventual establishment of Israel.

2018 – The wind of the Holy Spirit moving across the earth from one end to the other was the theme for 2018 with the love of Christ flooding the earth. A celebratory presentation with movement, scripture, prayer and dance was given to groups or individuals who wished to follow a script.

2019 – The Dance and Culture Study Tour in India saw a small group holding a Prayer Watch praying into various social and religious themes. This was followed by a pilgrimage the next day visiting significant religious sites in the area.

2020 – People were invited to pray creatively indoors or outdoors for ICDF, the peace of Jerusalem and the work of the Holy Spirit in their own countries. Guidelines were provided for those who wished to follow a set structure. In spite of the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic some were still able to go ahead with keeping the Prayer Watch.

ICDF Prayer Watch 2021

On Saturday, the 22nd of May we met from across the continents to move in prayer together. We declared hope for a pandemic torn world as we moved to the beautiful prophetic song, “Year of Miracles” by Paul Taylor. Then we interceded powerfully for the different areas of the world we represented. Participants came from across the globe – we truly were an international gathering.

If you wish to view a recording of the meeting, please go to www.icdfrefresh.com/prayerwatch

To watch an interview with Jackie Young (Network Leader), please go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCEukDSPh8s>

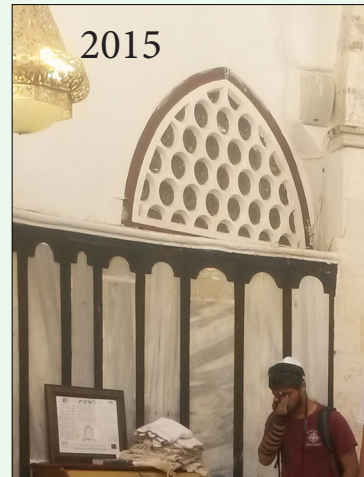
The opening prayer of the 2021 Prayer Watch that captures the heart of the gathering is copied below:

Lord Jesus,

We just thank you for the gift of dance and movement, and for the technology that allows us to connect across your amazing planet. We ask for an outpouring of your precious spirit, as we come together this weekend. We ask that we might catch a glimpse of your heart for the broken and that our intercessions will be seeds that will birth the miraculous throughout 2021.

Amen

ICDF Prayer Watch Gallery



ICDF Aotearoa New Zealand Movement in Prayer for our Fellowship 2019 – 2021

ICDFANZ AGM - 2019

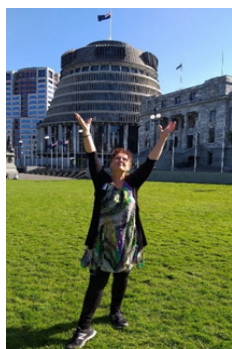
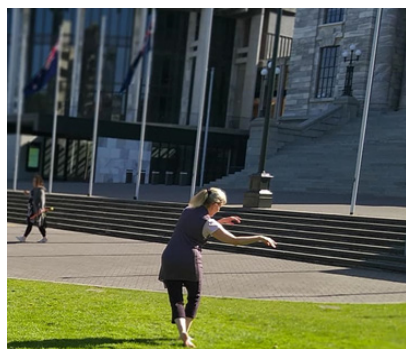
Before our 2019 ICDFANZ AGM we travelled up to Arthurs Pass, a high alpine village in the Southern Alps of the South Island of New Zealand. There we entered a beautiful little chapel where we worshipped, prayed, danced and took communion celebrating and interceding for our ICDFANZ Fellowship, for new committee members who would respond to the call and pledge to serve ICDFANZ.



Worship Warfare for our 2019 ICDFANZ AGM (Léonie Douglas worshipping at Arthurs Pass Chapel)

ICDFANZ Committee Member's Pledge

"I (ICDFANZ committee member) acknowledge that God has called me for this period of time to accept the responsibilities of office in the International Christian Dance Fellowship of Aotearoa New Zealand. I commit myself to serve Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, and as a committee member to forward the objectives of the Fellowship."



October 2019 Movement prayer for our nation at NZ Parliament, Wellington (1. Colleen Robb & the iconic Beehive building 2. Belinda Andrews)

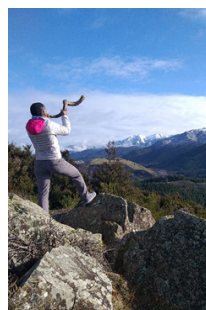
Machol Pacifica Dance Camp - 2019

Machol Pacifica is our New Zealand collective of Israeli Dance groups who gathered in Wellington in October 2019 for a three day 'dance camp'. At these camps an Israeli choreographer is invited from the Holy Land to New Zealand to teach the most up to date Israeli community dances. ICDFANZ representatives attended the dance camp and took the opportunity to not only visit the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand (based in Wellington) but also to worship dance on the grounds of our iconic Beehive parliament buildings for our nation and our nations Christian dancers.

ICDFANZ Christian Dance & Creative Arts Retreat Hanmer Springs - 2020

VISION: Prepare the Way Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. Isaiah 62:10 (NIV)

A small gathering was held at the Hanmer Springs Memorial Hall to connect together after our first COVID-19 lockdown in New Zealand for 6 weeks from March 2020. Workshops were held on Cloths & Billows, Israeli Dance, Contemporary Dance and Tambourine Dance Patterns. During the morning program we held our AGM and in the afternoon we had free time to visit the Hanmer Springs Thermal hot pools. Then in the evening we performed our workshop presentations on stage and filmed them. The next day we met together at a local café for fellowship and then donned our wet weather gear (it was mid winter!) to walk up a local hill to intercede with shofars, banners & movement for ICDFANZ amidst between the sleet/snow showers and sunshine.



July 2020: 'Preparing the Way' for our ICDFANZ national tour at Conical Hill, Hanmer Springs with banners and blowing the shofar

ICDFANZ Kohatu Ora National Tour 2021 - Precious Living Stones:

Come and be His 'living stones' who are continually being assembled into a sanctuary for God. For now you serve as holy priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices that he readily accepts through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:5 (TPT)

In 2020 Belinda Andrews presented a vision for a proposed Christian dance tour of both the South and North Islands, she shared the vision she had of a bus with ICDFANZ printed on the side, touring around New Zealand. Essentially this was to follow-up on seeds already planted by Rhoze Rivera's Dance Explosion NZ tour (from Manila, Phillipines) in July 2019, to connect and encourage our Christian dancers. In January 2021 the National Committee came together for a Retreat at the Sister Eveleen Anglican Retreat Centre in Christchurch. This was a precious time together in seeking the Lord, engaging in contemplative prayer 3 times a day as part of the retreat daily routine and it was during this time that the vision and naming of the tour "Kohatu Ora (NZ Maori language) - Precious Living Stones" was birthed. After discussing and seeking the Lord, the National Committee agreed that these proposed tours were a good idea but due to the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand were planned for 2021-2022.

In 2021 we embarked on the South Island tour via private car to Christchurch (1 May), Oamaru, (3 May), Invercargill (5 May), Balclutha (7 May), Hokitika (11 May), Nelson (13 May), Kaikoura (15 May). When we arrived in each city we did worship warfare and took communion at a high place over each town. We then had a dance workshop day and in the evening a creative worship night. At some places we had a live worship team and in some cities we attended a normal church service the next day at the host church or YWAM base. We also did a 'Jerusalema' flash mob dance in each town and created a compilation video for the South Island; [You Tube link: https://youtu.be/cbnvRN9nmM4](https://youtu.be/cbnvRN9nmM4)



May 2021 Kaikoura sunset winter worship warfare preparing for ICDFANZ Kohatu Ora dance workshop the next day (Belinda Andrews at left, Robyn Holland at right).

We have found that preceding each ICDFANZ event there has been a time of preparation, of 'Moving in Worship' while we are praying for what we sense God wants us to do. There is also a call for us to pray and move in worship warfare over our nation to call down from heaven His purposes for New Zealand.

In all this, Emmanuel – God is With Us.

Arohanui and Blessings,

Belinda Andrews – ICDFANZ National Co-Ordinator

Healing Through Creativity

During August there was a *Healing Through Creativity* day in Potchefstroom, South Africa where I was invited to facilitate movement and worship. As the programme for the day developed, we decided not to have actual workshops but rather just to lay the table and allow participants to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The inspiration for this day of creativity and healing was a book written by Fiona Horrobin from Ellet ministries. The programme was informal and relaxed being structured around different stations where participants could take part in dot art, messing around with paint on paper, drawing/painting on fabric, working with play dough, adding to a cross installation and walking a spiral.

For the cross installation I set up a cross and a pathway to the cross. Behind the cross was a Lion of Judah banner and 2 tables with various items on them. The participants were invited to prayerfully spend time there during the day and pick an item that spoke to them to add to the cross installation. There was also paper and pens for those who wanted to write something. The spiral was drawn on the floor with chalk and a menorah was placed in the centre. The participants were once again invited to prayerfully walk the spiral at any time during the day. Both the cross and the spiral were part of what was set aside for the worship space with banners against the walls. Everything was pointing towards the message of salvation, resurrection and God's reign as King and, without spelling it out, they "got" it.

The evening before the event God promised a shaking and a breaking free on the day. During the day there were recognised pastors and prophets moving from one station to the other encouraging, speaking and giving a word. The day came to a close when everybody walked the spiral together meditating on what they had received during the day. Walking into the centre and out again became symbolic of a new beginning and new hope, a laying down of the old and being clothed with the new, while being reminded of Ecclesiastics 3:1-8 which speaks of times and seasons. When everybody had completed the spiral we praised God with a song of victory, some picked up tambourines to keep the rhythm, others lifted their arms in praise, and others danced.

We will never know what God did during the day in the lives of the precious people attending but that is what faith is about – trusting God that His Spirit will touch lives and that with the roar from the Lion of Judah territory has been taken back for His Kingdom.

Saartjie de Wet



“Arise”: The 2021 Dance and Prayer Concert - Jakarta, Indonesia

by Jaringan Penari Sekota (Christian Dancer City Network)



17th of August is the Independence Day of Indonesia, yet this year’s commemoration events were still very restricted in many things due to the pandemic. Jaringan Penari Sekota/JPS (Christian Dancer City Network) in Jakarta, the capital city, had taken the initiative to organize a dance and prayer concert as a momentum of spiritual awakening for the nation, to unite the Christian dancers in Indonesia, regardless of church denominations or worship styles. On the Independence Day, the event was collaboratively held online through Zoom and made available for all to watch on Youtube (<https://youtu.be/Ty8Mp8uPh8g> - in Indonesian language) by JPS together with a number of other local churches and ministry organizations. There were around 200 participants involved from 164 local churches in 52 cities all around Indonesia, who all stood as one, to bring back arts to His glory. It was also our intention through this event to include participants from all ages to get actively involved, not only as viewers but as dancers and ministers, as we believe in God’s unlimited and inclusive power to use all who dedicate their skills and talents for His glory.

The vision behind the event was God-given. Ezekiel 37:1-10 was the direction for us to pray and prophesy through dances, so the spiritually dead may rise to life again as God’s troops. This led us to choose the event’s title: Arise.

A few highlights were significant in the event. The first were the unity dances, compiled of regional dances from many parts of the country: Bali, North Sumatera, North Sulawesi, West Java, Kalimantan, and Papua. The dances particularly showcased the rich variety of the tribes, arts, and culture of Indonesia and the spirit of unity. The second was the flag prayer dance using sign language, pronouncing prayers for restoration and recovery. The third was the pre-recorded thematic dance (“Song of Ezekiel”), a praise and worship piece based on the vision. It was then played in the Zoom event during the worship time.

Behind the event’s scene, however, the organizing committee had been prayerfully walking in faith to prepare and organize the event. Despite the many challenges, including funding, miracles happened and God’s provision proved. We believe that the event has started another movement in Indonesia, for Christians to rise and unite in these end times, bringing Him to every village, city, island, and region. Testimonies from those who participated quoted below confirmed this and encouraged us even more to move forward in faith, not only for this country but also to bless other countries.

It was an unforgettable experience to teach dancers from many different cities, backgrounds, and ages, who invested their time and energy as well as presented their body as living sacrifices before God. I hope and pray that this will trigger a spiritual movement in the nation, that blesses many through dances.

(Josevanie Lorraine Allestra, 17 years old, dance teacher)

When I first got invited to be one of the teachers or choreographers, I was quite hesitant because of my age and little experience. Thankfully, I accepted the invitation, realizing that it was an honour. I was involved in the preparation of the contemporary piece “Song of Ezekiel”, the journey of which taught me many precious lessons. Hearing and sensing God’s directions in creating the choreography, reversioning the prophetic message, and teaching the dance moves to the dancers were a very real struggle for me personally, bringing me to grow spiritually and mentally. This has also reminded me of God’s desire in my dance ministry personally and driven me to share it to others through my dances.

(Valerie Agatha, 15 years old, dance teacher and choreographer)

Being a part of this dance concert was a new and very different experience for me. Over the preparation course of about 5 months, I learned and practiced with the teachers in a lot of different types of dances. I am very grateful for this experience of doing a new way of ministry, online and from home but together and united with my fellow dancers from various parts in Indonesia. One thing that struck and lingers in my heart the most, was God’s presence during the event, when we were dancing and praying together. Many were healed, many miracles happened, and participants shared wonderful testimonies of how they were touched by God’s presence.

(Cynthia, dancer, participant)



I’m happy to have learned a lot of dances from the dance teachers in this event. Also, I have become more eager in reading the Word of God and started new friendships with other dancers who wanted to to serve and praise God through dancing. The whole event was really a blessing for me; I was not only dancing, but also getting closer to God.

(Joice Hana Sitorus, 10 years old, dancer, participant)

God’s calling often takes us into a hard and challenging journey, and this is exactly what I have experienced, too. There were many obstacles and difficulties in preparing and organizing the event that was birthed from a vision from God, and I did struggle to obey God’s commands, serve Him in faith that I would not be left alone, and move in His anointing. The pandemic has made everything a major problem; the practice sessions, the video shooting, and many other things. Thank God, He proved His perfect care and provision. No one of us got sick or infected with Covid; the lack of funds was covered miraculously so that finally we did not lack the slightest; and the event did show God’s powerful presence. I am now proud of our Lord Jesus, of how God has revealed His greatness and glory through the 2021 Prayer and Dance Concert. We received many testimonies from the participants, that all experienced healing, new strength, and divine comfort.

(Monika Yulania, chairperson of the organizing committee)

Reported by: Monika Yulania (Chairperson of the organizing committee)
and Lina Lasup (National Coordinator of ICDF Indonesia)

Line Up: an exercise in Scripture, Prayer and Cultures

ICDF embraces people from a great variety of ethnic ancestry, expressions of Christian faith, dance-styles and collaborative artforms, just as the Good News of Jesus was intended for everybody, everywhere, anytime.

To borrow a topical phrase in this season of COVID-19 pandemic, I see that we are human variants of interest. We are at variance to the popular culture of a world straying from God's original design. We, as Christians, and particularly Christ-following dance/movement practitioners, are a line-up of life-affirming individuals inspired by the life-giving Spirit of God! We embody the art and prayer of disentanglement; weaving together with our Lord, the refreshment of new songs, dances and other art-acts of communication. We re-align with God's gracious and merciful lovingkindness, drawing the beleaguered creation forward across the line, into the flourish-patterns of the original divine design! Back to the future?

Do you, can you, will you perceive it? A new thing arises as we search for, listen to, and practise redemptive, recreative varieties of prayer! (Is 43:18-19)



*Women Of Faith Fijian leader -
Living Kingdom Church*

I recently felt inspired to use Psalm 133 for a multi-cultural gathering of prayerful women. Here on Giabal/Jarowair lands, also known as Toowoomba, South-East Queensland, Australia, a small gathering of a group called Women of Faith was convened to pray for the transformation of the lands and peoples, both local and far beyond, even including the recent turmoil in Afghanistan.

I had been invited to coordinate any cultural presentations that would be offered on the day. There were likely to be items by the participating Aboriginal (traditional custodians of the local area), Fijian, Papua-New Guinean, Solomon Islander, New Caledonian and possibly other participants. What a privilege and pleasure! However, I knew that I knew something "new" would emerge from the gathering, and to be ready to "go with the flow" because it was more than likely that our prayer-prepped plans would be interrupted and disrupted in some way or another, if the Spirit was to be given space and time to truly move us out of our "comfort zones"!



Aboriginal Singers

This was NOT a dance workshop or a gathering of dancers, as such. This was a prayer gathering of women from Oceania regional cultures. Although mainly a women's event there were a few men in attendance, whose participation in the worship team and prayer groups was welcome and appreciated. The planning team felt strongly that unity of heart and mind was paramount in any prayer endeavour. So, we heartily embraced the Psalm 133 scripture as inspiration.

Through our prayer-dances, we "midrash" the Scriptures AND we "midrash" prayers of our antecedents, passing them on to our descendants, either natural and/or spiritual. Midrash is the way of interpreting the Bible developed by rabbis of ancient Israel in the attempt to give Scripture relevance to the needs of the current timeframe. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash>)

We were (still are) in the midst of a pandemic, making it nearly impossible to predict attendance numbers, since people travelling from outside the local area could be prevented from coming due to any sudden hard lockdown restrictions. All we could do was cater for a faith-professed figure. As often occurs, some travellers had been delayed which impacted the time we could start the day's proceedings, but multi-cultural events have flexibility to flow in such circumstances. There were challenges with the audio-visual equipment resulting in the lack of recorded music or video media. And yet... Of course, the Lord's purposes prevailed despite disruptions to our plans!!!



Fijian Dancers

Cook Islands Participant

Healing Testimony

Some Fijian Participants

As people entered the prayer-space, a venue whose use was donated by “Victory Life Church”, and hosted by the ladies from “Living Kingdom Church”, I gave each participant a little slip of paper with one of the following words from Psalm 133 on it:

Wonderful	Harmony	Anointing	Blessing
Together	Precious	Refreshing	Everlasting

By the time we reached the part of the proceedings to break into groups to pray, I hoped everybody had their little word-papers easily accessible.

Here goes...

Was this going to work? It was a NEW and unusual thing I was suggesting.

I asked them to find the slips of paper and look at the word they'd been given.

That was the way they would be identified to break up into groups. Who wouldn't rather be labelled “Wonderful” or “Precious” or “Refreshing” than the more usual “1”, “2”, “3”?

I felt the Spirit nudge me to reread the Psalm giving time for the invitational instructions to make sense, trusting that the call to unity through the Scripture text, albeit delivered in an unfamiliar way, would “interpret” for me. I had to have faith in the basic strategy the Lord had given me.

But, would it work here and now?

I am happy to report that it did!

In a quiet and amazing way, the words allocated from the Psalm successfully provided small group identification and more. The word for each group gave focus for the prayers. Each group prayed about matters personal and public, using each of the Scriptural words as a springboard from which to pray the Lord's heart, will, ways and time through spontaneous petitions, affirmations and sometimes even with weeping or laughing. I had not envisaged this. I had only thought to use the words to identify the groups... And yet, the Lord had his way! The groups prayed aloud, gathered in various parts of the venue space. On one of the walls was written “I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap...” Ez 22:30

After the prayer-session, a person from each group came forward to summarise what their group had prayed and shared any particular experiences or impressions. These people were not volunteers or group-appointed. Another part of the creative strategy was writing “1” on one of the paper slips for each identifying word. e.g., only one slip out of the several with the word “Wonderful” had the number “1” on it, only one out of the several with the word “Together” had “1” on it, and so forth. Hence, each group had been randomly assigned a person around which to gather. They were the ones who summarised what “their group” had prayed/experienced. It was a powerful time of testimony and empowerment in ways the people had not experienced before. These “God-randomly” assigned group-leaders, enthusiastically re-proclaimed aloud the prophetic prayers catalysed by the Psalm 133 key words! It illustrated to me, how faithful God is in doing things far beyond our expectations.

More time was given to hear from anybody else that wanted to share anything. One lady received physical healing during the time we celebrated the Eucharist during the opening welcome and worship part of the proceedings. Others received prophetic words and pictures during the session and/or vision and strategy for their respective ministries.

OK, so what about the sharing of cultural items?

With all the time taken with the general run of things, there was not much of a window for that. And yet... There weren't many contributors, so once again, the timing was well in hand. I didn't really have to coordinate anything... God had done it all, and we were very blessed by the Aboriginal singers, the Fijian choir, and the Fijian singer-dancers, aside from witnessing the new things God had accomplished in our midst!

It was a day of feast, fellowship and fun, indeed!

Lunch of course, was amazing in quantity and quality... The Fijian contingent who catered, knew how to lay out a banquet.

Prayer is a seriously powerful business, and serious in nature at times, but the Joy of serving the Lord together was evident. We moved forward in one heart and one mind despite occasional mystery and confusion. To me, it was a lesson learned about the intersection of cultural lines and the value of trusting the Spirit to move when incorporating new, if surprising, ingredients into the prayer mix.

VARY interesting

It was as if we were stirred up to pray in new ways, inviting and proclaiming new things – restoration and transformation in our locality and beyond, to the glory of God's divine plans and purposes!

People travelled home, satisfied and yet hungry for more...



Some Women Of Faith prayer gathering participants

Lucy Jarasius

variants of interest a-line

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I have lines on my forehead.
They weren't always there.
Many years of raising eyebrows managed to achieve that.
Make sure YOUR expectations are high

I have lines in my head.
I'm not sure if they were always there.
Sometimes they seem to obey summons,
giving the illusion of gather-friendliness.
Generally they arrive randomly,
unannounced, nevertheless not unwelcome, albeit many-a-time uninvited
Poetic Justice? Captive imaginations escaping the confines of my mind,
resisting freedom-blocking bars, incorrigibly disobedient recidivists,
apparently haphazard yet happily-hatched creactivists,
happenstantial volunteers,
prevailing and prince-peace principled protestors,
challenging hell-gated estates of authority.
Make sure your collective imaginations are prophetic

I have lines through my bones.
I didn't always know they were there,
ready to blood-sweat ancestral traits into the exercise of my daily life-living,
good and beneficial, bad and exorcisable.
Make sure your heart motivations are teachable

I have lines through my standards.
They are always there.
Drawn up across the sands of my deserted intentions
Sometimes they are borne like a cross
cruciformed, re-opinionated, thank God!
Conforming to a pattern time-warp wefted by the Creator of time herself,
etching thought-grooves,
conduits for living waters, free-flowing,
streaming higher conscience-ness, life-affirmation giving.
Make sure your mind ministrations are charitable

_Charitable ministrations

Teachable motivations

Prophetic imaginations

High expectations_

Master-chef ingredients to stir the earthen pot revesseled,
cooking up a storming,
a-newly created world adorning.
The usual suspects? What a line-up!

Imagine if they went viral?!
Variants of interest serving up deliciously glorified morsels,
transforming heart-and-home hungry-for-change mortals.

We'd have a feast of a future!