



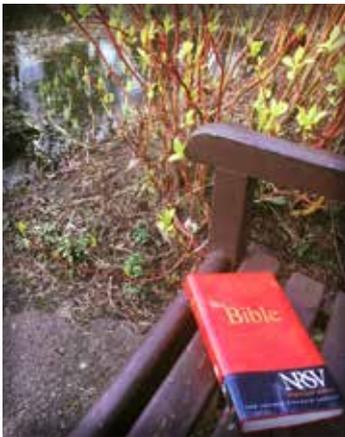
ICDF Networks

April 2017

AWARE

Network for Academics, Writers and Researchers

This network is for Christian dancers who write, Christians who undertake research, and Christian academics (in Christian or secular institutions) to support, encourage and pray for each other, whatever their discipline or area of interest.



It may seem strange to many that we have a Network for writers, researchers and academics in ICDF but, as Debbie Bright points out, research is more commonplace than we realise. In the dance ministry you may want to do research on the song you are planning to use for choreography, on the symbolic meanings of colours, or on many other topics than we can think of. Some of us may have a book in mind that we have been meaning to write for years. Whatever intrigues you, there is a place for you in this Network that is led by Dr Debbie Bright who lives in New Zealand.

To find out more about the Network go to ..

<http://icdf.com/en/networks/academics-writers-researchers>

For the AWARE blogs go to ...<http://icdf.com/en/connect/discussion-forum>

On Facebook search for ICDF Academics, Writers and Researchers - AWARE

The ICDF website is also worth a visit to see what articles are available for download. We are continually searching for relevant articles from our members to add to the collection. Visit our publications page for inspirational and academic articles ... <http://icdf.com/en/education/publications>

An art-maker may 'think' in the medium of her art-making. As a dancer, my thoughts are often experienced in my mind as movements, rather than as words.

Being Outreach

My life and how I live it means:

Being who God made me to be in everything I do.

I am made in God's image, and I am an artist.

I am a dance artist.

My dance expresses my inner relationship with God.

As I dance I am also an instrument of God, a breathing, dancing expression of God's creativity.

Therefore, my life is an act of outreach, and my dance is an act of outreach.



Poem included in ICDF Diploma in Dance Ministry, Foundations IV, written by Debbie Bright and available for study from June 2017

Research: Where to start

Lots of us research things, whether it is researching views on a particular Bible passage for our Bible Study Group, researching the historical or social background for a dance or other artwork, finding out what people in our church would like to have included in our Sunday services, or an online search for information on different brands of washing machine.

The following are some questions you need to ask before you start:

First Question: Work out the question you need the answer(s) to. You may be like me - I often find it hard when I am researching online – what question do I need to ask to get the information I need? Being clear about the question will help us to look in the right places for answers (or help Google to find the answers we need!). If my research involves asking people for their views, then I also need to give them very clear simple questions; if my questions are not clear, the people being surveyed will be confused about how to answer, and I will end Dr Debbie Bright at home up with a survey that was a waste of everyone's time!



Dr Debbie Bright at home

Second Question: How am I going to report on this research? Am I going to produce a series of focus questions or a short paper for the Bible Study Group, a dance or other artwork, a summary for the church newsletter, or a hand-written summary of features of the best washing machine?

Questions when your research involves people: For an academic research project involving people, there are a lot of ethical questions that have to be answered before the academy will give permission or funding for the research project. But I think we can learn something from this, even if we are not doing academic research. These ethical issues are really about respecting people: things like asking permission from leaders or elders, making sure you survey a wide range of people, ensuring that people's names and photographs are not included in the final report unless they give permission, allowing people to opt out if they don't want to answer a question (or even be involved).

Whatever you are researching, these are important questions to answer before you start.

I pray that God will bless and lead you as you look for answers.
Dr Debbie Bright



I Can't Think What To Write!

I am blocked, stymied, dried out, washed up, hitting a brick wall

I can't think what to write!

I answer my email, read Facebook, gaze out the window, pace the floor, Google that thing I've been meaning to look up for ages, doodle, stand up and do star jumps, sit down and check my finger nails... and my toe nails... and... and open my screen up to Word once again.

Still that computer screen looks at me blank-faced and waiting

Now what was I trying to write?

I HAVE NO IDEA!

Debbie Bright

What about the poets?

With our focus on academically based writing, we tend to get caught up in our projects and deadlines and sometimes the art of the pen is forgotten, or at least falls from our immediate focus to the periphery.

When I contemplate the poetry I see in books, on-line, on buses, or hear through musicians/singers – I wonder if they do not have as much to say as those who expound with citations and statistical study, about our world. Perhaps we even need to keep in touch with them as a compass for us in the midst of the working life as academics. Are they not the ones whose hearts are soft enough to perceive the world in metaphors and bring our attention to those things that often get forgotten? In this I perceive a prophetic influence, which society loses at its peril.

A professor in Old Testament studies (Michael Morgan 1978) once defined the prophet as one who speaks for the presence or absence of God in the present world. It is the poets who frequently plumb out the injustice, or quiet integrity of the plodding lives of humankind. They voice the inner anger, angst, pleasure, fear, or delight in response to our incarnate lives in the here and now. This is what links our emotions particularly to the music of our distinct generations perhaps – they brought light to articulate the ways of the world in which we were coming of age, and seeking to respond to, or serve, or change. To hear an old classic of our own age quickens the heart and renews the visions that were keystones to our discovery of ourselves and our callings.

We need to make room in our heads, and hearts to stop the rat-race and breathe; contemplate the wonder of the world, and what it says to us, renewing our spirits, our vision, and our minds, for the works that drive us day by day. Remember the poets – to receive from them and reflect on their words and visions. Remember the inner poet – listen to the inner voice that finds meaning in the metaphors surrounding us.

Diane Hobelaid, 2017

Morgan, Michael (1978) opening lecture for the course Old Testament Prophecy, Department of Religious Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Unlearn me, please!

©Lucy Jarasius 2014

You come...

Unbidden

Undomesticated

Unrehearsed

I wasn't even waiting

I was just here

Maybe, I was... Un-waiting?

Please

Unbid me Good Morning

For some, it's a bad morning

a bad bad warning

just a very bad mourn

Please

Undomesticate me

For some, there's no more home

no more home town

no more home state

no more home nation

just a desiccation of the mere notion of a nation

Damn! If I know

... damned if I don't!

Please

Unrehearse me

in my dance-making

For all

I thought I knew...

After years of class learning

How to hop to it, bop to it, step right into it

Now, unwarily aware, I intuit

I real-eyes

through your UN-ness

I learn I'm uncovered

Unlearned, I discover...



The poem by Lucy Jarasius was first published in "A World of Knowing 3: Art-making as a way of knowing" (2015) by Debbie Bright (PhD); available www.brightbooks.co.nz

How would you define Christian Dance? - ICDF Diploma students write

The following two writers are ICDF Diploma in Dance Ministry students completing the Foundations VI paper (Arts in Christian Ministry) – Noël and Romi have given permission for their work to be reproduced here.



From Noël Filemon (Suriname)

Christian dance – is dance done by the New Testament Christian who is saved and born again and who likes to express his/her love relationship with God through dance that is birthed from his/her renewed spirit.

In 2012 I went to an international dance conference in Puerto Rico organized by the International Christian Dance Fellowship in conjunction with the Christian Dance Fellowship of Puerto Rico. In that conference the late Paula and Bill Douthett danced to a song called *In Your Presence*, by Paul Wilbur. Through this duet dance performance the Lord revealed His love for me in an extraordinary way. Bill who reflected God the Father in the dance performance, was standing behind Paula and at a certain moment in the song, he embraced her. When I saw that I was moved to tears, I could really feel it.

Photo: Paula and Bill Douthett dancing to “In Your Presence” by Paul Wilbur.

From Romina Paola Cina (Argentina):

Dance is one of the expressions of the deepest feelings from inside using the whole body. It is communication when one has no voice. It is movement performed with a rhythm, a melody or both, but also it can be performed with the whistle of the wind passing through the trees or the birds singing. Dance is evidence of what you carry in your heart and spirit. I've always said that, for me, dance is like flying without wings, flying in my mind and being transported into the heights: one instant of full freedom. That is why I think Christian dance is dance performed by those who are sons and daughters of God. For me, as a daughter of God, dance is the expression of my heart. Dance reflects what the Father says to me in the intimacy, communicates the love of the Son to those who are the onlookers, and it could be a channel to heal those who need to be healed and restored, to be free of the chains of oppression. This is because through dance we are able to praise and worship the Lord, and as we find freedom in the praise of the Lord, because he lives in the praise of his children, there is restoration while performing it and also by looking at it.

Early Morning Windowed View

Mountains cling to shredded clouds, like tattered blankets against the cold.
Their naked slopes regret the loss of insulating fir and pine
for man's indulgences in paper, or colonial renovations.

We strip the earth of all its crust to build our own facades of pride and power
in mere appearances. When do we fin'ly hear the Lenten call of eucalypts
to strip away our bark, extruding worms that eat their threat towards our heart:
Throw off facades that hide the truth of vulnerability?

Would that I might shed those surface covers, reveal the beauty God has woven
In the naked layers of my being to bring Him glory; hear His word again,
“It is good. Lo, it is very good!”

Diane Hobelaid, 2017

Rhythms of Thought: *music and movement in theological collaboration*

Fire is often treated with suspicion by Christians, especially if it appears in ceremonial or worship contexts. Yet God reveals himself through fire in Scripture; so I tend to think fire has a lot of theological potential. I was able to put this theory to the test this year when I was invited to be part of a creative collaboration with a choral composer. Our brief was to produce a new liturgical composition based on the text of Exodus 3, where God reveals himself to Moses through the burning bush. I would provide the necessary research, while the composer would write the music.

From the outset, we wanted our composition to engage the imagination. We hoped that listeners would be drawn into the scripture, and imagine themselves encountering God as Moses did. It was important for us that the music evoked a sensation of being near the burning bush to heighten emotional and imaginative engagement.

As strange as it may seem, I have gained my most significant experiences of fire through dance. I practice the art of fire-spinning, in which the performer twirls fire on staffs or other specially-designed props. In fire-spinning, it's important to keep the fire moving during the performance — so, I dance! Dancing with fire has drawn my attention to the way fire can capture the imagination and stimulate the senses, as well as its challenging relationship to the human body.

There are times when our encounters with the Word of God may engage our senses and find expression in the body. This was my experience with Exodus 3. Through dance, I can experience fire as a means for creativity rather than destruction. Fire's potential to work with the body's movements, rather than against them, has led me to conceptualise the burning bush as a very personal encounter between God and Moses. Fire engages all the bodily senses, and perhaps the undeniable presence of the flames helped Moses understand that God really was present in the wilderness.

Portraying these ideas in music would be no simple task. We had only a church organ and a (very talented) choir at our disposal. It is easy to imagine the choir singing the words of the text, but how were we going to represent the burning bush? While I was conducting research for the project, I started to think about fire-spinning. I thought about fire's sounds and rhythms; the way in which flames rise and fall depending on the movement. Dance quickly became a key influence on the creative process.

Of course, there is a close relationship between dance and music. Rhythm of movement may be transposed into the rhythm of music. To capture the burning bush of Exodus 3, the composer gave the organ a recurring, steady rhythm to suggest the constant movement of flames; theologically, this also suggests the consistency of God's character. A sense of the flames 'rising' and 'falling' comes from the organ rising and falling in pitch and volume. This ensures that the music portrays a burning bush which is not static or inanimate, but reflects the living God who speaks 'out of the fire' (Deut. 4:12).

Both dance and music have shaped my theological reflection on Exodus 3. For me, the challenge of representing the burning bush in music has reinforced that reading and writing are not the only ways to approach scripture theologically. On the contrary, words alone can never be enough. As dance has shown me, our bodily movement and senses may give us insights we would otherwise have missed.

My research into God's revelation at the burning bush has reminded me of this: creativity is indispensable in both theology and human spirituality. Why? Because divine mysteries are greater than analytical words can tell.
Rebekah Dyer

Rebekah is currently based in Scotland, studying for a PhD in Theology, Imagination and the Arts at the University of St Andrews. To find out more about her musical collaboration on Exodus 3, go to ...

<http://theoartistry.org/projects/composers-scheme/>

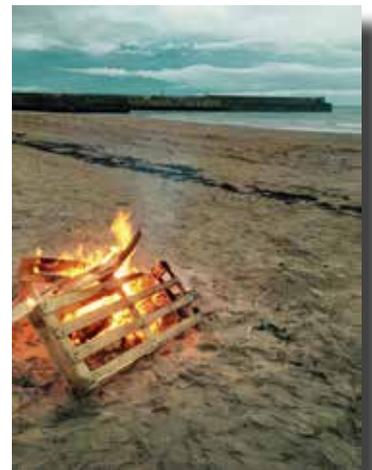


Photo: Making a bonfire on the beach while doing experiential research.