



ICDF Networks

July 2017

Creative Arts and Social Concern

This network aims to connect Christian creative artists reflecting on, and engaging with, the concept of being and doing church in new ways, being and seeing the Good News proclaimed imaginatively to ALL, including the marginalised, disenfranchised, and otherwise privilege-denied!

This Network is about demonstrating God's love that overflows every human barrier, whether of social, political, economic, cultural and religious construct ... being friends of Jesus ... being his loving works and workers of art.



“We need more voices of Spirit inspired ‘prophetic imagination’ from our Christian Creative Artists which speaks to major social justice issues today”.

- Andrew Park

Message from the Network Coordinator

I have observed an increase of interest from Christians in promoting social justice through the arts. Sadly, a lot of that has not become as evident from within the ICDF community nor is it where ICDF's main focus lies. That doesn't mean things have not happened to do with Art and Social Concern from within the ICDF community. It probably means that members are simply not communicating all that much about it among CDFs and ICDF.

As the Network Coordinator I want to stand down after a decade of doing this role, but I can't until someone takes my place. Despite numerous invitations advising that this role is now open for a new leader to take over the running of the network, no one has come forward yet. If you are interested, please notify the International Coordinators.

Andrew Park

Facebook ... [ICDF Network for Creative Arts and Social Concern](#)

Blog ... <https://icdfnetworks.wordpress.com/category/creative-arts-social-concern/>

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Last night I watched the film Laramie

Last night I watched the film Laramie. It is set in 1998. Following the brutal kidnapping and roadside-torture murder of gay university student Matthew Shepard, members of New York's Tectonic Theatre Project went to Laramie, Wyoming to research about what had happened and to hear about the communities' reactions. They interviewed over 200 residents before writing a play.

Hate crimes are not just crimes of intolerance. They are crimes of social exclusion. And they are directly counter to the message of Jesus' gospel, which is one of social inclusion for all, from wherever and whatever background they come from, openly welcoming and accepting them into the loving community of God.



Over the past few years, one of the major themes I have spoken about, written about and preached about has been to promote social inclusion toward others – both those like us, and those not like us – into the community and table fellowship of Christ.

We've all witnessed over the past few years how religiously motivated hate crimes have wrought insane violence and needless carnage upon so many innocent lives because the perpetrators, for one reason or another, could not live with or tolerate others who were simply "not like them"...Crimes of ignorance and insane fears ... ISIS terror, gun crime at massive levels ... and crimes of violent social exclusion, condemnation and judgement.

Church is not innocent of perpetrating religiously-motivated hate crime throughout its two millennia of history. And yet the message of Jesus, resounding strongly from the shadow of the cross, and from the pages of the Gospels, has and always will be, one of love and inclusion toward the socially-excluded and outcast including our 'enemies' without doing violence toward any to compel and coerce them to become "just like us". If we don't see that from what Jesus did and said in the Gospels, then we either haven't read or heard correctly, and we just haven't listened to what God is actually saying and doing through the person of Christ from the multitude of messages God has been speaking to us within the community of open table fellowship, open welcome and unconditional love toward all that we all claim to be part of. If that's the case, then we need to openly seek out the voice of Jesus about it and repent. Jesus wants us to include, welcome, and to love the excluded including finding ways to love our enemies ...see his seminal teaching all about it in Matthew 5-7.

Social inclusion is a major social justice theme within today's society. When has it ever not been? However, we as a creative arts movement are out of touch with that and with God, if we are not addressing it through our art in some way or other. Jesus, in so many texts like Luke 4, Matthew 25, is so proactively involved in including and welcoming the socially marginalised and excluded, and continually telling us to do likewise as his followers. How can our art exclude expression of that in some shape or form?

We need art to be speaking into, investigating and communicating about social justice issues. We need to be expressing prophetically-imaginative and alternative hope options to a world which is constantly on the brink of disaster due to things happening to it like hate-crimes. If we won't do that, and we remain silent while bad things happen to the world around us, we are also committing a crime – a sin of major omission. That sin is not our commission in mission. We need to be thinking as dance artists who we can support, and to be with Jesus in his social justice transformation mission which is stated so clearly in Luke 4 for us. I'm not going to quote it here. You need to read it for yourself!

Andrew Park

To read the full article please go to <http://icdf.com/en/networks/creative-arts-social-concern>

African Dance and Social Integration in Britain

We recently invited Dr Sylvanus Kwashie Kuwor, a lecturer from the University of Ghana, to contribute a paper in which he explores African dance as an holistic art and its use in social integration in Britain. As written in the conclusion: “The discussion focuses on a decade of his dance practice in Britain where African dance forms under the umbrella of ethnic minority arts were accepted in schools and communities as a tool for social integration for both immigrants and mainstream society.”

“While the paper draws on Ghanaian/African material to exhibit the ability of dance to bring cultural re-union and sense of identity to geographically displaced people, it also reveals some challenges involved. These include, re-creating the dance forms to respond to the educational needs of the learners, removing some original elements and incorporating relevant contemporary elements into the re-creation which obviously may raise questions of originality and authenticity.”

“Significantly, this paper offers a perspective on how dance can be employed as an impressive tool to integrate ethnic minority groups into European society without the migrants necessarily compromising their native cultures. It also highlights how dance and its related arts can be used to create a platform for multiple voices in order to encourage collaborative creativity among African immigrant communities and mainstream British society.”

He argues that “African dance as a cultural phenomenon provides the opportunity to explore the concept of society and its benefits to multicultural Europe, America, Asia and other diasporic environments with the benefit of promoting community cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the midst of diverse cultures.”



Students in Tokoe dance with Dr Sylvanus Kwashie Kuwor



Drumming session as part of Black History Month

In the paper Dr Kuwor describes the features of the Hesu Model of his West African Dance Course: “The model provides opportunities for students to learn a variety of Ghanaian/Ewe dance and musical forms in their cultural contexts. The course combines theory and practice. Students are introduced to the cultural contexts of Ghanaian/Anlo-Ewe performances: their social, religious/ceremonial, economic, political and stylistic bases and selected Anlo-Ewe music and dance forms. They also play Ghanaian/Ewe musical instruments, such as bells, rattles and drums, sing and dance in small and large groups. Students are also required to answer questions on the various topics and keep reflective journals of their learning experiences throughout the semester. They also have opportunities to perform in the middle and at the end of the semester.”

Dr Kuwor writes: “In order not to operate contrary to the Anlo-Ewe norms, I set out two themes to be explored by Hesu technique namely, (a) Sticking to the rules and (b) Breaking the rules. In the first part pupils are introduced to the movements and their significance after which they are taken through the rules that constitute the grammar of the dance. Significant part of the rules is listening to drum language and responding with the appropriate dance movement. In the second part, pupils are allowed to break the rules in order to allow creativity and innovation. In the creative process the drum language is replaced with recorded music to which pupils respond with their various choreographic pieces. I argue here that African dance in the diaspora always has a contemporary element to it. Therefore, if I call the first part of my Hesu model as a traditional or neo-traditional dance, then what is created in the second part (‘breaking the rules’) can be called contemporary. I also recognise that, what is known today as contemporary may become traditional tomorrow if it is maintained for a long period of time.”

For the full paper please go to <http://icdf.com/en/networks/creative-arts-social-concern>

Meet Carissa Caricato

Carissa Caricato is the founder and chief executive of Hoola for Happiness, an international non-profit organization that uses hoola hoops to spread joy. We have found the following testimony on the website of how she came to be involved in the cause of bringing hope and joy to those who are living in difficult circumstances.

“After my first life-changing, heart-awakening trip to Haiti in January 2009, I started taking hoop dance classes with the Hoola Monsters. When I took a bunch of travel hoops back to Haiti for Christmas in 2009, they were a magical way to interact with the kids (and adults) everywhere! I fell in love, with hooping, Haiti, the contagious joy of the children, but more importantly, with Jesus and His love for the whole world.”

“After the devastating earthquake in Haiti, God began to shake and move my world around. After two more trips to Haiti and lots of divine stories, I started Hoola for Happiness in July 2010 to spread the joy of hooping and the love of God all over the world through hooping projects and partnerships. I quit my nonprofit marketing job at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay after 3.5 years there to pursue Jesus’ call on my life to focus on Hoola for Happiness full time.”

“Our team of Joy Spreaders have been to 74 countries since 2010, and as God opens doors, we are hooping right through them. Following God is the craziest adventure you could ask for, and it is so worth it for the JOY He brings!”

“My Hoop Places: Haiti, Brazil, England (London), Kenya, Uganda, India, Dubai, United States/Hawaii, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, Ukraine, Costa Rica, Czech Republic (Prague), Poland, Israel”

“We make and send hoops all over the world to youth most in need of joy and freedom. We love and serve our local community through hoop dance projects with our nonprofit partnerships. We arise Joy Spreaders to invest deeply in their places of mission, rooted firmly in faith and equipped with joyful tools of movement, worship and playfulness. We unite the hooping community with passion and purpose by showing God’s immense love to all.”



For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of POWER and of LOVE and of a SOUND MIND. -2 Timothy 1:7
<https://www.hoolaforhappiness.org/>