



# ICDF Networks

## November 2017

### Messianic Dance and Tambourine



Photo: Provided by Natasha Chierico

This network aims to share ideas and choreography for Messianic Dance and Tambourine. Messianic dance can also be known as Davidic, Israeli or Hebraic. The title is not as important as the fact that they all have Jewish roots.

The communal nature of Messianic Dance and Tambourine is especially good for worshippers with little or no dance training. The repetition makes it easy to focus on the worship. The words of the song, which are normally taken straight from Scripture, allows for singing Scripture as you dance which makes the worship so uplifting.

“Though the term Messianic Dance does have some creative license, it needs a strong Biblical base pointing to the Messiah.”

- Vera Chierico

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## **Worship** in Messianic Dance

*Vera Chierico, one of the Network's Joint-Leaders, shared with us her journey of discovering the worship to be found in Messianic dance.*

### **The beginning**

**H**aving been a professional dancer for most of my life it was very painful to give up dance in 1973 when I became a believer because I couldn't serve G-d as a dancer? Dance was my god! Twelve years later, in 1985 married with three children and living in New York, I was invited to join Dancers of the New Jerusalem, a Jews for Jesus dance group. It gave me so much joy to be dancing to scriptural words (most Messianic music is scripture not 'feelings') but it took a while to really get the Worship aspect of what I was doing. DNJ danced at Churches, Messianic and Christian conferences, international events, and travelled with the J4J music evangelists "Liberated Wailing Wall" to the New Orleans Superdome housing 100,000 people for a 'Holy Spirit' conference.

Yet it was not until our family moved to London that I was able to get a better understanding of Dance as Worship. After a few months in the UK I heard an interview on the BBC with my childhood hero Helen Shapiro, a chart topping singer who had become a Jewish believer in the Messiah. I wrote to her c/o the BBC and two days later she called and we talked for 45 minutes mostly about the difference of singing/dancing for the LORD instead of the world! I began to get a better understanding that my dance was truly worship. We both agreed that sometimes it felt so good it was hard to grasp. At the end of the conversation she invited me to go to her Messianic Shabbat fellowship with my new friend and dance partner Helen Delap, another Jewish believer. We presented a one hour dance presentation ending with the whole room of 80 plus, mostly Jewish believers, dancing in a circle to joyful music. Several people spoke to me afterwards that they would book us for future events. I changed our name to the more simple New Jerusalem Dancers.

Sadly in some churches I had been less than acceptable because I had been a dancer, but here I was now blessing and bringing joy and worship to others through dance worship. This is what I wanted this Network letter to focus on. **Worship!**

### **Discovering worship**

**I**'ve been told I have an over developed sense of professionalism, probably picked up from working with top name professionals internationally for decades. During a three day dance conference in Barcelona in 2002, I became aware that the Spanish loved the slow worship songs a little more than the faster praise songs. I taught a dance to Paul Wilbur's "Kadosh", (Santo, Holy, separated for a purpose). My track was in Spanish so they knew the scripture was from Rev 4:8. As we covered our eyes in the third section I suddenly had a strong desire to hold that position for longer. It seemed right to cover my eyes before a Kadosh G-d

I had to snap out of holding the position thinking, 'I'm not here to get lost in His presence but to teach and lead'. They knew the next steps, a right chasse, but even with their eyes covered they had felt to hold that movement! They were not just copying me, I was shocked. Why were they doing that? Some were quietly weeping, some were on their knees. After a pause some of us finished the dance but I could not break the awesome silence after the music stopped. There was a Presence in the room and no one moved for a very long time. It was clear we were in the presence of G-d and I was puzzled as to how this had happened? It was not my steps, it could have been the Scripture, the beauty of Paul Wilbur's voice, the melody?



*Photo: Vera Chierico*

This was a first time for me! I could not sleep that night pondering the event. I remembered the 200 or so men and women in attendance and decided it must have been their intense desire to use their bodies for worship that had caused the presence in that room?

My desire to remain professional and not get swept away in the moment was very strong after years of dancing for the world. I could see that teaching dance as Worship was teaching me to change my habits and allow the Ruach ha Kodesh, Holy Spirit to lead! I had a lot to learn in this young ministry. I believe there are other aspects to Messianic dance which make it easy to focus on worship. Many of my dances are 'interchangeables', that means you learn a few steps to the verse and chorus then repeat them until the music ends. Within a few minutes the 'Neuromuscular Response Pattern' takes over and you forget what your body is doing and just worship! Hearing the Scripture constantly is also helpful, Isaiah 55:11.

### Foundation in the scriptures

**A**nother aspect which is big in the Jewish world is community. Messianic dance is mostly in a circle, we are one people Jew and Gentile together, sharing worship, looking at each other, being uplifted with visual communication. The Hebrew word for the circle dance is Macowl. It translates 'dance a round dance'. I would have been happier if Messianic Dance had been called Biblical or Scriptural dance, which is exactly what it is. Someone sarcastically asked me years ago when it was called Davidic dance (1970\80's in USA) 'how do you know David danced like that?' I had a good answer for him.

There are many words in the original Tenakh (Hebrew Bible) that actually describe the movements and steps that Israel used in worship during celebrations. Since the King James Bible translators in 1611 probably had no concept of dance as Worship (thanks to the reformation era and Martin Luther who declared that only music and preaching should survive in the churches) these translators used words like feast, joy, joyful, celebrate, celebration instead of the physical description. Some of the original words were dance, jump on both feet, swirl, leap with feet apart (grand jete?) march in two lines, limp, bow down, tap and many more. Translations to be found in Strong's ConcorDANCE!

Photo: Provided by Natahsa Chierico



They can also be useful in choreography ...

My New Jerusalem Dancers took part in a three day production called "King David" written by one of my dancers who is also an actor. Our son played 'young David' (there were three). At one point David was pondering the LORD whilst watching the flock in the desert. He wrote Psalm 8, 'Oh LORD, our LORD how excellent is your name in all of the earth?' Marty Goetz wrote the beautiful song but for the first time I was not inspired with moves.

I thought, as you do, 'Let me turn to the word!' I was able to put a dance together beginning with David being pensive and simply tapping his foot slowly (Pa'amah) for the first few bars as he pondered his Maker and His Creation. The programme had an explanation for each of our 8 dances and that was included! The audience would have been aware that it truly was Biblical Dance.

Who would have thought you can turn to the Word for choreography?

Well, dance was His first!

Zeph 3:17 says 'He will Joy over you' in context, Jerusalem. The word Joy there is Y'gill. According to Strong's ConcorDANCE it translates 'spin around in sudden emotion.' To me that is our Creator dancing! We are made in His image and we must dance to worship Him. They say 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery' (worship?) He loves it when we worship Him in dance.

*Vera Chierico*

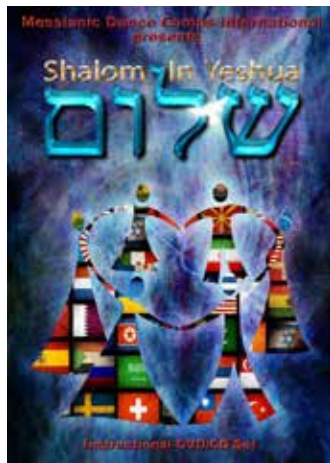
## Greetings from Ralph and Mindy Seta, with **Shalom!**

*A letter from Ralph and Mindy Seta, Joint-Leaders of the Messianic Dance Network, giving us an update on their ministry in the USA.*

**W**e pray you are well in our Wonderful Messiah. We have been basking in the glow of Yeshua! Our family ministered together this past summer on a short but powerful tour through the United States. We had twenty-three Messianic Dance workshops and three conferences within a two month period. It was a beautiful time as always, meeting with the Saints, and dancing together with worshipers along the way. We had little problems and safe travels for the duration of this abbreviated tour. We love what He has given us to do and understand the blessing it is to lead in the worship! We arrived home in time for the High Holidays, and like so many others witnessed the Solar Eclipse that moved across the United States. That solar event was certainly a sign in the Heavens!

Since then we have had a few local dance camps, and have been praying for many who have been experiencing great tragedy in this season of disasters. It seems everyone in Las Vegas knows of someone who was involved in the tragic shooting a little over a month ago. Thankfully, no one in our family was at the event; however three youths from our daughter's school were.

One boy was shot but only injured - "Praise God!" Then, one week later our ministry had been invited to Florida for Feast of Tabernacles. On that side of the country they were still in the throes of recovering from hurricane Irma. Yet, we were brought in to teach Messianic Dance for a better part of the week. It was well received by the attendees and the act of praising Yeshua with all of our heart, soul, and strength renewed joy to many. We are certain that because the dance is done more often in a group, holding hands and in community, the sense of connectedness between one another and Yeshua's commandment to "Love your neighbor as yourself" takes precedence. More and more we are seeing Messianic dance to be a comfort to people's lives and a vehicle of restoration. He has been leading us to search out the meaning of "Shalom" and infuse its truths into our ministry. Ephesians 2:11-22 suggests that there is now shalom because the barrier between Jew and Gentile has been abolished.



Messianic Dance Camps International started out teaching people the basics of Israeli Dance set to contemporary worship music with the "Teach Your Feet to Praise the Lord" instructional DVD series. We then moved to raising awareness of the needs that our brothers and sisters in the land of Israel have for our love, support, and encouragement. We also began dancing through the Land with the "Aliyah ~ Rise Up!" dance series (something we are still doing by leading tours and creating curriculum). For the past five years we have been exploring Psalm 149 within our instructional DVDs while we experience "Worship In Battle," realizing that King David was the consummate worshiper and warrior. Finally, He is bringing us to

the "Shalom In Yeshua" Messianic dance series. Rather than only a salutation, the word "Shalom" has deeper meaning. **Shalom** means completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, brings balance to agitation and discord in our lives. Shalom was accomplished by Yeshua's sacrifice, and because of that, humans can attain peace with God. True shalom is not a result of wealth or prestige, but is experienced when people trust in the Lord for everything. The goal of this new DVD series is to give the worshiper the inspiration to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself. In this way the worshiper will experience "Shalom In Yeshua."

Blessings to you all, in the Name of our Messiah!!

*Ralph & Mindy Seta*



Photos: Provided by the Setas

# For Such A Time As This - My journey in Messianic Dance

I would like to approach this topic, (I humbly request), from a personal point of view.

Thirty five years ago, a small group of singers and dancers took it upon themselves to start “rehearsing” the end time prophecies of the Nations gathering in Jerusalem during the Millenium ( Zech 14). This has gained momentum to become an annual celebration of believers each year, organised by many ministries both in Israel and around the world. Known as the Feast of Tabernacles or Chag Sukkot (Hebrew), this Feast consists of the Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur and Tabernacles and these are the only Biblical feasts not yet fulfilled in Yeshua, unlike Passover (Pesach) and Pentecost (Shavuot). We know the Lion of Judah will reign and bring in His Harvest soon, to fulfil this amazing annual depiction.

At about the same time as this movement was being born, I was radically born-again on the opposite side of the world in the city of Durban, South Africa. I literally went from cabaret night-club dancing to Bible School!!! Sadly, most of what I was taught there concerning God’s covenant people was replacement theology, i.e. the church is now God’s chosen ones. However as a baby Christian, I was learning the Biblically correct version through my then pastor, Malcolm Hedding, on Sundays. So, off to Israel for 2 years where I lived amongst the Israeli’s quietly, loving and serving in the land.

Can you imagine my shock arriving to volunteer at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1984 and being told to go and audition for the dancing??? The WHAT!!!! Never would I have imagined what God had instore for the next 30 years of my life. In Israel I learned the different Biblical Feasts of the Lord, learned the cultural dances, the language and was thrown in the deep end having been asked to choreograph two concerts at the YMCA in Jerusalem (opposite the King David Hotel). WOW!

When I came back to S.A everyone wanted to participate and learn and so the dance company was born.

Over the years, God has graciously used dance to demonstrate His love and concern for His Covenant people. It is just the vehicle to draw attention, again and again, to their need of the Messiah. That is what sets it apart from other styles of Christian dance.

Messianic dance is a visual reminder to the church that God has not forgotten His nation and turned to another people. It also has the opportunity to provoke the Jewish people to jealousy (Rom 11:14) when they see us doing Hebraic dance, especially if the lyrics are Hebrew. From my heart, I have a genuine longing for their “blindness” to be removed and for them to recognise their Saviour. (Rom 9, 10, 11).

We pray for Jerusalem’s protection, through the dance. We dance her future Salvation, in our steps. We prophetically, move out her place in end times as “the Head and not the tail of the nations”. We hope to bring to the church’s attention, the huge debt we owe to the Jewish people for their written word, their prophets, their faith, their future and their Messiah, all of which we are now, by His Grace, partakers (Eph2:12-20)

Passionately Messianic-“In Him we live and move and have our being”.

*Karen Kerr*

*Karen Kerr is the Director of the Rejoice Dance Company in South Africa and also International Christian Embassy Jerusalem representative for Kwa-Zulu Natal*



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Photo: Provided by Karen Kerr

## Why Messianic?

*What is it that makes members of a dance group go back time after time for practise sessions and ministry opportunities? We find out more from the members of the New Jerusalem Dancers.*

As a family, we've enjoyed dancing with NJD (New Jerusalem Dancers) since 2003. It's been a wonderful opportunity to worship G\_d with Biblical words, inspiring music and a great sense of community as we worship together in a circle format.

The photos included are from my husband's 50th: one photo shows NJD presenting their dynamic dance, 'Shouts of Joy'; the other photo shows everyone enjoying dancing together to 'O Give Thanks, to the Lord, Call upon His name'. These songs are both by Paul Wilbur.

Come and Join us in this wonderful Davidic worship dancing! ~ Ruth



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Why do we travel for 3 hours in/out of London once a month when I hate driving in London, and volunteer weekends of my time? Firstly, and most importantly, it was Adonai's timing by His leading hand! Through the work and blessing of the Chierico family we are able to do this. We are not professional dancers but we love to dance in worship to Abba our Almighty God. Messianic dance is a wonderful way of obeying Scripture and, through that, receiving and giving joy. It is uplifting, beautiful and joyous. Even when persecution hits, as it often does, the one thing in the midst of all our struggles that are happening in these troubling Last Days is being able to listen to beautiful harmony of voices and instruments and respond in Biblical dance.

Lifting our arms up to Yeshua in thankfulness for the persecution He suffered on the cross for us helps recharge and lift our eyes to Adonai and focus on Him. To keep looking up for the blessed hope of His soon return. What a blessing! ~ Karen and Elisha

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I've been worshipping with the New Jerusalem Dancers for over 20 years. It's great how women, men and children can all worship in dance together. We all enjoy our time together. The steps take a little time to learn and once you've got the dance in your head, then we can worship together. I love being able to use my whole body to rejoice in response to my amazing God's love for me. ~ Andy

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In my relatively short time engaging in Messianic dance I have especially loved witnessing many individuals crossing some sort of inner threshold and finding a new freedom and joy in worshipping God this way..

I once visited a dance festival in Israel and was very moved to witness a dance by a group of soldiers in memory of one of their friends who had died. The use of corporate dance to engage, in this case in mourning, and also in a way that united and encouraged was also very special..

Maybe the use of corporate worship as in Messianic dance is something the Lord longs to restore to us for our own healing, encouragement, unity and more? Having witnessed myself both men and women touched deeply by the Father when engaging with worship this way....I am hungry for more! ~ Gill

I love coming together with my brothers and sisters from NJD to dance once a month. I feel the joy of the Lord as I dance and it puts a smile on my face. Also I learn little snippets from a Messianic perspective that I perhaps don't hear in church which add so much to my understanding of God. For instance, I learnt that the healing of the woman with bleeding touched the tzitzits of Jesus garment. According to Malachi the Messiah will bring 'healing in his wings'. Jesus as a practising Jew would have worn a Tallit. The word for wings used here is the same as the word for the corner of this garment, the Tallit. The four corners of the Tallit are tassles called tzitzits and this is what the woman with the issue of blood would have touched with the understanding that by touching the corner of Jesus garment would come healing. ~ Fiona

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We attend as a family and we love learning biblical dance with the NJD. Dancing like David danced we find we can worship God scripturally and enjoy God through Dance. We also have some precious fellowship time with fellow like minded believers too. Our 11 Year old son loves it and says, 'It's a fun way to tell God we love him'. ~ Dominic, Rachel & Tim

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The New Jerusalem Dance workshops led by Vera and her husband, Paul, has broadened our way of expression of the biblical faith enormously. Our understanding of the scriptures too has been stretched and deepened into the well of Hebraic roots of the Christian faith. She leads it, like Miriam, a timbrel in her hands (Exodus 15:20) and all of us, male and female, follow her with timbrel and dancing. It is a wonderful place to come and meet with God to worship Him, together with brothers and sisters in Yeshua as One New Man, on Shabbat, His appointed day. Here, in the circular dance and the distinctively Jewish steps, equality and oneness of Man is emphasised as proclaimed by Rabbi Shaul (or, Apostle Paul), in his epistles Galatians and Colossians. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for [we] are all echad (one) in Christ" (Gal 3:28). It is, to me, a powerful antithesis to the World which as we see is incapable of relating to each other in this "new" way, but only in oppressive, pyramid shaped power structure. ~ Hiroko

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I rejoined NJD a few years ago. I had the dance bug creep up and just wasn't happy standing singing in church. To be honest that's never what I remember doing. I always remember music = dance and not sing like most people. So I picked up my first flag and that still wasn't enough. As my relationship with God grew my need to worship and praise harder did too. So I started searching for different flag styles and materials and how I can dance with the flags. Some I have ordered and put together, some I have made myself. I now have every type of flag and banner possible, I believe. I use a lot of silk in the form of swing flags, wings on flexi rod, all in a wide variety of colours. I have introduced flags into NJD more and more. Now most of our dances have flags involved somehow. ~ Natasha

You know those bracelets that young people wear ... WWJD 'What Would Jesus Do?'

Two things come to mind

First: He looked over at Jerusalem and yearned for Israel to return to the LORD.

Matthew 23:37-39

Be like Yeshua .... Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Psalm 122. Pray too for security and protection in the land that is 'The Apple of G-d's eye.

Second: According to the Encyclopaedia Judaica, 'It was the responsibility of the Rabbi to lead dance at weddings and celebrations'. We know He attended the wedding in Canaan (John 2:11) and is a Rabbi, Teacher. WWJD? He DANCED!

Therefore men (and women) .... GET UP AND DANCE BEFORE THE LORD!