



ICDF Networks

November 2022

Cultural Dance





In March this year, I had the unexpected joy of being part of a team on a missions trip to Burundi for a fortnight. At a large outreach rally upcountry, we came into a dust-raising, body “bopping” heart-warming celebration of worship with dancing. Shaking off the legacy of Covid and the weakness from recent hip surgery it was a sheer pleasure to join young and old in their native dance. The following morning in a packed to overflowing church again the praise and worship was with singing and dancing, foot stamping, body bopping and full of joy. Needless to say, I couldn't stay still! Babies in slings are jiggled and swayed so that dance becomes instinctive almost from birth. This is what I miss in our all too reserved western worship, whether cultural or theological I'm not so sure.

We can “... put on the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness or despair”. Isaiah 61.v.3 and be lead into the presence of the Lord.

On another day we were treated to a performance by drummers and dancers at a cultural centre. Carrying spears and shields, individual dancers showed off giant leaps with tucks in the air – the ferocity of the warrior! Dance with vertical leaps seems common in many African countries and even found its way into western pop culture some time ago.

Recently I've been listening to a sermon by an American pastor who was imprisoned in Turkey over 4 years ago. At the time I'd prayed for him and written letters then rejoiced over his release after two years. He was pastor of a church in Izmir for 23 years and went with his wife to renew their visas, and instead found himself imprisoned and given a long sentence. His talk was about “When God is silent and you can't feel his presence.” In prison, he sank so low that the presence of God seemed inaccessible and became depressed during his awful experience. His wife was allowed to visit and reminded him he was a worshipper and encouraged him to worship. Convinced that meant to dance, although he felt nothing he started to hop and leap around his cell worshipping Jesus to the amazement of the other inmates who thought he'd lost it!

This solo dancer locked in prison acted in obedience and found it uplifted him and was part of his breakthrough. Matt. 5 v.11-12 “ Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you... Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...” Rejoice, even when you don't feel like it! “Rejoice” this broken pastor knew to mean being active and to dance.

Due to lockdowns and restrictions, I haven't been to a communal dance or a Ceilidh in a long time. Many dance schools did online classes which worked quite well for the solo dancer doing Irish Step dancing. My neighbours' children continued their tuition via Zoom. Traditional Irish Dance encompasses both solo and group dancing with social, competitive and performance purposes.

Solo is mainly for competition, especially amongst the youth, with dancers wearing elaborate dresses, wigs and make-up. The technique is all important and is well honed. Group dancing is mostly social and more relaxed and fun. Between the reels and the jigs, there is ample scope to express our joy in the Lord and tell stories of his great redeeming power.

Someone wrote that dancing teaches us to make peace with our mistakes. We make so many it's really the only way forward. Onwards and upwards to the glory of God!

Alison Bourke

ICDF Ireland and Cultural Dance Network Leader

Jamaican Traditional Folk Form

Dinki Mini

The distinguishing characteristic and basic step of the Dinki Mini is the “Dab Step” done by the working foot (the right) placed on the ball of the foot which brushes sharply on the floor in an outward sharp and quick movement, as the dancer moves. The standing leg (the left) is placed firmly on the ground and does a low quick, flatfooted hop as the other leg brushes to the side and the weight changes. The knees are kept close together almost touching and facing each other as the dancer moves. This step/movement can be repeated on the other leg moving in the other direction – the change over done with a “break” – a quick motion of the body as it hunches and counteracts the movement for the change in direction. A backward turn can also be executed before the change of feet and direction.

The torso and pelvis do circular motions while the dancers move. The arms are held bent at the elbows making small circles as the torso and shoulders move. The arms are also used to swing down in front of the body from side to side in a sort of drop or relaxed movement giving a slight break to this movement as they change over the other side. This fist is usually clenched. Dinki Mini is a dance of defiance, the dancers will at times look directly at each other as if at an enemy – which is death – (“staring death in the face”).

Dab – front and back

This involves the “dab step” movement but this time brushing the working leg forward and backward of the body alternately. The standing leg does the usual hop and body change of weight and the knees remain close together. The pelvis is pushed forwards and backwards alternately with this step and the arms move from side to side across the chest at the same time with the shoulders lifting slightly with this movement.

Gallop Step

This is a sort of gallop step (like the donkey) and is done with the knees together as the dancer hops and splay the legs apart with the knees still held close together.

Flexed Foot Pumping

With the weight firmly on the left foot, the right foot is flexed and this working leg is pumped across the body in quick jabbing movements. The arms are brought into play with clenched fists and arms bent at the elbow. They also do the pumping movement in a slight diagonal across the body.

Information Source: D. Joyce Campbell
TRADITIONAL FOLK FORMS CONSULTANT, JCDC

Patrick Earle
Dance Development Specialist, ICDF Jamaica



Patrick Earle demonstrating the 'Dinki Mini' to students from Immaculate Conception High School

Traditional Swedish Dance

Nordic traditional cultural dances have been known since at least medieval times. Around the year 1900, many new dances were composed in Sweden. Swedish folk dances are mostly done for joy and fellowship, or for performance, as we saw at the recent ICDF conference in Sweden. Some dancers have used them for praise in church settings,

A few "dance masses" have been written in recent times. Some of which place traditional Swedish folk dances into the liturgy of the mass.

There is a Swedish folk dance service with communion called: "Träd in i dansen" which means "Join the dance". Songs were written for the choir and dance was included in the service. Follow the link to watch a film of the service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrxSolfUjh8>

Here are 4 more links to the dances we experienced with the Swedish Traditional Dancers at our ICDF Conference in Sweden.

shorturl.at/antDK

shorturl.at/jHQU4

shorturl.at/avxR8

shorturl.at/bGHX6

Psalto Team



Flamenco Dance

The flowing skirt catches your eye and has you captivated. The sound of a rhythmic instrument coming from your fingertips. The stomping of the feet in a floating manner. What am I talking about? Spanish dance of course. This beautiful dance form was birthed in Andalucia, in the South of Spain. Flamenco was originally danced to no music only the sounds of clapping called 'Palmas'. In the 1870s, guitarists started to join the dancers. This artistic collaboration became more popular and it started being performed in cafes around the 1870s. The style was, and remains, more of an intimate art form drawing the audience in.

I started Spanish dance at the age of 13 years old. As a child, I was intrigued whenever I saw it on television and my entire family knew that I loved it. My Dad surprised me one afternoon by taking me to a Flamenco studio. I was overwhelmed and at a loss for words.

Although I was doing Ballet, Modern and Ballroom, I never dreamt that I would actually take up Flamenco dance. I was excited about every class, and always did my best at every rehearsal. Within one year of joining La Rosa Dance Theatre, I was invited to join the company and it afforded me the opportunity to dance professionally and travel.

Our dance studio had planned to go to Spain and train with authentic flamenco dancers, but sadly, I never had the finances to go. I was disappointed but had my other dancing so I didn't allow it to get the better of me but I promised myself that one day I would visit Spain.

Throughout my life, that became a distant memory and I placed it on the back burner. This year on my birthday, my husband blessed me with a trip to Spain. I was attending the ICDF Sweden Conference and we thought that it was a good idea to go from there straight to Spain. This gift just showed me again how God lavishly loves us. He did not forget my dream to travel to Spain. Things may not always happen the way we want them to but God's timing is always perfect.

Ephesians 1 speaks about the riches of God's grace that He Lavishes on us. On the trip, I was privileged to see a Flamenco show called Gran Gala Flamenco at the Teatre Poliorama Rambla as well as a Tarantos show. Both these shows were so different and I had to contain myself from jumping out of my seat. I didn't hold back on the applause and the screaming though.

Spanish dance can be used as a form of praise and worship. I've used the props as symbolism for warfare and took the elements of community and passion to express the love of Christ. The foot stamping shows how the enemy is under our feet. All dance belongs to God and we can use it to glorify Him. It has inspired me to continue my Spanish dance journey and to afford the same opportunity to others. In South Africa, the racial divide has excluded people of colour from many opportunities. In theory, we have come a long way but we still have lots of catching up to do. Spanish dance is still not financially accessible to our communities and I would like to change that narrative.

God's creativity is a gift to us. Every morning I look at the artwork drawn across the skies and the movement of the leaves in perfect sequence. God has changed my life, dance has enhanced it and the only way I can thank Him is by praising Him with my mind, body and soul.

All Glory to God.

Gloria Dios.

Melanie Erasmus
ICDF South Africa Country Leader



Let Praises Rise!

The true worshippers Of The Most High God respond to Him in Spirit and in Truth and we in the Caribbean know exactly how to respond to God as He requires. Our ethnicities and cultures vary across our region but the one thing that remains constant is the vibrant praise (which is thanksgiving in action/demonstration) and worship (our expressed love and commitment to God) that must be seen, heard and sung, just as our Heavenly Father intends. Yes, our activity must represent the very nature of God and first we enter with thanksgiving.

As movement artists, every lift of the hands, turn, jump, kick and bend, expresses the life, energy and vitality of our substance, which tells of our love for God. Unbridled thanksgiving in demonstration, being ready to be In The House of God to enter into His gates with thanksgiving (mindset) and into His courts with praise (expression) and be (exist) thankful unto Him and bless His name. The number one requirement is we must make the decision to praise God, we must have the right mindset, it is not only a matter of feeling and movement but about the state of mind towards our great God and also being ready and expectant of His response. The praise express highway traffic has true praise to God going up on one lane and God's response and goodness and blessing to us coming down on the other.

We must be well attired and from Bermuda to Trinidad and Tobago the nations of the Caribbean, we have distinctive wear in the creative and cultural arts. We as the children of God use these garments to identify the genre of dance. Bélé, calypso, soca, reggae, hip-hop, African, Asian, contemporary and yes fusion dances with a merging of these and other styles. But the true dress code is our praise, in liturgical worship or special performances we must embody our praise in action.

We move because we have a reason to praise, from a place of love, truth, spirit and an understanding of who The God Head is, we as His own are expected to present ourselves. At concerts and special events, whenever our ministry teams take the stage, there is always an explosion of praise because we understand the importance of salvation and making it into the New City in the new world to praise and worship with Jesus Christ, our future existence for eternity; therefore our time on earth is spent in preparation for it.

At my local church in Trinidad, EDIC - Effectual Doors International Church, every Friday and Sunday we celebrate in the presence of God. The atmosphere is set, the band is jamming, the Praise and Worship teams sing the message of the Bible and the dancers move in response to God's Word in song, being led By His Spirit. The performing ministries who lead in praise and worship are not the only responders, but members, visitors and guests in our auditorium respond in ecstatic merriment and jubilee, not because of the excitement of the service, but because we are taught how to respond to God's Word, power and presence, and because we have the desire to serve and obey The One True God. The exuberant praise climaxes when God responds to His people and grace is released to endure whatever we may face.

What exciting and life altering times we have every weekend, from the time the service starts, God begins to speak, and by the time the sermon comes to us via our Pastor, the experience is one that makes the difference because of the presence of God being richly evident in every part of the service and due to having the understanding and the right teaching on how to give God what He desires. (Shout out to my Pastor Anthony Moses for teaching and demonstrating the truth to us at EDIC and the dancers of ICDF Trinidad and Tobago).

Clap your hands, sing, shout, dance and give thanks and express your love and commitment to God withholding nothing in a church of Jesus Christ where you are, and The King of Glory will come to worship and to meet with the children of God who respond to the Presence of God. The benefit of being knowledgeable of the Truth of The Word of God and His requirement of how we operate as children of His Kingdom is necessary to make it for the roll call in heaven, so we can have the opportunity to celebrate with Him in the New City. The state we exist on earth is the state we will be resurrected in when Jesus returns, so let us live accordingly now, and we will praise and worship for all eternity in The New City, in The New World to come.

Elder Celeste Olivierre-James
ICDF Trinidad and Tobago



Hip-Hop Dance

Its Friday night and I can't wait to get to the Galaxy night club. Tonight, maybe I will have the courage to take on Ramon, one of the hottest boys of our time. The year is 1986.

Clubbing is for dancing and Hip-hop is the style that we grew up on. It came naturally and it was part of our Coloured culture...and yes, here Coloured is a respected term of who I am. A mixture of Japanese and Italian descent, mixed with Cape Coloured. Hip-hop was never one thing, it embraced everybody who wanted to immerse themselves in the free expression of dance. New steps were constantly being created as an outflow of the individual's inner feelings. Street shows became the norm and from a single expression it now became a group outpouring of floorwork, intricate footwork, style, charisma and a level of performance that was never taught. It simply happened.



The crew (group) rivalries became fierce but it never escalated to violence as the battle was waged on the cardboard boxes taped down on the pavement stage.

Its now 10 years later, Apartheid is 'no more'. We now have access to studios and a different expression. But the White population now also have access to this freedom of expression and because it doesn't come naturally, its formulated into Hip-hop with an 8-count. Syllabi are written to embrace those who never had the opportunity to learn Hip-hop on the street growing up.

This grew Hip-hop even more but there is a thin line that divides the street from the studio. We even have names like OLD SKOOL and NEW SKOOL. But the love is the same! The rivalries are still fierce! The expression though taught and modelled by the choreographer, still holds weight as the passion for our modern culture of Hip-hop shines through.

The street dancers are now called upon by studios to share their expertise to try and pass on the freedom of expression that is Hip-hop, except now it has to fit into the dreaded 8-count.

And me? Well, dancing on concrete surfaces didn't do my knees any favours and now I sit 'in judgment' of the syllabi as an Examiner and Adjudicator, trying very hard not to leave Coloured out of this Colourful expression of dance called Hip-hop.

Gio Fisher

ICDF South Africa

Director of G-Squared Performing Arts Movement



Diversity and Inclusion

Two words often talked about and written about in the same sentence or paragraph as culture, and in this case, cultural dance, are diversity and inclusion. What do these mean and how are they relevant to the ICDF?

First let's look at what they mean, simply and in a nutshell.

Diversity – is the presence of differences.

Inclusion – is what is done to ensure that people feel a sense of belonging.

Diversity is about celebrating our differences. To empower people by respecting and appreciating what makes us different. Such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and ability/disability. In the ICDF, we provide a safe, positive and nurturing environment where we can explore these differences. Allowing us to celebrate and embrace the richness of each other's culture within our community. There is power in diversity when we recognise these differences and learn to respect and value one another, regardless of background.

Inclusion is what we strive for within the ICDF, to welcome and accept everyone, and value their cultural and social background. An inclusive culture helps everyone to feel respected and valued for who they are. Where space is provided for everyone's contribution for the benefit of all. Inclusion is appreciating and celebrating our differences.

Imago Dei comes from Latin and means Image of God. In Genesis 1:27 God creates men and women in His likeness, or in His image. Not in the sense of what He looks like, but in His essence and His character. Each and every wonderful human being is valuable, simply for being ourselves. We are unique in our abilities and characteristics and each one of us reflects our Father's image.

“...put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of the Creator.” Colossians 3:10

We need to realise the Imago Dei in ourselves and recognise the image of God in each other. This is what drives our desire to value and celebrate the unique cultural differences among the members of the ICDF, and the wider church family.

This newsletter has expressed our diversity, from Flamenco to Dinki Mini, and traditional Swedish dance to the praise dance styles of Trinidad and Tobago as well Hip-hop. Each has equal value within our fellowship and is celebrated as an expression of our faith and worship which is acceptable to our Father and acceptable to each other.

Liest Townsend & Sue Tutherland

ICDF Joint International Coordinators

