



# The Professional Christian Dancer

*December 2017*



*Photo: Provided by Sandra Godde*

## Audience of One - Sue Hodson

I wear my gown of performance with pride.  
There is no shame in perfection  
In striving to be the best.  
Showcasing the talent that I've been given.  
"It is good", He beams as I move audiences through my dance.  
But  
In the Secret Place,  
The "I" on my altar  
Must be replaced with  
YOU.  
I kneel, naked and unashamed,  
Allowing HIM to clothe me in humility and anointing.  
Submitting to His agenda,  
His will  
And allowing the Spirit  
To change hearts as  
I move.

# Dance Artists On Mission

Every artist wants their work to be significant! But what makes our art or our dance meaningful to us? and to others? We often forget that all believers in Christ have been called to participate with God in achieving His Missio Dei (His Mission) in the world. So what is God's Missio Dei? and how can we participate in it, experiencing the excitement of knowing that our artistry has a grand purpose and significance?

God's Mission is His overarching plan to bring redemption and reconciliation to the whole world. That is, to all people of every race, language, and people group. And, in redeeming and restoring mankind, God also brings all things under his Lordship in His eternal Kingdom. This plan of God's has been in place since the foundation of the world and the subsequent fall of Adam and Eve, and has never really changed. His heart is to restore mankind to his original God-given identity, in perfect relationship with God and each other, and to extend and multiply His kingdom upon the earth. In sync with this mission God has called all Christ followers to participate in co-partnership with Him: continuing on with Jesus's ministry of healing, delivering, saving, comforting, and exhorting others to enter into His kingdom of joy and righteousness. So, how do believing artists fit into God's Missio Dei upon the earth?



Sandra Godde

It is clear that each member of the Body of Christ has been uniquely gifted and equipped by the Holy Spirit for building up the Church and for being a blessing to the world. This will look different for each person as they follow their unique call to ministry, which is the specific outworking of the Mission of God in practice. For dancers too, this can be outworked in a myriad of ways from being a part of a dance worship team in church, to being a part of an evangelistic or outreach dance team, to being a professional dance artist, or being part of a professional dance company. In all these roles, the mandate for the believer is essentially the same: we are called to bring God glory and to represent Him on the earth.

Even though each ministry or calling has a very specific and unique goal or mission that fits into God's overarching Missio Dei, in every case we are called to be 'salt and light' to the world. Some dance groups have a specific goal to reach and redeem their audience, presenting a sermon in motion, whilst some individual dance artists are called to "stand out" and be a personal witness to Christ in the midst of a very secular and ungodly dance scene. Thus, wherever you are called to be, it is important for each believer to have a deeper understanding of this overarching calling and what that entails (Matt 5:13-16; Matt 28:16-20). We do not "minister" by ourselves, or out of our own strength; "ministry" takes place when we co-partner with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. If we are not connected to Christ, and our ministry doesn't flow out of His flow of life within us, then we are just engaging in fruitless works.

Think about how your dance ministry fits into this mission.... What aspect of God's heart or ministry focus has God called you to? Are you pursuing your call in obedience to the Holy Spirit's promptings or are you trying to copy someone else's ministry? God's will for you will include such details as geography, right relationships, leadership and accountability structures, the specific work of the ministry, and a lot more. God seeks to reconcile a fallen humanity to Himself, and He also intends to restore the people of this fallen humanity to their original holy identity, so there is much to do!

Another aspect of God's mission for the world is to re-establish His Kingdom over all creation, which was inaugurated at the coming of Jesus Christ. This means that all kingdoms and all arenas of human flourishing, whether it be government, education, medicine, science, the arts etc. need to come under the rule and reign of a righteous governmental head. Thus God's kingdom will transform all aspects of life. It was indeed mankind who chose, and who continues to choose, to not live under God's reign and to instead live

unto themselves. Therefore, as God seeks to reconcile mankind to Himself, He also seeks to reconcile mankind to His kingly reign. Moreover, throughout Jesus' ministry on earth, He was proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God by healing the sick, casting out demons, comforting the downtrodden and calling people to repent from their old ways (Matt. 4:17, 23; 9:35; Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 4:43-44; 8:1). By doing these things Jesus showed that the reign of God was present in a new way to defeat evil and conquer sin. The full manifestation of His kingdom will not arrive until His return, however we are to continue faithfully with His work of preaching and teaching about the kingdom to come.....

It is interesting to note that before the coming of Jesus the people of Israel did not have a specific missionary mandate except to be a witness of God's righteousness among the nations. However, this missionary mandate has experienced a reversal since the coming of Jesus, where the people of God received a commission to be sent out into the nations (Matt 28:18-20, The Great Commission). There is a common misconception that the term 'missions' refers only to the cross-cultural effort of evangelism and social justice, however the mission field is everywhere; even in our own neighborhoods. Furthermore, mission cannot be reduced to evangelism only, because mission consists of the broad range of activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery... slavery which extends from economic necessity to God-forsakenness.

It is clear that all ministry is God's ministry, as all lasting and fruitful ministry is done out of the power of the Holy Spirit through the universal mission of God. It is a privilege that all Christians have been invited to participate in the divine plan of God to restore all of humanity to Himself and to His Heavenly Kingdom. It is out of this knowledge and conviction that believing artists and dancers can find their true purpose and confident justification for ministry.

As Eric Liddell said in the movie "Chariots of Fire", "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure", I can also attest to the fact that "when I dance, I feel His pleasure". If God has called and gifted you to dance, and you name His name, then bring Him glory through your giftings, and never forget that you are part of a much bigger mission that began in the very heart of Father God.

Sandra is the Network Leader for the ICDF Network for Dance Artists  
For the full article please go to ... <http://www.icdf.com/en/icdf-newsletters-articles>

Sandra Godde

Photo: Iris Mirjam-Behnke



# An Audience of One

“ And David danced before the Lord with all his might; ....So David and All the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.” ( 2 Samuel 6: 14-15)

I don't know if this is the first “Professional” dance of worship performed, but it certainly was a dance conducted in front of a very large audience! As dancers who perform full-time (paid or not), there is always the question raised, “Who am I dancing for?”

In the Church, during the 70's and 80's, trained dancers were frowned upon in certain Charismatic circles. How could a trained dancer, who has choreographed a dance, be ‘dancing in the Spirit’? It must be fleshly! Thankfully, such notions are now not so common and training is accepted as a basic tool in the dancer's kit.

Rosemary Raw, founder of CDFSA, put it this way:

*‘Dancers are so easily carried away by the feel of dancing that they need to be constantly reminded that, as Christian Dancers, we have a priority order in the way we work:*

- 1) *Focus on Jesus Christ*
- 2) *Focus on Fellowship in the Company*
- 3) *Focus on Dance - to glorify Jesus*

*Secular dance makes no demands on 1) or 2) and the “focus on dance” is to please the audience, feed one's ego and self-esteem, improve the box office records, earn a living and become famous. (I know, because I've done this!)*

(“Viewpoints 3” by Rosemary Raw - see the box on the right)

As dancers, I believe we need to understand our calling. Where has God placed us? Our heart attitude will be the same – to glorify Jesus in all that we do, but our end results will be different.

We need to know whether we are called to the secular world as a performer, teacher or choreographer, or to minister within the Christian community, or both. If you are one of those who moves between the two, your challenge is to know when you are performing and when you are ministering. The first is so needed - the secular dance world is crying out for the **Light of the World** and Christians should be there, revealing Him. What then does it mean to be a professional performer?

We may use secular music, dancing or choreographing to non-church themes. We are Christians who perform, who teach, who choreograph. Just as we have doctors who doctor or teachers who teach, for example. As Christians, what we do in every aspect of our lives will be to the glory of Jesus. It is an act of worship, because we love Him. How then is the work we Christian Professionals do, different from the rest of the Secular world?

Firstly, whatever we do should be as honest as possible. Our choreography should be clean and unambiguous. Our costuming, modest (not dowdy!). We can be those at the forefront of new techniques, creative choreographies, inspiring dancing. We can be those whose concerts are booked out, because of the high standard of our work. We can bring the purity of Jesus into a very dark world. Beth Bluett-Spicer, founder of Living Dance International and also leader of the ICDF Network for Dance Teachers, is an excellent example of this. She told me that the Australian Ballet Company would send scouts to her end of year concerts to find their next dancers. What a testimony to Beth's determination to stand against the sexualisation of dance, to use Christian principles in teaching and choreography and to produce work of such a high standard, that a secular company would come seeking dancers trained by her!

We can be the pioneers, the standard by which others are judged. There are so many Christian performers and teachers out there doing this already. We salute you!

You may be one of those called to dance or teach or choreograph full-time within the Church environment. You are a professional Minister of God's Word. To minister, means basically to serve. You are to be a vessel, a catalyst, a carrier of God's anointing, His encouragement, His love and His word. Your primary goal is to reach the hearts of people, to see God move, to be the one He uses to draw them closer to Himself, bringing healing to the nations.

“Your goal is different. You are not interested in entertaining people, but in desiring God to touch them through your dance.” ( Karen Kerr, director of Rejoice Dance Company)

You are dancing for an AUDIENCE OF ONE.



Rosemary Raw (above) started out as a professional dancer for the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) but later became one of the pioneers for dance in the church and as a form of worship in the years 1979 to 2012. She was the Founding Coordinator for the Christian Dance Fellowship of South Africa where her legacy still lives on.

Ask yourself this: When you are dancing, are you focused on Jesus or the audience?

The answer will be a good indication of where your heart is when you dance. Ministry or performance ....

In the early days of my ministry, I heard this quoted: "Miriam (Moses' sister), was called a prophetess because she turned the hearts of the people to the Lord through her dancing."



Photo: From the CDFSA conference in Cape Town, July 2017

How my heart burned when I heard that! My heart's cry was and still is that I might be a Miriam! I am trained, yes. I danced full-time, yes. I teach and choreograph secularly, but I know that I am called primarily to ministry in a church setting.

My dear friend, Kerry Williams, an amazing teacher, choreographer and dancer, will tell you outright that her calling is to be a light to the world. The cry of her heart is to bring Him glory "out there". She is doing just that and producing beautiful dancers and choreography that is outstanding! Her King loves her offerings and has granted her much favour and influence in Cape Town.

Believers who dance professionally and those who minister through dance should be motivated by this: "Jesus First".

Rosemary Raw put it like this: "As a professional dancer, I had all the training, all the steps, but Jesus wanted my heart. I had to put aside my training for a time, until I had learnt to WALK in the Spirit. Once I got my priorities right - He released me to DANCE in the Spirit!"

To sum up: All of us need to keep on asking ourselves: What is my heart motivation? Who is getting the glory here? Do I care more about pleasing others than pleasing Jesus? Does my choreography, my costuming, my music choices, my behaviour reflect the qualities of Jesus? We need to remind ourselves that Satan was once in charge of worship and music. He knows the power of dance. Don't be deceived by what is acceptable in the world. We have to be those who walk the path less travelled, risking scorn and mockery.

When we dance, there is no room for ego, for a "look at me or my group - they are so well-trained, etc". We have to allow performance to slip off our shoulders and allow the Holy Spirit to take over, whether you are at an eisteddfod or in a church service!

I am challenged anew by these words by a New Zealand pastor, John Beaumont:

"There is something precious and beautiful in angels and humans mingling together in dancing before the Lord. And such dancing! It commences in the heart, and overflows from there with creative expression of joy and love and abounding life and yet it is totally free from any characteristic that would draw attention to the dancer or that would distract in any way from Jesus' glory.....There is beauty in dancing when the outside reflects the inside and the inside is wholeheartedly seeking to glorify Jesus." (God in My Dreams - J. Beaumont)

*Sue Hodson*

**ICDF**

## Network for Dance Artists

This is a network of Christian dance artists who are seeking to affect their culture through their artistic endeavours and/or by their professional positions in the dance arena. This includes professional and semi-professional dance artists who are involved in ministry, professional companies, independent dance artists, mission work, or educational roles.

Members usually have at least 3 years full-time training as dancers and/or are very experienced performers, and are keen to unite with other Christian dance artists in cyberspace. This fellowship network is for those who can see, and will act on, the creative possibilities of engaging their faith within their culture.



Photo: Provided by Sandra Godde

"Ministry" is a brokerage of another kingdom - the kingdom of heaven invading the kingdoms of this earth to bring life where there was death, hope where there was despair, healing where there was sickness."

- Sandra Godde

# Country News

## Britain: Brunel Manor Conference 2017

Each year the CDFB National Conference and AGM is in a different part of the country. Every so often we have a weekend conference beginning on a Friday night and finishing on a Sunday after lunch. This year was one such year. We met up at Brunel Manor in the South West of England. The venue was a wonderful Christian conference centre set in extensive woodland grounds.

Marie Bensley and her Bristol and West and South Wales team put together a weekend of wide and varied workshops from dancing with staffs to creating shapes in groups. The evenings were full of worship, presentations and dancing. One of the great highlights was our speaker and cake lover, Liz Babbs. Some ICDF members may remember back in St Andrews she and I had an impromptu comedy moment when I was trying to tie my tie and speak into a mic at the same time. Inspirational and funny in equal measures she was excellent.

There was space for quiet and prayer in the prayer room run by Tom Gibson, our National Prayer Coordinator and Kaye Strauss. This was more than a room to pray in. God moved greatly in the quiet of that room. Several people were blessed.

Overall a great conference. Next year will be one day but what a day as it includes an evening of celebrating 30 years of ICDF.  
- Peter Hothersall



## Australia

### *... next chapter in the Australian story*

The season of Advent seemed like the opportune time to soft-launch a new era for CDF ministry in Australia. After all, the traditional Advent candles symbolise Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, respectively, and the main message of the month's pre-Christmas lead up is about waiting and expectation! The anticipation of God Incarnate's arrival in the person of the baby Jesus weaves its way through Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi (many centuries of looking forward to a very important event). Our anticipation of Jesus' Second Coming is likewise long, in terms of time, and rich in a mix of stories during its passage!

One of the Scripture themes for the 2007 CDFA National Conference held in Alice Springs, a town in Australia's geographical desert centre, was Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV:

“Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
19 See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.”

Little did anybody realise that it would take 10 years of waiting, and the “mixed emotions” accompanying the closure of all formal operations of the old CDFA, to happen before a new era for CDF ministry in Australia could be born!

December 3rd, 2017, fifteen people (ten women and five men) gathered at the Bungarribee Community Hub in Blacktown, to express interest in exploring The New Thing in terms of creative and healing arts in Sydney's Greater West region. At this fresh initiative facilitated by Lucy Jarasius (Asia Pacific Connection on the ICDF Steering Committee) representing the ICDF Network for Creative Arts and Social Concern (begun by her husband, Andrew Park) and colleague Sharon Ereaux who began and is currently Coordinator of the ICDF Network for Fitness, Wellbeing and Movement Meditation, the afternoon's attendees represented several different Christian denominations and a variety of artforms – Dance, Drama, Poetry, Visual Arts (drawing, painting, sculpture, digital art), singing, song writing, music, and various art therapies.

The afternoon's proceedings included Acknowledgement of Dharug Country (recognising the First Nations people of the local land), personal introduction activities, CaraMayan, Praise Moves Kickboxing, and an improvisational intercession (about heritage, call, place and purpose), before closing with a worship song/prayer-blessing by Reverend David Eco and Clarissa Boch from Mt Druitt's Living Bread Ministries, followed by refreshments and fellowship time.

Regular gatherings in 2018 are in the processes of being planned. Several participants expressed their enjoyment of this first session and volunteered to encourage their friends to join the journey into The New Thing! Like a second coming, the plunge further into the deep of God's plans and purposes for dance and creativity has begun... Australia is once again in waiting and expectation... just like it was 40 years ago when Mary Jones first “mid-wifed” CDF ministry's original arrival into the world!

- Lucy Jarasius





## Ireland

Our September workshop was run by our National Co-ordinator, Linda Ivanka, who taught us an exciting celebration dance from South Africa which certainly tested us but gave us a real sense of achievement when we performed it at the end, with a sense of fun too, and lots of gusto! We continued with spontaneous celebration worship. Linda also took time to share her news that she will be stepping down from the role of National Coordinator, although for a time she would stay in a nominal capacity to facilitate handover. She senses she is being led by God into a new season of ministry.

We want to thank Linda, who as you will all know, has been an amazing leader, extremely gifted and very hard working. She had inspiration to join with Ghana in facilitating the 2016 International Christian Dance Fellowship conference and endeared herself to many as she networked with those of you there and joined Ireland and Ghana in a beautifully choreographed duet telling of the Father's love. She has also led humbly and with a lot of grace through difficult times, facing these difficulties with prayer and perseverance. Her loss is keenly felt and we will miss her kind-hearted, friendly personality. We wish her God's richest blessings for the future.

- Rosemary Alcorn

*We join our thanks to Rosemary's for Linda ... for the person she is, her leadership of CDF Ireland, and her friendship. In addition, we thank Rosemary for stepping into the role of Acting National Coordinator for CDF Ireland during this interim period.*



## Psalto: CDF Sweden National Conference

In the middle of October Psalto met in the middle of Sweden for our National Conference and AGM. We came together on Friday night and shared dances from our local groups. One of the members performed a mime dance which was very expressive. The following morning we were taught some dances from Israel. Our teacher was Anette Sundell-Liljedahl, who is known to many of you! Also, in the Sunday service we danced Israeli.

After our AGM at noon on the Saturday, we were taught how you can teach small children facts (in our group about the UN!) with help from dancing! We were looking for mimes, dancing, jazz!! We loved the idea and so did the children!

On Saturday night we danced in an unusual way: in a mass! With simple steps in a circle, we celebrated the Holy Communion. The texts were free texts but in accordance with the words used in Church of Sweden services.

In our AGM we got a very nice answer to our prayers. For a long time we have prayed for a new member to join our board in Sweden. We got two!! But one old member left and our chairman, Tove, has difficulties working for Psalto at the moment so we still need your prayers!

When we went home after the AGM to our different parts of Sweden, we were all very happy about the Dance Conference!  
Gunnel-Maria Palmqvist

## ICDF Caribbean Connect - Hurricane Irma

Oh the joy of December, the time of year when all of the world gets busy with Christmas. As children of the Most High God, we Celebrate His arrival and Lordship; what a privilege it is to serve Him. While many may be planning dinners and décor, many in the Caribbean are faced with the most difficult times they have ever experienced. The Hurricane season struck the Caribbean with a brutal force, devastating many Caribbean islands and causing havoc on many others. While the hope of rebuilding is a daily trek, the reality remains that lives have been severely changed. Homes, schools, churches, business and in many cases, lives were shattered. However, with the preservation of many lives, blessings are still counted as survivors live to give the account.

Much aid has been sent to affected islands such as Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominica, Puerto Rico, Saint Marten and others, however the amount of damage to their land, economy and personal affairs, continuous relief efforts are needed to help these nations remain resilient. Some countries have been set back five or as much as ten years! We can make a difference in many lives by giving to the needs of our Caribbean family.

Get in contact with persons in affected countries and find out how you can **be a blessing** to those in need. Donate relief items, non-perishable items, water, building materials and equipment and most of all your time. Spread the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ across the Caribbean and help make life better one heart at a time. To find out more about how you can help please contact ... [caretovolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:caretovolunteer@gmail.com)

Another way of helping is to **purchase an item** from ... <https://teespring.com/stores/blessed-life> and just as important by **sharing the link**. All proceeds go to the organization to purchase items, food and building material for those in need. It also assists volunteers who take items to affected places and toward rebuilding efforts. The campaign will only run for 14 days longer so please don't delay to share the link and place your order.

- Celeste Ollivierre-James

*We thank Celeste for the work she is doing to help towards the rebuilding of lives in the Caribbean. Celeste is a member of the ICDF Steering Committee and herself lives in Trinidad and Tobago where she is ICDF Country Representative.*



# ICDF News Update

## ICDF Prayer Diary

The ICDF Prayer Diary for 2017-18 is now available. The Prayer Diary offers a daily focus for prayer covering our ICDF Leadership, Countries, Networks, Foundation, Diploma in Dance Ministry and more on a monthly rotational basis.

If you would like to receive a copy for prayer, please email Kaye Strauss, our Prayer Consociate, at [kayestrauss.icdf@gmail.com](mailto:kayestrauss.icdf@gmail.com) and she will email the Prayer Diary to you.

## Mobile Friendly Website

We have exciting news ...

The amount needed for making our website mobile device friendly has been raised and work on this will start next year. Thank you so very much to all who have so generously donated to making this possible and to all who have prayed for this project. May God bless you as you have blessed those around the world who can only access our website on their mobile devices.

## Christmas - An invitation to worship

### Picture it ...

*There you are on the hillside just outside Bethlehem watching your sheep. You're rubbing your hands together in front of the fire to keep warm -- and then, out of nowhere, an angel of the Lord appears with the news that the long awaited Saviour has been born in Bethlehem! As if this wasn't enough, a great company of the heavenly host (more angels) appear with the angel praising God and saying ...*

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests."  
(Luke 2:14, NIVUK)

Whoa! Then who would have expected that some wise star gazers would have seen a star shining brighter than any other, and followed it all the way to Bethlehem?

### A Journey

For the shepherds and for the wise men, a journey was beginning. This journey would take them to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. It was a journey that would take them to the Christ Child, to Jesus, the Messiah.



The shepherds were Jews; the Wise Men were Gentiles.  
The shepherds were poor; the Wise Men were rich.

The shepherds lived nearby and were there that night; the Wise Men lived a long way away and had to make travel plans.

This is about God reaching out to everyone, wherever they are – including us.

So ...

What did the shepherds and the wise men do when they found Him?

The shepherds came, saw, and spread the word: "they glorified and praised God for all the things they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:17-18, 20)

The wise men came, saw and "... bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their gifts of gold and incense and of myrrh." (Matthew 2:9-11)

What would we do?

The Christmas carol, In the Bleak Midwinter, is based on a poem written by Christina Rossetti. In the final verse and in answer to this question, Rossetti writes:

"... If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,  
yet what I can I give Him: give my heart." (Christina G. Rossetti, 1830-1894)

Jesus might not have been born in the winter time, and celebrating Christmas is not in the cold season for all of us. Still, the words point us to the greatest gift that we can give Jesus: our hearts in worship.

Jesus delights in our worship! He rejoices in our gifts. As dancers, a gift God has ordained in us is to dance for Him.

### Reflection

In the busyness of this Christmas season, let us stand still for a moment, reflect on what and who we are celebrating, affirm once more our commitment to follow Him ... with all of our heart. Let our worship of Him flow from our heart, a heart of love responding to His love.

Come, let us worship and adore Him, Jesus the Christ, Messiah, Emmanuel ... God with us!