



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN DANCE FELLOWSHIP MAGAZINE

ICDF NETWORKS

ISSUE 9 | 2025



The Future of ICDF Networks

AN ICDF EXCLUSIVE

9 NETWORKS
ICDF RESOURCES

A Journey Through Nine Networks in this 9th ICDF Issue



Liesl Townsend



Sue Sutherland

Joint Coordinators' Note

This magazine will share articles from nine of our networks

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Refresh |  Men in Dance |  Ability not Disability |
|  Movement in Prayer |  Messianic Dance and Tambourines |  Dance Teachers |
|  Dance Artists |  Ballroom |  Dance for Children |

There are a few firsts in this Ninth Issue of our ICDF Magazine, focusing on our Networks. We are introducing you to Christine Amagove who has agreed to coordinate the Refresh Youth Network. Christine shares her vision of building community, spiritual growth, empowerment, celebrating unity and sustainable growth for the Network. We eagerly anticipate seeing her vision come to life. Christine has been given a mandate from the Steering Committee to identify and connect with young leaders in each ICDF Country. We encourage you to connect with her and share contacts for networking with emerging dance leaders in your country.

Also featured for the first time is the Men's Network and we are excited to showcase the unique measures that Andy Raine uses to reach men.

There is a significant link between the Children's and Dance Teacher's articles where Belma Vardy's prayer echoes the principles outlined by Sue Hodson. We have a responsibility to be good stewards and examples as disciples of Jesus, in our dance technique, and as managers of the dance businesses we run. May the world who does not know Him be drawn to our classes where parents can feel that their children are safe from criticism, comparison and the profane.

Jackie Young shares her perspective of how our prayer life should be a natural expression of our heart, in whichever format you prefer, rather than a spiritual discipline.

In our 5th Issue of our Magazine, we introduced Adam Koen as our Dance Artist Network leader. In this Issue, Adam takes us on a journey from the Himalayan mountains of India in Dharamkot, to Tbilisi Georgia and then to the SLOT Festival in Poland where he ran Theokinesis workshops with predominantly non Christian participants.

Another network leader who gets to travel locally and afar is Vera Chierico. She shares her stories of her trips to Aotearoa New Zealand, the Netherlands and various events in the UK.

As Joint Coordinators with Vera, Ralph and Mindy Seta traveled to Israel during the wartime to renew their covenant with the Lord and minister to evacuees, worship ministries, orphanages, Holocaust survivors, food distribution centers, and the IDF. They have also embarked on establishing the Messianic Dance Camps International Academy, a 12-week certificate course.

We have a heartwarming testimony from Sue Wheeler who attended our Sweden conference. She believes that worshipping God through physical expression is the most genuine form of praise and feels uplifted, as if worshipping alongside angels. We look forward to meeting up again with Sue in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our Ballroom Network Coordinator, Robin Joseph, shares a wonderful image of the relationship between the leader and follower in ballroom dancing, illustrating how it serves as a reminder to trust God and His timing, surrender to His leadership, and stay connected to Him.

There are still vacancies for the Creative Arts and Social Concern, Flags and Banners, and Ability not Disability Networks. Should any of these Networks interest you and you are able to assist us in Coordinating activities for these Networks, please make contact with us.

We can't wait to connect with our incredible Country and Network Leaders in picturesque Aotearoa New Zealand!

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ICDF NETWORKS

ICDF's networks give opportunities for global networking and communicating between people who share the same interests, callings, or passions.

Visit our Website for more information on all our Networks WWW.ICDF.COM

REFRESH

The Refresh Network strives to build an inclusive community that fosters connection, collaboration, and unity. Its mission is to support dancers' spiritual growth and celebrate diverse expressions through workshops and performances.

The network aims to empower dancers with skills and confidence while partnering with churches for impactful outreach.

NETWORK JOINT COORDINATORS
Christine Amagove | Netherlands
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WEBSITE
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Christine Amagove

MOVEMENT IN PRAYER

The ICDF Network for Movement in Prayer aims to share ideas for movement and prayer; for members to support each other in prayer projects; to answer the call for prayer internationally through support in prayer or in person; to celebrate the outcome of prayer; and, where possible, to meet in our countries / localities to move and pray.

NETWORK COORDINATOR
Jackie Young | United Kingdom
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Jackie Young

BALLROOM

The ballroom network supports ballroom dancers who use ballroom dancing as a form of worship. When ballroom dancing is used in ministry it can be very powerful in depicting God as the leader, and us - His children as the followers.

NETWORK COORDINATOR
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Robin Joseph

DANCE ARTISTS

The goal of the Network is to identify creative dance practitioners who incorporate the Word into their ministry. It aims to connect these practitioners worldwide, fostering relationships and collaboration. Utilizing existing resources within the dance and butoh communities, the network seeks to bring together potential Jesus followers in a shared space.

NETWORK COORDINATOR
Adam Koen | USA
Adam@shadowbody.com

WEBSITE
<https://theokinesis.com>

<https://instagram.com/theokinesis>



Adam Koen

MEN IN DANCE

'Men in Dance Network is for ALL men who identify themselves as dancers, exploring what men characteristically bring to the dance, what we enjoy, how we learn, and what can be achieved when men move together... in dance, in integrity of purpose and in friendship.

NETWORK COORDINATOR
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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2430459533760804>



Andy Raine

ABILITY NOT DISABILITY

The core principle of this Network is to recognize and appreciate the unique talents and abilities of people with disabilities, rather than dwelling on their limitations.

NETWORK COORDINATOR - Vacant
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ICDF NETWORKS

ICDF's networks give opportunities for global networking and communicating between people who share the same interests, callings, or passions.

Visit our Website for more information on all our Networks WWW.ICDF.COM

DANCE FOR CHILDREN

The Children's Dance Network is for all who are or would like to be involved with teaching and leading children in Christian dance. Through cyberforums we can share ideas, teaching methods, learn from one another's personal experiences in teaching children, share dances, share resources.....and most of all share our hearts.

NETWORK JOINT COORDINATORS

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<https://www.celebrationofdance.com/>

<https://ucgrace.co.uk/about/>



Belma Vardy



Anna Gilderson

MESSIANIC DANCE & TAMBOURINES

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.

NETWORK JOINT COORDINATORS

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Ralph & Mindy Seta | United States

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Vera Chierico



Ralph & Mindy Seta

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DANCE TEACHERS

To provide ongoing professional development opportunities for dance teachers, such as training sessions, certification programs, and educational resources. We will do this via Workshops and Seminars, Certification Programs, Online Learning Resources and Mentorship Programs.

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Beth Bluett-Spicer



Sue Hodson

REFRESH



Introducing Christine Amagove

Christine Amagove is a dynamic dancer, dance educator, choreographer, and leader, based in the Netherlands, using dance as a transformative force across cultures. A graduate of the Amsterdam University of the Arts in Dance Education (2018), she has over a decade of experience inspiring students in diverse schools and talent programs. Christine's influence extends to community initiatives, aiding older adults with stroke, dementia, and depression through dance.

She founded SONGA (2018), a dance exchange program linking Nairobi and Amsterdam, and UZIMA (2024), empowering women to heal through movement. Additionally, she established SOUND OF MARCHING (2024), a platform for gospel urban, afro, and contemporary dance, offering workshops and masterclasses.

As a seasoned choreographer, Christine collaborates with dancers of all levels, creating impactful works. Her expertise lies in uncovering hidden potentials and guiding individuals towards purposeful paths, transforming innovative ideas into projects that resonate in the dance and entertainment industry.

Christine says:

I'm excited to share my vision for Refresh Network and how we can empower our dance community. Community Building is at the heart of my vision. I want to create an inclusive space for dancers, especially in Afro, urban, and contemporary styles, where connections and collaboration thrive.

Spiritual Growth is also important to me. I hope to support dancers in exploring their identities as worship dancers, blending their artistry with their spiritual journeys.



I envision promoting Diverse Expression by offering workshops, performances, and collaborative projects that celebrate our unique dance styles.

Empowerment is key. I want to equip dancers with resources to excel in their craft and build their confidence.

Additionally, I believe in Impactful Outreach—connecting our dance community with local churches and organisations to spread the joy of worship through dance.

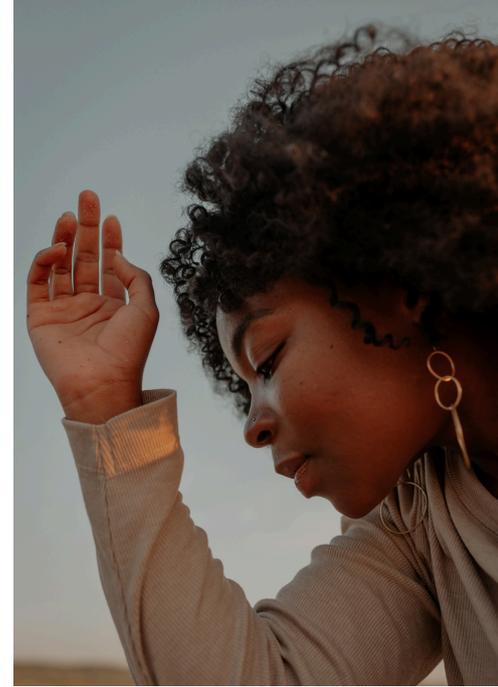
Celebrating Unity is essential too. I aim to foster an environment that respects and appreciates every dancer's contributions.

Lastly, I'm committed to Sustainable Growth for Refresh Network through strategic funding and community engagement.

I truly believe that these goals will create a transformative experience for our dancers and positively impact our community. I can't wait to work together to make this vision a reality.

The Refresh Network is for young dancers aged 16 – 30 years of age. You can be trained or untrained, professional or amateur, and like to dance in any style of dance. If this is you, or you know of anyone who it applies to, contact Christine or the ICDF and we will put you in touch.

We are looking for someone to work alongside Christine to help run this important network.



If Christine's vision for the network excites you and you consider that this is something you might be interested in, please contact us at icdfworld@gmail.com and so that we can discuss this with you.

You may also contact Christine directly

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Website Christine
www.christineamagove.com

Facebook: Christine Amagove
<https://www.facebook.com/share/18zG5f6pbh/>

Instagram: Christine Amagove
<https://www.instagram.com/christine.amagove?igsh=bWRyeHA5ejcxeGdx>

Sound of marching
<https://www.instagram.com/soundofmarching?igsh=MW5kZDNmbTEzZ3NsNA==>

Uzima Dance Program
<https://www.instagram.com/uzima.program?igsh=bDI4ZzVubGRxOTR5>

"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me"

MOVEMENT IN PRAYER

Prayer is much more than Praying

Far too often, many of us can so easily see prayer as an obligation, rather than a spontaneous desire arising from our first love. In our churches, prayer is sometimes presented as a spiritual discipline that we do not do naturally, but we feel we have to do because it is good for us. But surely prayer is the natural language of our soul – my spirit communicating with Papa God.

As I watched my tiny granddaughter and godchildren playing, I pondered – I don't have to tell them to play, they just do. It is part of their expression of who they are. It is adults who see play as a discipline that might be helpful. Prayer should be our natural expression – like children playing with Papa; spoken or silent, moving or still, in scripture or nature, with candle or cross, with incense or flag, contemplative or corporate, singing or chanting..... All these creative offerings can be prayers when openly offered to God with a faithful heart and childlike trust.

Jackie Young



“ My spirit
communicating
with Papa God ”

DANCE ARTISTS



Adam Koen

Theokinesis Expanded

Theokinesis (θεόκίνησις) is a Christ-centered movement, study, and performance art system heavily inspired by butoh that invites participants of all backgrounds and abilities to engage in body-based art, dance, and theatre inspired by scripture. In Theokinesis, the body becomes a vessel guided by God, as participants surrender to a body of prayer. The practice fosters creative flow, encouraging spontaneous expression and presentation.

Founded in October 2023 while residing in the beautiful Himalayan mountains of India, the practice has since developed since having shared itself in two other countries: Poland and Georgia.

At the time of writing the last ICDF article on Theokinesis, the practice was in its infancy stage only having shared a public performance. Workshops hadn't yet begun. Since then, it has gone through another performance of "A Living Sacrifice" and numerous workshops.

Workshops

Theokinesis workshops began in the Himalayan mountains of India, in the greater Dharamsala area of Dharamkot in April and May 2024. They occurred twice a week in 3-hour workshops with an occasional additional day to engage in site-specific nature improvisations.

Leading a Christian-themed workshop series in a region unfamiliar with Christianity felt a bit daunting. Tibetan Buddhism is woven into the landscape, while Hinduism, Tantra, and New Age beliefs filled the remaining spaces.

Yet, despite the initial challenge, I quickly noticed how open and receptive the participants were, regardless of their faith journeys—or lack thereof.

By the end of the two months, the classes had gained significant popularity in the area.

However, it was time for me to move on to Tbilisi, Georgia, to explore how receptive the project would be there.

By June, a 10-day series of three-hour Theokinesis workshops took place across two studios. Much like in India, participants here were curious and eager to explore butoh dance theatre in this distinctive form.

The following month, I introduced Theokinesis to its third country: Poland. I was invited to the SLOT Festival in Lubiąz, a small town near Wrocław, to lead a five-day Theokinesis workshop. The festival was held on the grounds of a sprawling former monastery. Initially founded as a Christian event, the festival gradually expanded to include secular activities, which now make up the majority, though some Christian themes remain. At SLOT, the workshops lasted one and a half hours each, and again, they were met with both curiosity and eagerness.

That marked the last Theokinesis activity until January 2025, as I needed to return to the U.S. However, since then, I have been brainstorming ways to further develop the practice.

Expanded Vision for 2025

Theokinesis resumed on January 25th with its second intensive, held in Tbilisi, Georgia. This time, I collaborated with Finland-based butoh artist and good friend of mine, Santeri Vikström, making a 9-day intensive. While his practice was distinct from Theokinesis, focusing on his own butoh approach, it did not lead to any conflicting narratives.

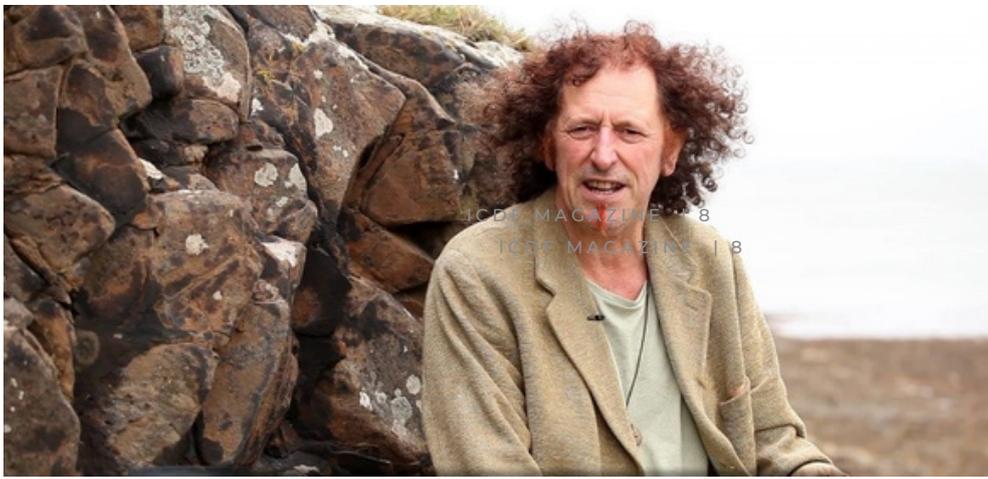
Because of the positive reception in Tbilisi, I am dedicating my time here until later in the year to hold at least one regular Theokinesis class per week while fostering relationships and collaborations. Additionally, I plan to explore weekly site-specific improvisations in both natural and urban settings.

Tbilisi already has a strong Christian presence, primarily through Orthodoxy, but many in the younger generation feel disconnected due to political, family, or church conflicts. However, Theokinesis offers a "new song" (Psalm 96:1)—a fresh way to honor God through embodiment and creativity. This can serve as a bridge between family, tradition, and the evolving culture.

Theokinesis continues to evolve through deep, attentive listening to discern God's voice in every aspect. As part of this growth, Theokinesis is being shaped into a stand-alone concept—while deeply influenced by and connected to butoh, it extends beyond it, embracing scripture-driven performance art and body-based artistic expression more broadly.

"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth." Psalm 96:1 (NIV)





Andy Raine

MEN IN DANCE

"One Heart Beat Away: The Dance Inside Every Man"

Andy leads the Men's network which operates mostly online through Facebook. Other social media platforms and connections are growing in popularity, and some people avoid Facebook intentionally, but the group continues as a place where men involved in or interested in dance can connect.

We have no strictures about whether guys are trained or untrained, dance at a professional level, teach or just appreciate dance. We seem to be followed by those involved in ballet, contemporary, street dance of all kinds, physical theatre, tap or clog, traditional folk dancing, ballroom, latin, circus skills, interpretative choreography, improvisation, free-running - and making shapes at parties!

We are interested in seeing work which tackles difficult subjects, articulating struggle or bringing dance to those who have yet to find a voice.

Labi Siffre's song says, 'There's something inside so strong' - I always say there's at least one dance in every guy waiting to come out. One man I met said to me, 'I don't dance.' 'Really?' I said, 'why not?' 'Because it's not the sort of dance I'd like to do.' 'What IS the sort of dance you'd like to do?' He picked a song and started creating a really strong set of moves with two guys. It was very good.

We keep the group open for any guys, whatever their background, status or spirituality. We're men, and we dance. We'll listen and treat each other with respect, and that's the way we want a workshop to be. I try to get interviews with some of the men that we can all read and resonate with. These can be accessed on our Facebook site.

We also appreciate any work that engages with struggles about identity and worth as men or incorporates strength and tenderness, our relationship with violence, physicality, bullying or uncertainty.

One group did a whole show on the trafficking of migrant labourers in the building trade and used scaffolding in public settings as their stage. Justice in Motion is a Physical Theatre company passionate about arts and social justice. A recent piece was On Edge, about trafficking in the building trade.

<https://www.justiceinmotion.co.uk/show/on-edge/>



On Edge Photo by Michael Lynch



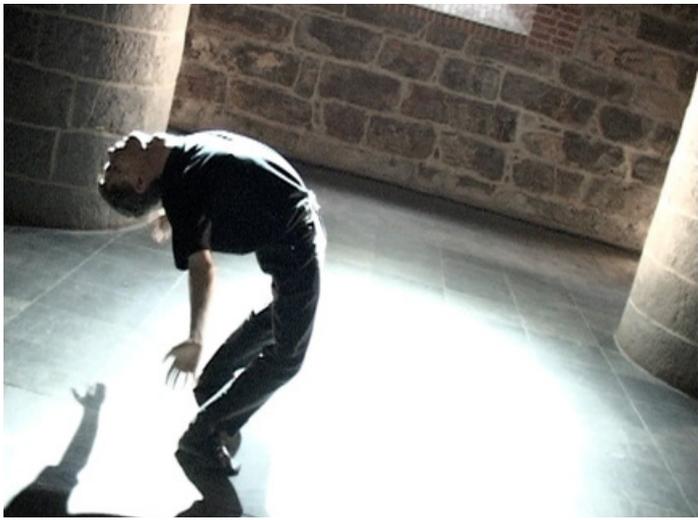
Videos and photographs interest and encourage us, so we don't just post our own work, but other things that we are drawn to.

If you are a man and can access Facebook go to Groups and type in Men in Dance Network. You can find past interviews with men listed under files.



I always say there's at least one dance in every guy waiting to come out.

Andy Raine



John Egil Rage from Sweden
Photo by Asmund Brovig



Jeet Devnath from New Delhi, India
"Dance in everything in my life."



Crossing The Bar. featuring Men! Dancina! | Dance Film

Crossing the Bar, featuring Men! Dancing!

Some of the men featured in this production in collaboration with Sadlers Wells dance, have now joined the network. It was a project for men over 50 years of age with no dance experience. Click on the link to watch the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybENhB5cWz0>



MESSIANIC DANCE & TAMBOURINES



Vera Chierico

Vera tells us of her busy year and a few projects she has been involved in.

Last year, I was asked to go to **New Zealand** for the ICDF Aotearoa New Zealand national conference. It was so amazing and I'm happy that I accepted the invitation on a tour bus in Sweden from Belinda in 2022. I'm looking forward to the international conference in April this year 2025. It will be my ninth international conference. I would encourage all readers to try very hard to attend, not only because of the natural beauty of the islands but because it will be an amazing time with wonderful worshippers.



I have been part of **Beit Sar Shalom Messianic Synagogue** for a long time. Of course, we keep the Biblical Feasts and it has become customary for me to go and lead a dance workshop for Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, Succoth and other feasts. In fact, I was teaching there on Simchat Torah last year when none of us had yet heard what was going on at the Nova Festival and Kibbutzim in Israel.

I always love that boys are taught to dance the communal circle dance Hora etc, from a young age. Traditionally, on a boy's second birthday, they have their first haircut to celebrate their survival and there is always dancing and food.

Therefore, it's not unusual to see men dance, especially at Simchat Torah when we 'rejoice over Torah' The Word. I took along my New Jerusalem Dancers scrolls since it is normal to dance with the Word.

My daughter, who is 27, has been a member of my UK New Jerusalem Dancers and now works in a preschool with 33 children all under three years of age. Within the school, they teach all faiths and try to include an interesting aspect of the celebrations. She asked me to teach Biblical circle dance, which is so vital to any Jewish feast. I love toddlers and was wondering how this would work.

I have so much respect for the teachers who were completely in control of these children, even the ones who were still potty training. One little child was happy just to sit in the middle of the circle and observe this very different event. I taught two sessions and even introduced billows for them to run under to get into the circle. I loved it, and I think they all loved it too.



A Greek pastor asked me to teach at her Shabbat-keeping international church in London. I went a few weeks later, with my daughter and granddaughter, and was so impressed that as they came into the church, each person joined the circle I was leading until just about everyone was dancing with me. That is, except for the pastor on guitar and the other musicians. There were about 20 nationalities in this very lively church and they all seem to love dance and worship.



On the last visit, the pastor said he had always wanted someone to bless them in Hebrew. This I was very happy to do as I know the Aaronic benediction and all the traditional blessings for Shabbat, etc. As I was singing the blessing, they all lay on the floor worshipping, and some crying. It was an awesome experience. I translated the blessing into English and he asked me if I knew the Shema. I sang that in Hebrew and on his knees he explained its importance to everyone after I translated. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God, the Lord is one." (Deut 6:4) You just never know when something so normal for you can be such a blessing to others.

Helianthe O'Neil from **CDf Netherlands** invited me to teach at the new church, King of Glory ministries, that Helianthe now runs in Rotterdam.



I have been twice, and I was surprised yet again that everyone, both the young and not-so-young, got up as soon as I was teaching and joined the circle. Others came in as I taught and came right to the circle. I'm looking forward to the next time.

Finally, **CDf Britain** had a request for a messianic dance teacher, and I was asked to teach a group of young professional dancers for a production set in cathedrals called Symphony of Light. They wanted a harvest dance and I have one called "How I Praise You". This dance is not a repetitive one and it can take a long time to learn the complicated flexed Yemenite moves but these dancers got it the first time! I recently returned to teach a Processional dance for the Arc's entry into Jerusalem and a fun circle dance for children from a Kent dance school. Their leader, Karen, chose the Israeli piece Od Lo Ahavti Dai, which I knew. I taught them the dance, and they recorded it for the children to learn.

May the true LORD of the Dance bless you all.

Vera



Ralph & Mindy Seta



Reflections on a Dance Ministry Tour to Israel

It has been one year since our last ministry tour to Israel. Fifteen of us had the mandate to go during a time of war and renew our covenant to the Lord, and to marry ourselves to His Land under the chuppah (the Jewish wedding canopy). This was done in accordance with Isaiah 62:4-5

“You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.” (ESV).

Besides the heavenly wedding celebration, we ministered to many evacuees, weary worship ministries, orphanages, Holocaust survivors, food distribution centers, and the IDF. Many people we met during that time were so moved that we made the effort to come. While many people were grappling with PTSD, they still sought to maintain some sense of normalcy while defending themselves and securing their borders. However, many were also facing the oppression of antisemitism, which was exacerbated by the media, leading to accusations of being genocidal. It is fair to say that it was a privilege to be there to serve for such a time as this!

We observed and participated in several Israeli dance classes attended by hundreds of people. It was amazing to witness their healing as they held hands, sang together, and danced in unison. You could see the stresses of daily life melting away from their faces. Watching them reinforced the marvelous gift we have: the ability to enter the throne room, worship the Lord together through dance, and feel His presence in the love we share for one another.

Our ministry at Messianic Dance Camps International has renewed His commandment to love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength, and to love His Land and our neighbor as ourselves. This principle guides not only our dance but also our teaching and leadership. As a result, we have embarked on establishing the MDCI Academy, a 12-week certificate course. We are dedicated to training worshipers to become exceptional Messianic dance facilitators, infused with love, compassion, and humility.

Many blessings to you in Yeshua,
Ralph and Dr. Mindy Seta



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
OR HOW TO SCHEDULE DR. MINDY FOR AN EVENT ~
CONTACT US AT
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BALLROOM DANCE

This is not easy and comes with lots of practice with your partner and learning to trust, build connections, become friends and build a strong partnership. This takes time and often involves doing lead and follow exercises to connect through the frame.

Having a strong frame is the foundation to be able to connect and feel the lead more clearly as a follower. Sometimes during these exercises, the follower closes their eyes and learns to feel the lead without seeing the direction in which the leader is going. This can be scary as the majority of the time, even when your eyes are open, the follower moves in a backwards direction and has to trust and rely on the leader to carry them safely across the dance floor and not knock into other couples. In the Latin dances, the frame is usually open, but there is still a connection through tension and push and pull through the arms.

“He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.” Psalm 23:2-3 NIV

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14 NIV

Jubilate Dance Group, co-led by Robin Joseph with Liesl Townsend, performed a Latin praise dance to I Can Only Imagine by Puchi Colon at an old age home in Cape Town, South Africa. Robin says, “They were a blessing to all in attendance.”



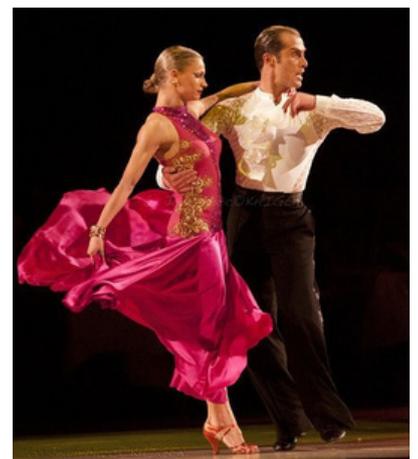
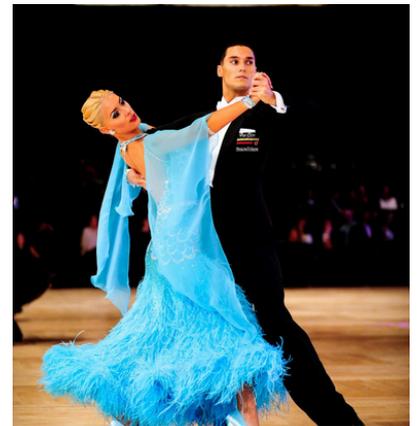
Robin Joseph

Lead and Follow in Ballroom Dancing Robin Joseph

The beauty and elegance depicted in Ballroom dancing are attained through good posture, a good frame, and a strong connection with your partner. The waltz is often described as the most elegant of all the Ballroom dances. When we see a couple with a strong connection on the dance floor, it is usually the result of being so attuned to each other during lead and follow. The couple communicates movement through the lead and follow. The leader initiates the movement, direction, size of the steps, and decides which steps to do and the timing. It is the follower’s role to interpret the signals that the leader is giving to understand what movement or sequence of steps to do, which direction to move, how fast to move and the alignment of the foot placements. Some questions to ask yourself as a follower. Am I moving diagonally? Has the leader given me a signal to rise on my toes? Was that a change of direction? Has he led me slightly faster to change up the tempo slightly to create more light and dark in the movement, making it more exciting to watch? Has the leader suddenly halted in mid-motion? But why has he done that? Should I just follow and go with the flow or try to complete the movement myself?

The answer to these questions would be to follow the leader. As we can see, there is a lot of interpreting by the follower, but there also have to be times of less thinking, just feeling the lead and trusting that the leader has your best interest at heart.

These photos show the different holds and frames between the partners. Sometimes it is a closed hold as seen in the Ballroom dances and sometimes it’s an open hold, or one-hand hold in the Latin dances.





Robin competed in the All South African Open International and American Pro-Am Ballroom and Latin Competition, hosted by the South African Dance Teachers Association (SADTA). She competed in the Ballroom Section, 5 dances: Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot and Quickstep. It was Champs level Senior 2 age category, Pro-Am (Professional Amateur) competition. Robin and her partner and dance coach London Louw gained third overall. Congratulations Robin and London, well done.

Carina Cullen, owner of the dance studio at the Phoenix Dance Company, Cape Town, South Africa, where Robin attends, wrote: London's Achievements Soar With the Highest Honor! Adding to London's impressive accolades, the International Dance Teachers Association (IDTA) has awarded him the prestigious 2023 John Knight Fellowship Award – the highest honor in the world of dance!

This recognition comes on top of London's quadruple Fellowship in Ballroom, Latin & Freestyle, with the IDTA, his status as a distinguished judge, and his esteemed qualification as a British Dance Council scrutineer. In recognition of this achievement, the IDTA has invited London to the Congress Dinner and Dance in Blackpool, UK, to receive his certificate and cheque. We are absolutely over the moon and bursting with pride to have London as an integral member of our Phoenix family."



Carin Cullen



London Louw

A 21-year study by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine proved that ballroom dancing is the best way to prevent neurological degeneration such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementia. "Making rapid decisions and movements in social dancing increases neural network connectivity and overall intelligence."



ABILITY NOT DISABILITY

Worshipping with the Angels by Sue Wheeler

I have loved to dance all my life, having started at age three with ballroom and at five with ballet. So whenever I saw a dance group at any Christian conference or gathering ... if there was a chance to dance ... I was there.

About four years ago, I broke my wrist and couldn't use the crutches I'd been using off and on for many years, having had serious balance issues for quite a few years previously, and had too many trips to the hospital to be stitched up! I had spinal damage causing my left foot to drop, and not much feeling down my left leg and foot. A wheelchair is my wonderfully safe, and much faster, especially going downhill, way now of getting about.

Going to Sweden three years ago, I was slightly nervous about how I would manage, but having prayed about it; I felt a peace and excitement and trusted God to direct me, and He really did look after me. Everywhere I went and everything I did, it was all OK. I could join in to the best of my ability.

I can walk with help but as my wrist hasn't healed and I'm still waiting for an operation or more healing directly from God, I still use my wheelchair, but without the footrests, as I use my feet as my power, especially to go up hill - backwards!

I find it the most amazing experience being able to adapt what I can do or how I can join in, with dancing. But I do find that worshipping God using my body is still the best way to Praise and Worship Him. I find it gives me the feeling that my Praise and Adoration is genuine, from the deepest part of me, helping me to feel I am in the heavenlies, worshipping with the angels, totally uplifting my emotional state.

I have registered to attend the 12th ICDF Conference in Aotearoa New Zealand and look forward to meeting and worshipping with dancers from across the globe.



"Dance exercise offers significant value for physically challenged individuals, promoting physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being through improved coordination, flexibility, strength, and confidence, as well as providing an outlet for creativity and social interaction".

DANCE TEACHERS



Bethie Bluett-Spicer



Sue Hodson

Grace & Grit: What Dance Teachers

Need to Know and Common Problems in Running a Dance School for Children. Sue Hodson

“Graceful” refers to something or someone that is characterized by elegance, smoothness, and beauty in movement, form, or manner. It often conveys a sense of effortless charm or poise. As Christians, we are called to ‘let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt...’ (Colossians 4:6) and that can be challenging to a dance studio owner and teacher. Dance teachers must balance the artistic development of their students with the logistical and administrative demands of managing a school. This article explores some of the essential knowledge dance teachers need and the common problems they may encounter in their profession. I have tried to keep it general and, hopefully, that will help most dance studio owners. I would love for this article to spark a discussion about running a studio!



How I imagine myself to be vs.



How I sometimes actually am!

Essential Knowledge for Dance Teachers
It’s admirable to be a considerate dance instructor, but being “too nice” might suggest a reluctance to enforce classroom rules. Good classroom management allows instructors to remain calm and kind without getting overwhelmed. How do you run a class? Please share your tips!

Understanding Developmental Stages

Dance teachers must be well-versed in the physical and cognitive developmental stages of their students. Knowledge of age-appropriate techniques and exercises ensures students can progress safely and effectively. For younger children, activities should focus on basic motor skills and creative movement, while older students can handle more complex choreography and technical training.



Dance teachers need to understand various teaching styles and how to adapt them to different learning needs. Incorporating positive reinforcement, clear instructions, and constructive feedback helps foster a supportive learning environment. A beautiful dancer is not necessarily a good teacher. The vocabulary one uses with children needs to be specific to that age group and using technical, anatomical terms with young children is pointless. Their brains don’t work in that way! They need picture language. Images like: “Imagine you have a string tied to your belly button, and it stretches out through the top of your head. It is being pulled up and up”, will get them to stand straighter, rather than: ‘Hold your core’. A deep understanding of dance techniques, anatomy, and kinesiology is essential. This expertise enables them to teach proper technique, prevent injuries, and provide high-quality instruction. Seeking out older teachers and linking up with mentors is also a great way to develop as a teacher.



Business Acumen

Running a dance school requires more than just teaching skills. Dance teachers must also possess business acumen to handle administrative tasks, marketing, and financial management.

Understanding how to budget, promote the school, and maintain records is crucial for the school’s sustainability and growth. Some may be blessed to have people who can run this side of the business for you, but if it is just you, then some basic courses in marketing and finances will really help you. There are free courses on Alison or Udemy.

Interpersonal Skills

Building strong relationships with students, parents, and staff is key to a successful dance school. Teachers need excellent communication and conflict-resolution skills to address concerns, provide guidance, and foster a positive community atmosphere. One could also set up an intercessory group of trusted prayer warriors that you could rely on. This will also help you to not feel so alone. Forming WhatsApp groups with other teachers will also provide you with sounding boards and support.

Common Problems Student Retention and Parental Expectations

One of the biggest challenges for dance schools is maintaining student enrollment. Factors such as the quality of instruction, the learning environment, and the school’s reputation all play a role in student retention. Parents play a crucial role in the dance school community, but their expectations can sometimes lead to challenges. Dance teachers need to navigate parental concerns, such as their child’s progress or participation in performances while maintaining professional boundaries and upholding the school’s policies. It is also important to set out in writing what your stance is on missed classes, payment of fees, etc. I have learnt over the years to be very clear about what parents can expect if they enroll their children in my classes. It is a good idea to get them to sign an agreement regarding fees, missed classes and the general expectations of your school. In any dance school, students will have varying levels of skill and experience. Teachers must differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of beginners, intermediate dancers, and advanced students. This requires careful class planning and the ability to provide individualized attention.

Our Ethos

As teachers, we endeavour to guard our students from criticism, comparison and the profane. We continually hear that parents and children, from families of all persuasions, love the atmosphere in our schools. They are welcome and children find they can relax and enjoy their classes. So without those pressures, students can concentrate on what is being taught.



Addressing Body Image and Self-Esteem Issues

Our bodies are a temple and, as such, care must be taken to keep a dancer's body healthy and strong. Dance can have a significant impact on students' body image and self-esteem. Teachers must be vigilant in promoting a healthy and positive approach to body image, encouraging self-confidence, and addressing any issues that arise. As Christian teachers, we will be going counter-culture on this, but it is vital that we instill in our students that a healthy body is better than a thin body.

Workshops and open discussions about body positivity can be beneficial. Should you participate in competitions and eisteddfods, pressure may be brought to look similar to the other dancers out there. This could be pressure from parents or dancers themselves. This is where we need to hear the Lord and respond if and when He gives us a check in our hearts about clothing or music, despite being accused of being 'old-fashioned.'



Choreography

What does our choreography say about our faith? While every dance we do does not have to be to Christian music, our movements need to stay within the boundaries of what honours Jesus. I would always say to my students: "If the music was switched off, what would your movements be saying?" If we can teach our students to dance for an Audience of One, from a young age, we will not have contentious arguments about music, movements and costumes when they are older.

Preventing and Managing Injuries

Injuries are a common concern in dance. Teachers must prioritize injury prevention through proper warm-ups, technique training, and conditioning. Teachers must ensure that they and any assistant teachers know what the correct postural requirements are and why we enforce them. Regardless of the genre of dance that we teach, our emphasis should be on strong bodies.



Young Trainee Teachers

Running a dance school is a passionate endeavor that involves investing time and resources into training young dance teachers. However, it can be disheartening when these newly trained educators decide to leave shortly after their training is complete. This phenomenon, while common, requires a strategic approach to ensure the continuity and success of the dance school.

Understanding the Reasons for Leaving

Common reasons include:

- Career Advancement: Seeking better opportunities or higher positions elsewhere.
- Personal Development: Pursuing further education or personal projects.
- Work-Life Balance: Relocating for personal reasons such as family or lifestyle changes.
- Financial Incentives: Attracted by better pay or benefits offered by other institutions.

A dance owner could apply the following strategies to retain teachers:

Foster Professional Growth

Encourage continuous professional development by offering opportunities for young teachers to attend workshops, conferences, and advanced training.

Provide Mentorship

Pairing young teachers with experienced mentors can help them navigate the challenges of teaching and build a sense of belonging within the school community.

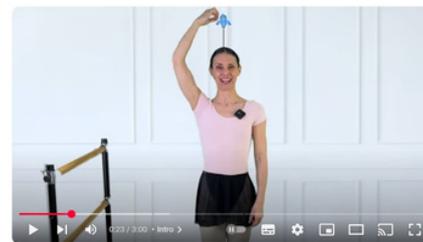
Enhance Work-Life Balance

Acknowledging their need for work-life balance and providing support during personal transitions can foster loyalty and commitment.

We invite you to share your experiences and solutions regarding the training and retention of teachers, a concern worldwide. Your insights could help other studio owners navigate this challenge.

Running a dance school involves a unique blend of artistic passion, teaching expertise, and business savvy. We fully believe that our teachers can inspire the next generation of dancers while preserving the joy and artistry of dance, for our teachers have both Grace and Grit!

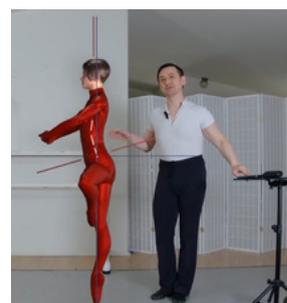
Resources



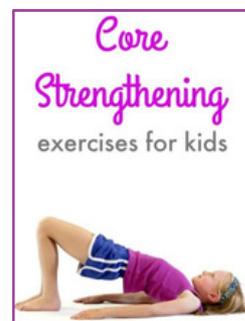
Kids Ballet Tutorial: Perfect Ballet Posture + 5 Most Common Mistakes

<https://youtu.be/Lm4tpF4xo0s>

I love what this teacher has done to educate dancers and teachers! If anyone has a contact who could design an app like this for teachers of ballet, please let me know!



https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7DsCVPr80/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



<https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/child-development-core-strengthening-for-kids/>



DANCE TEACHER RESOURCES | 25 Phrases to Encourage Active Listening | Dance Classroom Management

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxJBPOqpCRE&pp=ygUcUmVzb3VyY2VzIGZvcjBkYW5jZSB0ZWZjaGVyY2Vw%3D%3D>

DANCE FOR CHILDREN



Anna Gilderson

Enabling Children to Experience Worship Dance

Enabling Young Girls to Experience Worship Dance – Judi Spratling

In October last year, our lead pastor asked me if I would choreograph a dance for the girls in our youth group to contribute to the main Christmas Family service. The music was 'Manger Throne' by Phil Wickham. Tash, our pastor, explained that two of the older girls had dance experience and the three younger ones had a little bit or none. We had a workshop in half-term where we had fun and I gave them time to find some movements together. Then we had rehearsals during their youth time in church during December. Unfortunately, the two older dancers dropped out at this stage, finding it "too slow". This meant we had to make a few adjustments, to fill the gaps and find movements and expressive storytelling to convey the nativity and gospel message.

I added flags towards the end of the dance to create a "bigger picture", filling the space with colour, dynamics and pace. The dance came alive, and the kids loved it. The three girls (11-12 year olds) fell in love with dancing and worship and after the service came up begging to do it again next year! It was an absolute pleasure to work with these girls, who were hard working and willing to try new things. I know that the Holy Spirit was at work too as the dance touched those watching and added a breath of fresh air to the familiar Christmas story which we love.



Performance of 'Manger Throne' by Phil Wickham

Reflections on worshipping alongside children – Jane Stonham

At St James Ensworth in Hampshire, UK, we had anything from 5 to 15 youngsters waving small banners for the tiniest and larger ones for the juniors. We encouraged them, saying that they were praising Jesus and explained different colours used to mean different things, such as Jesus the King, God the Creator or Jesus our Saviour.

As adults, we joined in worshipping ourselves with banners. But often were on our knees moving among the little ones, helping them unfurl stuck banners or moving them to a better spot. All the while singing ourselves, giving words of encouragement and having a hand raised in worship. Two little girls always ran with real joy to take part. There were also ribbons and very short ones on sticks.

It wasn't every song we joined in, we waited for an invitation from the leaders or we moved to the front. Lots of visiting children at baptisms really enjoyed the chance to join in. The congregation were very supportive, with many of the older folks who loved the children enjoying worship. We had a large Jesus banner to remind them of who we were worshipping.

At a small workshop for juniors, we had five African girls and a mum. We did two structured dances 'Marching in the Light of God' and 'We want to see Jesus lifted high'. They then did free movement, having been previously shown a variety of ways to use the flags and ribbons. The person who had helped prepare the music then gave them a choice of songs, and a unanimous pick was 'My Light House'. Panic, I hadn't prepared anything! Quick prayer. We joined in a circle dance and I called out simple instructions for the first verse and chorus. For the other verses, they did free movement, and we gained a pattern for the chorus. I suddenly realised we were all dancing in the freedom of the Spirit and the joy of the Lord. We ended up smiling, laughing, and panting, with lots of lovely comments 'that was fun', 'good', 'can we do some more!' We had to stop there, but I was very blessed, and I am sure they were!

Remembrance Sunday 2024, a group danced a prayer for the British armed force, each flag representing the Royal Air Force, Navy and Army. Flags supplied by Anna from UC Grace.

If you fancy something fun and the opportunity for either yourself or your group to learn some movement. Check out the 'Moving JOY' choreography video.



This walks you through some choreography to Martin Smith's song 'JOY'. This was taught to a group of girls who shared it at a church weekend in the middle of some woods. It was performed in the round, so the congregation created a big circle, and the girls danced in the middle of it. Much fun was had. The movements are there to act as a springboard for you to be creative.

" Moving JOY "

<https://youtu.be/gBJpUdkixEM>



Remembrance Sunday 2024

Thank you to Judi Spratling and Jane Stonham, for your contributions to this Children's Network Newsletter.

DANCE FOR CHILDREN



Belma Vardy

A Closing Prayer

Jesus, we come to You, the Fountain of Living Waters. Take us by the hand and lead us into the holiest place of Your presence. Fill every aspect of our life with Your beauty.

Father, we thank You for the gift of teaching. Let us always be a vessel of Your wisdom and patience and seek a continual flow of inspiration from You.

Enable our thoughts to always be clear and positive before our children. Our words always encouraging.

I pray that as dance leaders, we continue to seek Your face, Your ways and Your will for every child we lead.

May dance leaders have insight into the children's unique talents and gifting. Modelling a passion for Jesus. Resulting in not one of them missing an encounter with You.

Lord Jesus, You are powerful, beautiful, and magnificent.

May the children we teach become a reflection of You. May they carry Your Word in the dance and impart that to the next generation.

Make me to know Your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in Your truths and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation." Psalm 25:4-5

We pray all this in Jesus' precious name!
Amen.

Belma Vardy



ICDF RESOURCES

CONNECT WITH US CLICK ON ICON TO NAVIGATE TO PLATFORM



Our ICDF Website contains all the information on our Fellowship. Contact us and we will link you with the resource you require.



Our Networks create a space where discussions and activities can be shared with like minded individuals. Join a Network and learn more about your dance interest



We have an Official Facebook page for the public and a Group page for our members and supporters to interact with each other.



Medina Potter manages our X Page. We don't do many Tweets on ICDF, but we could start tweeting about our upcoming ICDF Dance Week from 12 - 19 May. Let's celebrate Pentecost together and spread the word



We would love to get more pictures and reels for our Instagram page. Connect with Medina to share your pictures on our ICDF Instagram



We have ICDF branded products waiting for you to purchase. Go our our ICDF shop and place your order today!!



Share your dance videos with us and we will post them on our Youtube channel.



Join our Telegram Global ICDF page and see our Newsflashes and Magazines as soon as they are released. We also have a Group for those of you who are planning to attend the Aotearoa New Zealand ICDF Conference in April 2025.