

The article below was written by Kathryn Mihelick. It was originally published in the Sacred Dance Guild Journal, Winter 1991, Volume 34, Number 2. It is reprinted here with permission from the author and publisher of the Sacred Dance Guild Journal.

WHY DO WE DANCE??

- in a sanctuary and through the aisles of our place of worship? We dance - we move in joy, in thanksgiving, in praise, sometimes in sorrow, in witness to God and each other.

- because movement is the universal language. It is the gift given to us by God, made possible through these marvellous temples we call our bodies. And we offer ourselves back to God from whom all blessings flow.

WE DANCE BECAUSE:

- there is a special communication that exists on a non-verbal level: because we are created not only with intellect, but also with spirit and emotion - with heart. The non-verbal language of movement speaks to the heart and speaks from the heart, where we can recognize the presence of God. So many things of the heart cannot be put into words. Therefore God gives us the art of movement and dance, which are reflection of the creative spirit of our Divine Creator.

WE DANCE BECAUSE:

- it allows us to transcend ourselves and to stretch beyond our own boundaries in reaching to God. It frees us and challenges us to move beyond the merely comfortable. It strives for release of the spirit and for extension of love (energy) and space. Hearts can be touched, changed and transformed through such love.

WE DANCE BECAUSE:

-it is our link to the cosmic rhythms of the universal Creator God. It puts us in synchronization with the pulse of Gods Creation. The wind, the earth, fire and water give us movement and life.

WE DANCE BECAUSE:

- movement is integrative, uniting body, mind and spirit. It is a way of helping us toward wholeness. A way of combatting the division in today's world. Division is sin. It divides us within ourselves, separates us from each other and alienates us from relationship with God. There is so much disintegration in the world. We pray that movement, the universal language be used to heal and integrate us as people of God. We use dance to communicate, understand and bond us in friendship and love at a heartfelt level and at that level, come to a greater sensitivity of God's presence - the holy Spirit who gives breath, life, and is, after all, the generator of all movement within us.

- It was once said to a congregation learning about liturgical dance, "So it is that when we learn to enter the life of faith with our bodies as well as our minds and voices, we will come to a new level of knowing and a greater sense of God's gift of human wholeness."

THERE IS A DANCE IN EVERYONE. GOD CALLS IT FORTH.

- Psalm 149 summons those who are "children of Zion" to praise God's name "in the dance." King David "dance before the Lord with all his Might" as related in 2 Samuel 6:14. Miriam led the people of God in a joyful dance of praise after the crossing of the Red Sea. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Glorify God, therefore, in your body and in your spirit."

- We are answering Gods call in our lives to dance at B.C.U.C.'s, pray that our dancing spirits be joined, making us all, in fact, one body in Christ.

- Please continue to speak with us about music, readings, and songs that you feel could be moved to as a prayer. We would also like to hear from those people who may find dance confusing, upsetting or uncomfortable. We would like to explore ways in which movement could be made more meaningful for all of God's people.

LIFE IS MOVEMENT!!! ALL MOVEMENT!! ALL DANCE!!!

- All of life involves movement, and movement becomes dance when there is an inner life, a living spirit directing it. True dance draws its strength from the living flow of the universe. (Either the universe doesn't hold together and we're simply mad, or we really are connected in some way!) With this power, dance can lead us to the heart of reality: it can turn energy loose with in us, and this could be a fearsome thing if one were not rooted in good. The dance began in the beginning, in silence and stillness, as the world lay worshipping under the hand of God, for "the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." The dance began with God!!

- Movement abounded, - rotation of the planets, changing seasons, day to night, the creeping of cells and plants and animals; BUT yet the dance was incomplete, for it required the human SOUL

- the soul of persons moving in relationship to God - to give this dance its deepest purpose, that of praise and gratitude.

"...Then God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life; and we become living beings." Made in the image of God - body and spirit moulded by God's holy hands.

A Quickening spirit!!
That's when I Catch my breath
Jump in joy
Grasp a new idea,
Turn to one another for help and support
Touch someone with your words.

- and though we may only move a little, suddenly we are quickened, charged with life, and we love. So simple a thing. Our bodies have taught us of what we had been only dimly conscious. And then we return to stillness as the liturgy moves on, but it is all different. Movement has awakened us.

DANCE AS PRAYER

- If prayer is the central core of life, then dance becomes prayer when we are expressing our relationship to God, to others and to all the world of matter and spirit, through movement originating from our deepest selves- this same central point of worship. The movements of dance-prayer start from our deep centre, flow outward like rivulets into the stream of life, and impart life everywhere. So dance can be a part of prayer, just as stillness can be a part of movement and silence can be a part of music. There is one root; all the rest, movement or stillness, silence or sound, is its expression. The closer to the source, the purer the song.

- We prayer and praise God with the dance, it is a dance that wells from our true nature from persons not cut off from their inner selves. This dance has found different expressions through the ages, and our own culture has its unique contribution to make.

- ??Does GOD pay attention only to the movements of the lips and not to the movements of the hands and body??