

# Company Keepers

*Dance Ministry Daily*

Rekesha Pittman

## **COMPANY KEEPERS: DANCE MINISTRY DAILY**

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# *Introduction*

I have been privileged to dance for the Lord since 1999. I have been blessed to travel and teach various subjects concerning dance ministry and the worship arts. I have seen the good, bad, and the ugly side of the ministry of movement. Over the years, I have been able to observe many things that work to promote the Gospel with sincerity and truth.

Within these pages are laughter, tears, and joy. If we have enlisted ourselves as soldiers in the Lord's army, we get our marching orders from Him and through His vessels. In Him we live, move, and have our being. Without Him we can do nothing.

I encourage continued study regarding the ministry of dance, but ask that we not stop there. Ministering the Gospel through movement compels us to know God beyond the Hebrew and Greek words used for dance and movement. We cannot take one element of the Body and live. All members of the Body have a function and a purpose. We must understand and know the great commission that we have been chosen to fulfill.

You are invited to experience the triumphs, trials, tears, cheers, celebration, revelation, and reverence that entail our journey as disciples. Walk with me through these pages on a daily journey that will challenge, sharpen, strengthen and encourage you.

Welcome to **Company Keepers: Dance Ministry Daily!**



# *Dedications*

This book is dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who died so that I might live.

To my mother Anita, whose prophetic words and wisdom have been my guideposts throughout my life...

To the “wise woman,” whose words have made me sensitive to the things of God and caused me to overcome my fears...

To the pioneers of movement ministry and trailblazers of today for paving the way...

To the anointed Pastors, Prophets, and Teachers that have encouraged me to dance and preach, pray and teach...

To you, for your readership and support of this labor of love...

I am grateful.

# The Ministry of Movement

Elitism is beginning to run rampant in the praise dance world. Networks, memberships, institutes, and organizations abound. Many dance mentoring programs are popping up throughout the world. Though these can be good if intentions are pure, if used for the wrong purposes, they can cause great harm. We must first be validated by the Lord who orders each one of our steps.

There is the argument concerning the trained vs. the untrained dancer. There are pros and cons to both. I believe that we must know to whom we are called to minister. If we are to impact the professional world of dance for the Kingdom, then training is a must. All bodies are not made for ballet. This does not mean that without it one does not have a place in the ministry of movement. The most important information that must be had by the dancer is an understanding of the Word of God to be anointed and effective over the long run.

Regardless of our physical talents, what matters is that ministry is conveyed through movement. The power of God should be a tangible experience that moves the observer and compels us to obedience. Beautifully danced pieces may only be great entertainment when the Holy Spirit is absent from them. Much effort may be expended through interpretive dance, but only applause will be garnered without the direction of the Lord. For those who have had the great joy of seeing the Lord through the lens of movement ministry, there is no doubt that in Him we live, move, and have our being.

## **Luke 6:40**

*A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.*

## **1 Timothy 4:8**

*For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

## Through Thick and Thin

Many make annual commitments to lose weight (yet again). Losing that extra 10-20 pounds may help that garment fit a little better. Less weight may equal greater ease of movement. I have struggled with my weight since childhood, and let me tell you, it has not been easy. In dance ministry, heavier dancers are often not taken seriously, talked about, and ridiculed. Unfortunately, much of this criticism also comes from within the dancer who may be struggling with body image issues.

I have been on both the thin side and the thick side of dance ministry. I must constantly work to keep things "in order" through proper nutrition and frequent exercise. I thank the Lord that I did not stop dancing when I had more of a load to bear. I admit that I tried to convince myself to stop during those times, but the Lord sent several people to minister to me and pull me through. I encourage anyone struggling in this area to dance your way past the weight to the glory of God!

Admittedly, it is easier to minister on the lighter side. I am not out of breath or lightheaded when my weight is under control. I must remind myself that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1- KJV).

### **1 Corinthians 9:27**

*But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

### **2 Corinthians 5:7**

*For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

### **Hebrews 12: 1-2**

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Day 2*

## Sloppy Agape

If I see one more bra strap (pick a color... any color) while I am sitting and observing a dance presentation, I may just shout (for all the wrong reasons). What is it about the church in the traditional sense that makes dancers think that dance garments should look like something from the 1800s? I am weary with seeing so many sloppy, shoddy, flimsy garments as part of dance ministry presentations. When we know better, we must do better.

I often receive catalogs with "liturgical" dance wear that is often made of material that leaves little to the imagination when worn alone. I own a few of these basics, but will wear them with a beautiful overlay, comfortable pants, and skirt for modesty to match the message I am trying to convey. It may not be easy to find a seamstress or tailor who will make custom garments, but with a little research, we can purchase durable garments that will not provoke the deacons on the front row to look away from us in ordered to stay saved.

Study. Pray. Take the time to research several options. Consult the Lord regarding garment styles and colors. The presentation of the message is only half of the battle. Let's not do ourselves or the ministry a disservice by dancing in garments that hinder instead of help.

### **Exodus 28:2**

*And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.*

### **Psalm 29:2**

*Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

### **Luke 12:35-36**

*Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.*

## So, What Are You Saying?

The message must be clear. We cannot just slap the name of Jesus on something and call it "Christian." All that we do should be to the glory of God. When we choose songs to dance to or select choreography, we must always be mindful of the motivation behind our choices. A right relationship with God and a consistent prayer life will help us see our true selves and make corrections where needed.

Some people select songs based on emotions. Others select movements that will allow them to showcase newfound or existing skills in ballet, modern, mime, or hip-hop. I have been blessed to see some contemporary movement ministers who no doubt are inspired by the Spirit. I am not picking on the hip-hop art form. Each of us must make sure that our movement is led by the Spirit and not the flesh. Everyone who says "Lord, Lord," does not automatically make them a follower of Christ.

If the arts are to be restored to its proper place in the church and in the world, we must definitely demonstrate the Power and Glory of the Lord. Ultimately, the Lord will reveal to us what is acceptable according to His standards. His approval will always line up with the Word of God. Our opinion never counts. We should be sure to make our focus one which pleases the Lord.

### **Jeremiah 42:6**

*Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.*

### **John 3:21**

*But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.*

## Not Unto Us

I have received several requests to provide training from dance ministries in need of mentoring. Studying our area of discipline will help us to be more effective ministers for the Lord. I am blessed with a passion to teach and assist the worship arts community to succeed in their specific area of calling from the Lord. Over time, I am acutely aware that there is a big difference between Godly discipleship and cloning people to be like us.

Several years ago, a dance ministry that I was stewarding danced at a public outreach event. One of my friends in the dance ministry remarked, "They look JUST like you!" I was immediately convicted. I realized that the point of mentoring is not to make people like me, but to assist them in becoming what God has designed them to be.

I have one of the wisest women in the world for a mentor. She is not a worship artist, published author, or millionaire. What she has given me has made me rich in substance. I will always remember an important bit of wisdom she shared with me: "I will share my experiences with you. You do not have to be like me. Listen to the Lord and follow Him." In leading others, we must be careful not to take the credit for what the Lord is doing in the lives of others. We are being transformed into the image of Christ, not of other people.

### **Psalm 115:1**

*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth.*

### **2 Corinthians 3:18**

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

## Behold, I Do a New Thing

It's time to take inventory. We should examine the current songs and choreography in our repertoires and seek the Lord again. Are all of the songs that we currently dance to a "Word in season?" Do we find ourselves doing the same movements for "love," "Jesus," and "rejoice?" If so, it's time to do a new thing!

When I first started praise dancing, many of our songs and movements were about battles. A praise dance classic is "The Battle is the Lord's" by Yolanda Adams. I have seen that song SO many times over the last several years. The Lord then transitioned us from being "praise dancers" to "worship dancers." Many of our songs in that season were slow, very personal, and emotional.

The Lord made another transition with me as I began to embrace dance as a bona fide ministry. I must always seek Him as to what song and movement He would have me minister to a particular group of people. I no longer dance to the same songs for every occasion. I am often told after I have ministered in dance, that the song that was selected matched the theme of a gathering even when I was not aware of the theme beforehand. The Lord is a Revealer.

As dancers, we too must deliver a Word in season. Our favorite song may not be what the Lord wants to say to His people. Let us pray and ask the Lord to show us what pieces to keep, and what dances need to be retired from our ministries in this season.

### **Isaiah 43:19**

*Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

## An Audience of One

I often hear dancers speak of being nervous before or during a ministry presentation. I have witnessed dancers forget choreography, laugh, or get frustrated while moving in front of a congregation. Some dancers will adjust garments while dancing due to self-consciousness or embarrassment due to a lack of sufficient coverage. We must remember that we are dancing before the Lord Himself.

Rehearsals should be treated the same way. Worship, praise, and expression through movement starts long before an audience is present. If the dance is for the Lord, the dance will also magnify Him in our private rehearsal times. We should experience worship, visitation, and an outpouring from the Lord during our gatherings. To walk in truth, our lives must match the message we are conveying.

What is done privately will show up publicly. Our lack of consistent rehearsal, insufficient prayer time, and minimal preparation must not result in a "Lord, bless this mess" situation. What we present must be pure and set apart exclusively for the Lord so that we may witness the Word made manifest before our eyes. When God arises, lives will be changed and souls will be delivered.

**Psalm 71:16**

*I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.*

**John 4:24**

*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*

**John 17:3**

*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

## The Real Celebrity

It is natural for people to want to feel a sense of importance in the eyes of others. Our commitment is that the Lord is the ultimate "Superstar" in our eyes. Internal fighting is present amongst church factions that want to raise the most money, be the most anointed, have favor with the Pastor, be requested by the congregation... etc. People are often competing for fame or celebrity, even in the church realm.

Beautifully crafted dance garments, explosive applause, and gushing compliments can become our focus if we are not careful to give all glory to God. We cannot strive to "work the crowd" as we are dancing openly. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32) Our ministries must draw people to Jesus, not to ourselves.

Our garments cannot be too beautiful to be touched by anyone else. Our demeanor must not turn people away or give the impression that we are haughty. Our conversations before and after ministry are being overheard. Our lifestyles are being noted and watched intensely. Let's make sure that we are lifting up the name of Jesus, and not trying to make a name for ourselves.

### **2 Corinthians 12:20-21**

*For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.*

### **Philippians 1:15-17**

*Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the Gospel.*

# How to be a Good Housekeeper

A house divided cannot stand. If you are experiencing division, strife, and disunity in your dance ministry- deal with it. We must have clean hands and pure hearts. How can two walk together unless they agree? It is very difficult to worship in spirit and in truth, when the truth is that we have a problem.

Jealousy, envy, pride, and self-importance are just a few factors that can contribute to division among us. We cannot continue to ignore the problem and wish that it would go away. If you know that you have a problem with someone, or if you know that they have a problem with you, make sure to read Matthew 18:15-17. Go to them (after prayer for direction), and try to reconcile. Make every effort to keep the house clean.

When we are on one accord, it will show in our rehearsals, ministry assignments, and daily lives. Make every effort to keep peace. Do not let the enemy come in and distract you from getting the Gospel message delivered. It is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity.

## **Psalm 127:1**

*Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*

## **Matthew 24:43**

*But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

## **Mark 13:34-36**

*It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.*

## It Makes Scents

The last thing we want people to remember about our dance ministries is the way we smell. We are presenting our bodies to the Lord, and we are ministering in close proximity to His people. There is no excuse for poor hygiene, especially when we use our bodies as instruments for the Gospel.

Everyone's body chemistry is not the same. There may be times that we have to minister and have not had a chance to shower immediately before ministry. We can be prepared by packing a washcloth (in a re-sealable plastic bag), baby wipes, deodorant, breath mints, lotion, perfume/cologne (but not too much), and other items as needed. It is also important to make sure that our ministry garments are clean and fresh, even if there is no visible dirt on them.

We should let nothing hinder us from delivering an effective message. If we offend someone due to poor hygiene, we may not find out about it, or hear about it when it is too late. This situation is an embarrassment that we can avoid. Clean hands, clean feet, and clean faces (provided it fits the ministry message), go a long way when coming into contact with people. Let's remember to take care of the temples that He gave us.

### **Exodus 40:32**

*Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

### **Leviticus 16:4**

*He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.*

# Talent Show

In the parable of the talents, all those who were given talents were asked to give an account, or showing of what they did with what was given to them when the master returned. Everyone does not have the same talents. We do not all dance, mime, or move the same way. There seems to be a growing sector of opinion in the dance that says that if you are not formally trained, you are not graced to dance.

Do not let the traditions of man hinder you from giving an account for the gifts and talents that God gave you. Did King David take required dance classes before he danced before the Lord with all of his might? Did Miriam take ballet? I am sure that both understood that the dances they did had purpose and glorified God. This matters more than training.

I have seen trained dancers with no demonstration of the knowledge or the power of God. I believe that dance classes help with safety, movement vocabulary, and knowledge of the mechanics of movement. I have taken Ballet, Modern Dance, and African dance classes as an adult. Ballet, Modern Dance, Jazz, Mime, and African are only a few ways to praise Him in the dance. We must remember that we must multiply all of our talents and give an account for them upon the Lord's return.

**Matthew 25:20**

*So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'*

**Romans 11:29**

*For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

**Romans 12:6-8**

*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

## A Hairy Situation

It is amazing what can be done through hairstyling. Creativity abounds in cut, color, style, volume, length and texture. What was once considered cutting-edge in hair care is fast becoming an everyday sight. While self-expression may be encouraged in our personal lives, we must ask the Lord how He would have us appear before Him in a ministerial capacity.

Hair can be a distraction in a ministry piece if the style does not match the presentation. Hair that sticks to the face wet with sweat may not necessarily be a bad thing if the message is showing struggle or a radical praise. Wild tresses may be a hindrance if the dancer's hair is moving more than the dancer and unintentionally becomes the focus of the piece.

When dancing with a group, it would be great to be on one accord when choosing what style appropriately fits the message. Bright red hair (or purple - or blue - or pink), mohawks, mullets, and expressive artwork shaven in the head may garner more attention than is needed. Let's make sure to let nothing get in the way of our service to the Lord. After all, He knows the number of hairs on our heads.

### **Proverbs 16:31**

*The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.*

### **Song of Solomon 7:5**

*Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; A king is held captive by your tresses.*

### **Matthew 10:30**

*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

## Crown the Winner

We are trained in the natural to want to win. We often quote that “we are more than conquerors...” Winning usually means that someone else loses. In school, spelling bees, cheerleading competitions, and student body elections condition us to want to be the best, or to select the best out of those vying for the crown.

Some of us bring that same mentality to the dance ministry. Although we should deflect it, it may be flattering to hear that we are the best group on program or the most powerful. Dance concerts can turn into tense competitions to determine the "Most Anointed," "Best Dancer," or "Most Glorious Garments." We must make a concerted effort to magnify the Lord and dismantle competitive spirits when groups of dancers come together.

How can we do this? We must maintain an atmosphere of love by greeting one another, speaking, and smiling. Stay during the entire event and support the other ministries on program. Be approachable and sincerely humble. It is also a good exercise in selflessness to support dance events for which we are not scheduled to dance. My prayer is that concerts, services, conferences, and other dance events are presented in such a way as to spread the Gospel and dwell together in unity, regardless of the roster.

### **1 Corinthians 24-25**

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

### **2 Timothy 4:8**

*Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

## Chain Reaction

We must set at liberty those who are captive. A person does not have to be behind bars to be imprisoned. When we are ministering before the Lord and in front of His people, there should be a change in the atmosphere of the mind, body, and spirit. The yoke is destroyed because of the anointing. We are merely wasting precious time without it.

When we select songs to use during ministry, we should earnestly seek the Lord each and every time concerning what He wants to say to His people. He may have a specific message for an individual or to a group of people. Without regarding His instructions, we will miss the mark. A true encounter with the Lord is always life-changing. Ask Abraham. Ask Moses. Ask Paul. Ask me.

My prayer is that anything that would hinder the observer from rejoicing, praising, and worshipping the Lord would be obliterated when we minister in dance. Taking the proper precautions to move out of the way will result in our lives and ministries bringing glory to God. When we are in step with the Holy Spirit, the Word will manifest right before our eyes. Let's not forget that we are on eternal assignment.

### **Psalm 116:16**

*O LORD, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds.*

### **Isaiah 58:6**

*Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?*

### **Colossians 4:18**

*I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.*

## Repeat After Me...

At one time or another in our dance ministry journey, we may have selected songs that made us feel good. These songs may have been inspirational or uplifting, and had us feeling good about ourselves. As we study the Bible and learn more about rightly dividing the Word, we may begin to realize that all songs used for ministry must agree with the Word of God.

A few popular songs come to mind. Kirk Franklin's "More Than I Can Bear," states that "He'll never put more on me than I can bear." The Word does not actually say this (I know your Pastor/Bishop/Prophet may have said this several times over the pulpit, but it's not in there). The Bible actually says, "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*" (I Corinthians 10:13) I do not see where it says that God will "put" any of this on us.

I have also seen R. Kelly's "I Believe I Can Fly" danced in the sanctuary. We know that, "*...they shall mount up with wings as eagles...*" but this song was written for a basketball movie starring Michael Jordan. It is about the idea of flying through the air before making a slam dunk. Many of us have heard the lyrics, "Long as I got King Jesus (I don't need nobody else!)." Genesis 2:18 records, "*And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.'*" Yes, we definitely need Jesus, but Jesus came here for mankind, not for Himself. Let's not be afraid to step away from anything we find lacking the true Word of God.

### **2 Timothy 2:15**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

## Here's Looking at You

I once conducted a dance rehearsal and did an exercise in which I asked the group to demonstrate various expressions in front of mirrors. Unfamiliar with the concept, many approached with trepidation as to what would be expected. As we progressed, the dancers were able to see what others saw through facial expressions. When one of the last dancers came forward, she replied with her head down, "I can't..." Because of the way she saw herself, she could not comfortably face herself in the mirror.

Taking a look at ourselves helps us to improve. Regular rehearsals in front of the mirror are a start. We may decide to improve by recording our movement presentations and then watching them to discover ways we can enhance the work. Even professional athletes watch games in which they have played to see where improvements can be made. We can learn by looking at pictures of ourselves in motion. Are our hands and feet in the right places? Do we look angry when dancing to the word "rejoice"?

DVDs and photos have greatly helped me perfect some choreography and continue to present excellence in movement. When we see ourselves in action in an actual setting, we can see where changes may need to be made. Don't be afraid to face the fact that many of us are still learning and growing. One of my favorite inspirational scriptures is Proverbs 22:29, "*Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.*"

### **Daniel 1:13**

*Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants.*

### **Galatians 6:4**

*But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

## Before and After

It's not all about what we do when we are dancing before people. What we do before and after ministry has a very significant impact on how we are received. The authenticity of our ministries comes into question before and after we dance.

**Before Ministry:** Are we on time for our ministry engagements? Is our music cued and have we greeted the sound person and thanked him or her for assisting us? Do we carry our garments stuffed in a trash bag, or are they clean and neat? Are we expecting the "best seats in the house" or are we willing to sit in the back, if necessary? Are we supportive of other ministries during a gathering, or are we focused only on what we are to do? Do we smile at people who may stare at our garments in wonder? Are we having inappropriate conversations that others may overhear? Did we remember to turn our cell phones off?

**After Ministry:** Do we leave early due to overbooking, or to get a bite to eat? Are we leaving trash in the bathroom, seats, or changing areas? Do we put on clothes after dancing that negate the message we are trying to convey? Are leaders and soloists prepared with business cards when approached by people for ministry information? Again, are we having inappropriate conversations that others may overhear? What music is playing our vehicles when we start them that may be heard in the parking lot?

There are many factors of the "before and after" that impact our ministries. We must remember that it is not about the actual "performance," but about the truth of the Word of God being demonstrated in all that we do.

**Luke 24:17**

*And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"*

*Day 17*

## Have Some Class!

Many dance ministries still overlook the importance of having a solid knowledge of the basics. There are many ways that we can educate ourselves regarding our craft so that we are authentic and respected. The most important aspect is that all dancers are saved through Christ Jesus and have a grasp on what the Bible has to say about dance. King David is not the only person who danced in the Bible, yet many dancers still know little beyond this.

There are many books, DVDs, and websites that can provide assistance concerning Biblical principles, technique, and ministry networking. Performing a simple internet search by entering the words "praise dance" will direct us to several sites with information. We can research community dance classes in our areas to see how we can improve our technique and choreographic abilities. Dance classes open up the door for us to meet fellow dancers and permits us to share the option of dancing for the Lord with them.

We cannot merely rely on the opinions and revelation of others. When we study for ourselves, we will be able to stand firmly on the Word and move forward in the confidence of the Lord. It is very hard to convince someone of our beliefs if we are unsure ourselves. We must make a commitment to be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

### **John 3:21**

*But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.*

### **Acts 7:22**

*And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.*

### **Titus 3:14**

*And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

## Identity Theft

Some people do not even realize that they are stealing. Others take the liberty to “borrow” heavily from the work of another without giving the proper credit. It is one thing to use choreography with permission, but it's another to make a practice of incorporating ideas from someone else and presenting them as our own. It's also dangerous to blatantly copy everything that we admire about our fellow dancers.

After dancing a few years back, a woman called me on the telephone informing me that she had videotaped our dance and wanted to know the song title and artist. Her direct quote was, "I am going to teach that piece to my girls!" I was shocked to say the least. I have also had people teach pieces that I have choreographed without first asking my permission, and then conveniently informing me about it afterward. I have no problem granting permission for choreography use; however, things could get sticky if I show up to dance and my piece seems all-too-familiar...

It's great to be inspired by each other. The Bible reminds us that there is nothing new under the sun. We have all been influenced directly or indirectly by someone else. We are also reminded in the Word that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. He did not make every flower look exactly the same. We are all uniquely appointed to carry out His work. Let us continue to rely on the Lord for our choreography, garments, song selection, and leading. We can never go wrong when we are under His guidance.

### **Romans 2:21**

*You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?*

### **Romans 15:20**

*And so I have made it my aim to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation*

## Singled Out

There was a time when I danced with a group, and then with a partner. I was excited as I watched choreography coming together and witnessed the handiwork of the Lord in rehearsals. Receiving instant feedback concerning the selection of movement was a highlight that I looked forward to on a weekly basis. This provided me with the confidence that the pieces we presented were anointed and powerful.

I was reminded that the Lord wants me to depend on no one else but Him. I stepped out as a soloist after years of dancing with a partner and teaching church-based groups. I no longer had my own section of ministry cheerleaders to pat me on the back and compliment my teaching skills. In fact, I never envisioned myself dancing alone when I decided to dance for Him. Suddenly, it was just me and God.

My confidence in my own abilities began to fade. I found myself praying each and every time that the pieces would truly minister to the people, as I felt inadequate to do the job alone. It's been several years since I continued on the journey and the Lord has faithfully shown His hand of favor and provision on the ministry. There are challenges that solo dancers face that are unique and much different than dancing with a group. The Lord has now opened the doors for me to dance both with a group and alone, and through it all, I have learned to trust Him more. He continues to order my steps.

### **Isaiah 6:8**

*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."*

### **John 8:29**

*And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.*

## Perfect in Weakness

There are mountains and valleys as we journey along in ministry. When I first started dancing for the Lord, nothing could hinder me from the vision that He planted in my spirit. As the years have gone by, I have been hurt, abandoned, mistreated, unappreciated and the like by fellow brothers and sisters in the Body.

I cannot say that these things have not affected me, but I have learned to forgive and move on. My desire is to please the Lord. He has brought healing in my life by reminding me to never forget the reason why He called me to ministry. There are places that He is still repairing, but there are already some areas that He has given me strength. The Lord instructed me to be faithful over the areas where He has already made me strong.

I made a commitment to write each and every day for an entire year. Since then, many doors have opened, miracles have taken place, and the weaker areas in my life are now being strengthened as I continue to stay the course. He reminds us that if we are faithful over a few things, He will make us ruler over much!

Are we struggling in some areas in our lives that need discipline? Let's focus on the areas that He has made us strong and it will begin to flow over into every area of our lives. Trust the Lord and know that His strength is made perfect in weakness.

### **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

*And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

*Day 21*

## All God's Children

We can never underestimate the ability of children to experience the power of God. Countless children's dance groups stand before congregations week after week, but it is obvious that they are not expected to know the Lord for themselves. I remember worshipping the Lord at very early age. Not only was I expected to understand the Word when I was young, but to obey it as well.

We are to train up children in the way that they should go. It breaks my heart to see so many of our youth dancing in the name of Jesus, but doing movements in the sanctuary from the latest nightclub or popular music channel. I have heard crowds cheer loudly when the children incorporate the latest dance craze in their "ministry" presentation. What message does this send to our children?

I am a living witness that young people can be taught to praise and worship God from a place of truth. There is nothing like seeing a child lift up his or her hands in total surrender to the Lord, praising Him with a loud voice. In this world that we live in, we must no longer encourage our children to live as hypocrites, dancing about a God they do not know. Let us begin a new training season in the lives of our children.

**Psalm 71:17**

*O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works.*

**Proverbs 22:6**

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

**Matthew 19:14**

*But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

## Publicity Stunts

The entertainment world does it all the time. Relationships are manufactured to create publicity for one or more people in an effort to gain popularity, deflect rumors, or to promote an upcoming release. Public relations firms are paid top-dollar to make sure that the public persona is desirable to the mainstream audience. The same thing is happening in the church.

Dance ministries are hooking up with Jesus in name, but deep down they are really looking for a platform to showcase themselves. Some dancers never have a personal conversation with the Lord, yet claim to know Him in front of the congregation. Some even claim to be in love with Jesus, but pass telephone numbers and text messages to that attractive person across the aisle or behind them. Some even go home right after dancing to commit sin on a regular basis.

Making a name for ourselves and using the dance ministry to benefit our selfish desires is not what we are commissioned to do. If the real intention is fame, popularity, financial gain, or a seat with the "best of the best," by all means, pursue it. Please, just leave Jesus out of it!

### **Mark 7: 6-7**

*He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:  
'This people honors Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.  
And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"*

### **Colossians 2:18-19**

*Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*

## May I Take Your Order?

As prayerful and discerning as we may be, we cannot make assumptions when we go out to minister in dance. We must "survey the land," so to speak, and inquire about where we are going, so that we will be effective when we get there. When visiting another church, we should ask if there are any obvious restrictions concerning attire, where we can or cannot dance (is the pulpit area off limits?), and what kind of sound system will be in place. We must always allow the Lord to lead us regarding what we should know in advance.

We do not want anything to hinder our ability to deliver the Word through movement. It's a good practice to know the order of the house, and sometimes the order of service when we go out. There are times when I make requests not to dance right before offering, because the dance is a worship piece. An offering taken afterward may have the effect of quenching any worship that might result in response to the piece. Experience has taught me that worship will be quickly doused for the money collection ritual.

This concept also applies to international travel. Knowing the customs and traditions of a country helps us to not be offensive to the locals. Although we do not adopt the practices of nations that are not Christian, we want to make sure that we have an opportunity to make an impact for the Kingdom. We are not ashamed of the Gospel, and should know where we are going to get the message to the intended recipient.

### **Proverbs 18:19**

*A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

### **Romans 14:21**

*It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.*

## Hired Hands

Impeccable technique, exquisite make-up, and a toned body do not qualify us as movement ministers. Invitations to dance in mega-churches, on network television, and in expansive stadiums does not signal an "arrival," or stamp of approval from the Lord. The enemy understands the power of the dance. Some platforms will expose the true state of our connection to Christ.

I pray that dancers who are granted such large platforms truly understand the ministry of dance. If the presentation brings more attention to the antics of the dancers than the featured singer, praise team, choir, or the message of the song, we have to ask ourselves, "What is the motivation behind it?" We must be careful not to "dance for a dollar," or allow ourselves to be seduced to shake our "Holy Ghost money-makers."

Is the love of money allowing us to compromise decency and truth for the sake of popularity and increased exposure? Are we wearing garments to dance in that would cause the mirror to blush? There are some people who have yet to experience the power of God through a dance rendering. As long as we continue to treat dance as a showcase instead of a ministry, the movie and television industries will continue to promote the entertainers over the true worshippers of God.

### **Proverbs 12:2**

*A good man obtains favor from the LORD, but a man of wicked intentions He will condemn.*

### **Acts 8: 20-23**

*But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."*

## Name Calling

Biblical names are full of meaning, and are often prophetic. In Biblical accounts, there were several times when people named their offspring and the Lord would give them a new name to reflect their true destiny. At other times, names were changed to reflect the new nature that the Lord had given to someone. When we name our ministries, it is important to seek the Lord's instruction. What may be common or catchy may not be God's intended name for us.

If we dance in a ministry that dances predominantly at a single church, this does not automatically mean that we should be named "ABC Church Dance Ministry." Remember: names are prophetic, so if we memorialize ourselves after the name of a church building, then in essence, we are saying that we will only dance inside of those four walls.

We are all fearfully and wonderfully made in Him. If the Lord has chosen us to minister before His people, He will give us a name that speaks to our assignment as a ministry. We should never feel that it's too late to start again. If we must receive a new name from the Lord, then we should accept it along with the assignment that comes with it. What's in a name? Prophecy, Purpose, and Proclamation!

### **Isaiah 43:1**

*[The Redeemer of Israel] But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

### **Isaiah 62:2**

*The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name.*

### **John 10:3**

*To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

## Taking the Stage

As movement ministry influence continues to expand, many doors are opening for dance to be in the spotlight. Large public gatherings are calling for dancers from various churches and communities to unite together in the name of the Lord Jesus. Collaborative efforts bring about fellowship among many dance ministries as choreography and garments reflect them unified on one accord.

The theatrical stage is becoming a common arena for dance ministry recitals and public concerts of movement. Lighting, backdrops, sets and props add elements of visual depth that can greatly assist the understanding of the message, if used correctly. Challenges for the newcomer to the stage may include a sense of disconnect from the viewing audience, as well as the vast volume of space to cover compared to a pulpit or smaller platform.

With practice and innovation, the theater can be a great place to experience worship. When we view the lights, scenery and auditorium as a canvas, we can open up to many new possibilities in the movement realm. As we allow the Lord to continue to show us vivid portrayals of His Word, we allow Him to take us beyond the confines of our own imaginations.

### **Isaiah 54: 2-3**

*Enlarge the place of your tent,*

*And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings;*

*Do not spare;*

*Lengthen your cords,*

*And strengthen your stakes.*

*For you shall expand to the right and to the left,*

*And your descendants will inherit the nations,*

*And make the desolate cities inhabited.*

## Short Circuit

There have been times in ministry over the years that I have danced on the “circuit.” At the time, I did not realize it, but I danced on many programs with the same groups, same dancers, same emcees, same programs, witnessing the same songs. Although I was familiar and comfortable with the scheduled roster of dancers, routine programs, and annual events, I did not want to hear my name yelled out from the audience just because someone out there was familiar with me.

I began to desire to expand my circle and meet new people. The Lord opened doors for me to travel with the dance ministry and teach at conferences outside of my local area. As a result, I was able to meet many wonderful people and new groups. As time progressed, I again found myself on the dance ministry “circuit.” Same groups, same dancers, same emcees, same programs, same songs...

What this has taught me is to keep my eyes and ears open as the Lord directs me into new areas, leads me to new people, and presents new opportunities. I am grateful for the long-term relationships that He has given me, but I remain open to new circles of fellowship. When I begin to see a pattern of doing the same things over and over again, I realize that it is time to step into another place in Him.

### **Joshua 1:9**

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

### **Hebrews 10:10-12**

*By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,*

## Getting in Line

Many people have a tendency to run and tell what they've heard. This worked in the spreading of the Gospel, but if we are not careful to use the Word as our source, we can misquote and misinterpret. It's good to seek wisdom, knowledge and further understanding regarding how movement is used as ministry. After attending workshops, conferences, and dance events, many will simply repeat what has been taught instead of researching the information first to see if it is supported by the Word of God.

This can lead to error and unsound theology regarding the position of dance in the Body. Just because we have been told something at a conference or workshop does not then qualify us to become teachers on the subject. Just like we cannot take one Scripture and based a whole doctrine on it, we cannot take one opinion and base a dance ministry "to-do-list" on it either.

I praise the Lord for deliverance from the "dance ministry rulebook," and thank Him for instruction regarding how He would have me to minister in particular. There are many qualified teachers regarding worship arts and movement who indeed have heard from the Lord. We must also remember that there are many teaching, hosting conferences, and leading dance ministries that have heard something, but not from Heaven...

### **Jeremiah 14:14**

*And the LORD said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart."*

### **1 Timothy 1:5-7**

*Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.*

## De-light Thyself

I will never forget when the Lord spoke these words into my spirit: "Delight thyself!" Initially, I began to rejoice and laugh because I felt so special that the Lord would speak to me. He then said, "Sit down. Turn off everything that turns you on. The Light that you are to shine is not from you or because of you. This Light is not artificial, but supernatural. It is not your light, but Mine." I was stunned.

I can only truly rejoice in Him when I have removed myself from the equation. Just like a lampshade conceals some of the light that a lamp can cast forth, our flesh can conceal the Light that is supposed to shine through us. Improper attitudes, pride, rivalries, over-zealousness, and competition can hinder the ability of people to see Jesus through us and ultimately affects our ability to minister.

We cannot even let our beautiful garments, choreography or "anointed" reputations stand in the way of the True Light shining through our lives. Being transparent before the Lord allows His full glory to be revealed through us. It is time to remove anything in our lives that would cause people to see us instead of Jesus. De-light thyself in the Lord!

**John 1: 1-4** (Referring to Jesus)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

**John 1: 8-9** (Referring to John the Baptist)

*He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

## Telling Stories

There have been times when I have felt like my time was wasted watching a dancer or group present a piece that had no discernable meaning. At other times, the message has been outright confusing. Regardless of the skill level, we must remember that the Word is sharp, powerful, and living! We must pray for the Lord to show us how to marry the music, movements, and ministry of a piece.

We are not limited to just the use of our bodies to glorify Him. There are wonderful flags, banners, billow cloths, crowns, and visual enhancements that we can use to make sure that the message is clearly understood. There may be someone we know who is gifted to create custom visual worship tools. When we make our requests known, we will watch God answer prayer.

The Lord is creative and His Spirit lives in us. The Bible is full of detail, miracles, and truth. We must ask ourselves who is leading us if all of our dances look the same and we are all dancing to the same music. Being open to new revelation and insight is crucial if we want to truly minister effectively.

### **Psalm 33:1**

*Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful.*

### **Isaiah 41:20**

*That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.*

### **Colossians 1:16**

*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

## Rise Up and Walk

We may have a few missteps in ministry, but we can never allow ourselves to stay down after a tumble. If we continue to walk in the Lord, He is able to keep us from falling. There are seasons that bring discouragement, confusion, doubt, and second-guessing. We are to be about our Father's business. Rise up, and get back on the path of righteousness.

Tune out anything that would try to discourage or distract you. Fix your eyes on the Lord and press forward to obedience. Put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness! Get in His presence and experience the fullness of His Joy. Let nothing separate you from His love.

Pray for fresh choreography, new garments, or simply renewed commitment. Allow the Lord to minister to any wounded areas, and then walk in the newness of the day. There are others waiting to see the Glory of God revealed before their eyes. Submit yourself to the washing of the Word. Shake off the dust. Rise up and walk on.

**Psalm 119:45**

*And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.*

**Isaiah 52:2**

*Shake yourself from the dust, arise; Sit down, O Jerusalem! Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion!*

**John 5:8**

*Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."*

**Acts 3:6**

*Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

## "Net" Work

Since we all belong to the same Body, it is good to reach out and connect to other movement ministers for fellowship and support. We are to be "fishers of men," and so the results of our networking should ultimately lead to how we can lead others to Christ. As each of us link together to form a spiritual "net," this will allow us to have a greater catch of souls for the Kingdom. There are many wonderful organizations that offer memberships to movement ministers for connectivity and support.

The trend of late seems to be that people attend conferences, workshops, and dance events to rub elbows with the instructors, or recruit an audience for their own personal ventures. People also join networking organizations so that they can "name drop" and say that they are associated with this great name in the dance "Kingdom." While it is great that people are aware of our gifts, it is the motive that matters (what's in the heart?). Some people will share an entire dance resume with you because they really want you to invite them out to teach at your church or conference.

We must get back to the Great Commission. Our gift will make room for us and bring us before great men. We do not have to make room for our gift by taking matters into our own hands. When we are about our Father's business, then the real "net" working will begin.

### **Matthew 4:19**

*Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

### **Matthew 28:19-20**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

## Dance on the Airwaves

We are going into the world as never before! The ministry of dance is being prominently featured and explored by way of television, radio, publications, and even the movies. The internet has allowed dancers from every genre to connect and support one another through social networking, online video uploading, internet radio, blogging sites, etc... It is exciting to be able to meet so many fellow co-laborers and not even have to leave the comfort of home to do so.

There are some "heart check-ups" that we must do along the way. Though it is fine to have a vision to spread the message around the world, our motives must not be for fame or fortune. We must be careful to remain humble and the Lord will reward us in due season. If we want to be on TV because we saw another dance ministry on the air, we must stop and thank the Lord for the door He opened for that ministry (instead of thinking about our own promotional options).

When we see the Lord opening doors for ministries to gain exposure, we should rejoice with them. Prayer must continue to be the order of the day, as some dances passing as "praise dances" are really doing a disservice to the movement. The enemy also gives opportunities for exposure, but we only want to walk through the doors that the Lord has uniquely assigned to us.

### **Proverbs 4:7-8**

*Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; she will bring you honor, when you embrace her.*

### **John 7:18**

*He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*

*Day 34*

## For Christ's Sake!

If we have not experienced persecution during our dance ministry journey, we must ask ourselves who we are really serving. Although many may praise our efforts to preach the Gospel through movement, we must have those who will rise up against us. David's chief critic concerning his choice to dance came from a member of his own household. Jesus was persecuted, betrayed, and ultimately slain by those who disagreed with His ministry. Paul was imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel.

We must count it all joy when we go through various trials! This will allow us to become more mature and not desire the approval and accolades of people when we are obeying the will of the Lord. We should allow persecution to remind us to read the Word, increase our prayer directives, and love those who spitefully use us.

Let us embrace the sharpening process and ask the Lord for wisdom to endure when friends forsake us, when leadership fails to utilize us, when critics launch verbal and written attacks on us, and when undercover enemies try to infiltrate our lives. We must pray for discernment daily and continue to acknowledge Him in all our ways... and in doing so our paths will be made clear.

### **Matthew 5:10-12**

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

### **John 15:20**

*Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.*

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Sometimes we have to wonder, "What in the world are people thinking?" I have seen countless e-mail addresses, websites, social networking pages, pictures posted online, and outrageous behavior that do not glorify God in any manner. It is funny how we claim we love the Lord, but our love for Him is not discernable in public.

I am not saying that we should appear to be "holy rollers," but if we truly love someone, we are not ashamed to show it. I have witnessed fellow dancers displaying provocative pictures, or allow visible comments with foul language to be displayed on the internet and scratch my head. If we are truly in Christ Jesus, we are new creatures. If the old things of the world are still important enough to advertise in cyberspace, then we must do some soul-searching to find out if we have really been converted.

The internet is a great way to "go into the world." If the Lord visited our websites or social networking pages today, would He say "Well done, thou good and faithful servant?" Would we be embarrassed to forward our e-mails to Him? Instant messaging Heaven, anyone? If we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to us, we will make the changes that would bring honor to the Lord.

### **1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 31-33**

*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.*

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

### **2 Corinthians 6:3**

*We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.*

## In and Out

My dance ministry journey has been one of many transitions. When I first starting dancing for Him, a lot of the song selections were "warfare" oriented because we were fighting a school of thought that praise dance was "for the young people." At that time, I was no longer a teenager. Most of our choreography was aggressive and forceful as we tried to break down barriers that tried to hold us back.

After some time, the Lord allowed us to transition into a worship phase in which most of our movement was graceful, and the music was often slow and emotional. Songs of praise and celebration were also frequently used by us to reflect our newfound joy in Him. I was soon to learn that there was so much more to the ministry of dance than the categories of movement in which we may classify a piece.

I used to need at least two weeks notice before I would accept a ministry assignment. He has now transitioned me again. I receive phone calls from Pastors and ministry leaders to come minister in dance regarding a particular situation, or demonstrate through movement what the people do not seem to be getting through words alone. Sometimes this happens without much notice during a worship service, or I may be called to dance at the last minute. In the book of Jeremiah, the prophet was instructed to perform many physical demonstrations to show what was to come. I have accepted that I too must be ready to demonstrate the Word through movement when the Lord says so.

### **Matthew 24:44**

*Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

### **2 Timothy 4:1-2**

*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

## Put Your Foot Down!

We can no longer passively allow the enemy to wreak havoc in our lives and ministries. We must stand with our sword (the Word) at our side and let nothing separate us from His love. Internal fighting is more damaging to our ministries than what is attacking us from the outside. We must recognize trouble, pray for direction, and deal with it before it grows into a larger issue. Let's build up our ranks from within.

We must make every effort to maintain the bond of unity in the Body. We can do this by getting to know each and every dancer we co-labor with (not for selfish purposes). We should pray for each other on a regular basis. Each of us must learn to repent for offenses immediately. Even if we did not intentionally mean to offend someone, we should be humble enough to identify where we may have been in error. How can two walk together, much less dance together, except they agree?

It's time to walk in the path that the Lord has set before us. Let's not get sidetracked with arguments, misunderstandings, and the like. If there are conflicts going on with fellow dancers, either in-house or in the dance community at large, we must take a stand and give the enemy no foothold. As we step into our rightful places, the Lord will bring clarity to our paths, while enlarging us for an even greater work.

### **Deuteronomy 11:24-25**

*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.*

### **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*

## There Are No Words...

Expressive worship can be effective even when a song is only instrumental. Certain symbols (wings, trumpets, the cross, etc) are universally recognized and understood. Working outside of the box allows us to be open to possibilities to use movement as a ministry by further exploring the visual elements of Biblical imagery. It's important to be led by the Holy Spirit when presenting pieces that have no lyrics so that the message is crystal clear.

When we are developing these types of pieces, we must be sure to have Scriptural foundation and direction. All of the dancers in the piece should have a firm grasp on the Biblical concepts portrayed. Accurate presentation of garments, colors, and praise props are very important to get the message across.

We can look at the world around us to see that God embraces diversity. He made each of us fearfully and wonderfully. The Lord instilled creativity in each of us, so let's show it! Let's pray that He opens our ears to hear songs in new ways that will take any choreographic limits off of us. God is not visible, but He is visual!

### **Daniel 4:2-3**

*I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.*

*How great are His signs,  
And how mighty His wonders!  
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
And His dominion is from generation to generation.*

### **Romans 1:20**

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*

## Divine Artistic Direction

The Lord is the Utmost Choreographer. When we rely on Him for every element of our ministries, we will witness life-altering manifestations of the power of God. Often, we may have what we think are great ideas for songs, choreography, and garments. When we consult the Lord concerning everything, often our plans are drastically changed or done away with altogether.

There have been many times that I have started rehearsing a group piece, and the Lord will have me to change artistic direction. It is in these times when I have learned to totally submit to His leadership. As I present solo pieces, the Lord may give me specific instructions in the middle of dancing to minister to certain people, and I have witnessed the power of God in operation. Dance is the vehicle, not the destination.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! When we allow the Lord to minister to us, He will minister through us! Even if He directs us to re-choreograph an entire piece, we must do it! We suffer no loss or wasted time when we are guided by the Lord. We should desire to dance His choreography more than that of our own. The move of God is more potent than anything we can with our natural talent and abilities.

### **Psalm 37:23**

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way.*

### **Proverbs 16:9**

*A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.*

### **Jeremiah 10:23**

*O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*

*Day 40*

## "Move-Meant"

Nothing happens by chance. Each and every move that we execute must have meaning and purpose. Understanding the significance of movement throughout the Scriptures will greatly aid us in Divine choreography. We must not limit our subject matter to only the "dance" segments of the Bible. It is also important that we look at the Bible as a whole. This will allow the ministry of movement to take its proper shape.

For example, "stretching out the hand" in the Bible (NKJV) has several connotations. It can mean blessing (Genesis 48:14), judgment (Exodus 3:20), miracles (Exodus 14:16), punishment (1 Samuel 24:6), submission (Psalm 88:9), creation (Isaiah 48:13), compassion (Mark 1:41), healing (Acts 4:30), and more. We should take the necessary steps to connect the appropriate movements with the message of the piece.

We must allow the Lord to open the eyes of our understanding as we continue to study His Word. Our knowledge of the Bible must not focus on only worship arts ministries. If we are to minister the Gospel through movement, we must have a firm grasp of what the Word is revealing to us in its totality.

### **Exodus 7:5**

*And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.*

### **Deuteronomy 26:8**

*So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.*

### **Ezekiel 2:9**

*Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it.*

## Tit for Tatt

Distractions are assigned to interrupt the Gospel message on every hand. Unfortunately, many of the distractions in movement ministry come from the dancers themselves. Yes, it is important that garments are appropriate and relevant. Yes, it is essential that we are properly covered by our attire. Yes, what is under the garment is as important as the garment itself. Teaching regarding garments is becoming a core class at many dance conferences and workshops. We must ask ourselves: What else is being advertised during our times of ministry?

**Females:** Is there a need for extra support or additional barriers in the chest area? I have seen way more than I care to remember on female dancers, especially when it is cold. We must consider that human bodies may respond in unpredictable ways, and should therefore take the needed precautions.

**Males:** Are those pants not quite roomy enough for free movement? Is the garment hugging the chest and abdominals too closely? Are the arms (and underarms) completely exposed?

For both males and females, I have also noticed various tattoos openly displayed on the feet, neck, and hands, which are not traditionally covered by the ministry garment. We must understand the power of visual imagery.

People will definitely pay attention to these things, and we must be diligent to keep the focus on Christ. Nothing should be able to prevent us from spreading the Gospel through movement. If we have some reminders of our "old" selves visible on our bodies, we must pray to the Lord for wisdom on how to minimize those visual distractions.

**Exodus 28: 42**

*And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.*

*Day 42*

## You Look Just Like Your Father...

The Lord made each of us unique and in His image. Isn't it awesome how we are all created in His likeness, but we are all different? God is truly amazing beyond what we can comprehend. This is why it is important to move the way that He has Divinely orchestrated.

There are forms of movement that are universal, but each of us has been given a specific way to interpret them. People still walk up to me after several years of dancing and say, "You are so unique," or "I have never seen anything like that before," and so on. I admit that it made me uncomfortable years ago because I felt like I must have been doing something wrong (or that I was a "weirdo"). Now I embrace the wonderful way in which the Lord directs and orders my steps.

Walk according to the steps ordered for you, even if you have never seen it done before. There is no need to try to imitate someone else's gifting. The Lord has given each and every one of us a special place in the Body. We should not dance for the applause and approval of men. When we are found doing what He has designed us to do, we will surely soar in ministry. Dare to be different!

### **Job 23:13**

*But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does.*

### **Psalms 139:14**

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.*

### **1 Peter 2:9**

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

## "KIM"

Let nothing or no one stop us from moving forward in Him. There are many dancing today who want to give up on the ministry of dance. Step out on faith again!

Let's take a look at the following story about a man who was crippled from his mother's womb: *This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"* (Acts 14:9-11)

Notice that Paul only told him to stand up, but he broke forth into leaping and walking! There may be circumstances or people that are trying to hinder us from pressing forward. We may feel as though we are stuck in the same cycle over and over again.

Be it financial lack, critics, unbelievers, negativity, or poor self-esteem; let nothing separate us from His love! When we demonstrate the wonder-working power of God, even the heathen will have to recognize that what we are doing is supernatural. The people in the Acts 14 did not necessarily know about the true God, but they understood by observation that this miracle was not man's doing. Make no mistake about it, we are being watched! Whenever we are faced with obstacles that are designed to hinder us, just say "KIM!" Keep-It-Moving!

### **Philippians 3:12-14**

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Day 44*

## Clap Your Hands

We can get caught up in the applause of men before we even realize it. We may be tempted to smile big when we hear "You are SO anointed," "That was powerful," "You really blessed me," and so on. There is a feeling of warmth that may flood our hearts when we hear that what we are doing is revered by men.

Jesus had (and still has) a very popular ministry. Thousands of people showed up whenever the news spread that He was in the region. Fame spread of His miracles, wondrous works and parables. He was doing the will of the One Who sent Him. We should aim to do the same.

We can be thankful when we are effective, but we must always resist the temptation to allow ourselves to become enamored with our own reputations. We should not have a tantrum if we must sit in the back of the building or behind the large obstruction where it is more difficult to see. Carrying our own baggage will help us to identify with the load that someone else may have to carry for us. Having our names mispronounced or forgotten may help us to remember that it is really all about Him. Having our music malfunction during ministry may remind us that we can depend only on the Lord. We may then accept the fact that the Lord exalts the humble, but resists the proud.

### **Proverbs 15:33**

*The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility.*

### **Proverbs 29:23**

*A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.*

### **Matthew 23:5-7**

*But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, Rabbi."*

## Dreams and Visions

The Lord does not speak to everyone in the same way. When I am getting a "choreography download" I am never sure just when or where it will happen. I have received visions of choreography in church, at the movies, in my dreams, in my living room, etc. It is always a picture that I cannot get out of my mind, and is not always a dance for right now. Sometimes I will have visions of pieces that I am to do years later.

If the Lord shows us dance and movement pieces that seem far-fetched, we must not doubt Him. If He provides a vision beyond our own creative ability, we should pray that Lord helps us to make the vision a reality. He will send us whatever assistance we need to bring the vision to pass. With God, nothing is impossible!

He can do the same for garments, ministry businesses, websites, dance companies, etc. Whatever the Lord is revealing, we must write it down and pray for His Divine timing for it to come to pass. Do not fear. All things can be done through Christ!

### **Habakkuk 2:2-3**

*Then the LORD answered me and said:*

*Write the vision*

*And make it plain on tablets,*

*That he may run who reads it.*

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time;*

*But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.*

*Though it tarries, wait for it;*

*Because it will surely come,*

*It will not tarry.*

## Glow-in-the-Dark

Whenever we go forth in the ministry of movement, there should be a revelation that takes place. Jesus is the Light, and because He lives in us, we are carrying that Light wherever we go. Sometimes dance ministries are invited to dance in "dark" places where depression and hopelessness abound (prisons, homeless shelters, hospices, etc). Our very presence should break yokes and lift burdens if we are moving in the power of God.

There should be a difference when we have to attend non-Christian events and bring the Gospel message. When Moses spent time in the presence of the Lord, his face was shining from the encounter. When we spend time with the Lord, we too should have a "glow" that is recognizable to others.

Everything about our movement, songs, and choreography should reveal the True Light to all that witness us in motion. Darkness and light cannot abide together. We must light up the world with demonstrations of praise, worship, encouragement, celebration, edification, exhortation, declaration, and triumph. If we truly carry the Light of the Lord within us, it is impossible for us to remain hidden.

### **Isaiah 9:2**

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.*

### **Luke 1:78-79**

*Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;  
To give light to those who sit in darkness  
and the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!*

## Step by Step

There is a difference between spontaneous dancing and choreography. Spontaneous dancing is done in response to something, while choreography is usually a demonstration of something that has a particular message or meaning. Why is this important? I have witnessed many groups that are exciting to watch, but whose choreography has absolutely nothing to do with the song.

While this may be entertaining, the Word of the Lord provides many instances of God giving His prophets specific instructions on how to combine prophetic movement with what the Lord wanted to say to His people. Jeremiah, Hananiah, and Hosea are but a few examples of how the Lord gave physical instructions to demonstrate His Word. Jeremiah 28:10-11 says, *Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, and he said before all the people, "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.' "*At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

There is nothing wrong with Christian entertainment, but everything has its time and place. If the purpose of the service is worship, then dance pieces with movement that is unrelated to Scripture will appear to be out of place. Let's make sure to obey the instruction of the Lord regarding every move that we make. There is truly a distinction between praise dancing and the ministry of movement.

### **Exodus 14:16**

*But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.*

### **Ezekiel 4:4**

*Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity.*

*Day 48*

## Re-Hears-All

In our times of rehearsal and preparation, we must not forget to revisit why we agreed to dance for the Lord in the first place. When dealing with time-management, we should always aim to arrive early so that we can start on time. While we are at rehearsal, we should also make sure to make the best use of the time allotted. There are too many times precious moments are wasted with unrelated conversation, waiting on latecomers, praying for attitude adjustments, or just plain carelessness.

There can be a strong visitation from the Lord during our rehearsal gatherings. It is a good time to "re-hear-all" that the Lord has specifically called the ministry to accomplish. Write the vision! Post it for all to see. Read it aloud on a regular basis. Reviewing the vision and mission of the ministry will keep us from straying off the path. We should regularly study the Scriptures concerning our ministry mandate and the particular pieces that we are working on.

We must consider rehearsal time another opportunity to bring glory to God. He is our greatest and most important witness. Let's not waste any time getting out of step, burdened with the issues of life during our times of rehearsal. The moment that we set foot on a platform, stage, or pulpit is not what counts, it's what we do in our private moments that will be openly rewarded.

**Romans 10:17**

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

**Colossians 4:5**

*Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.*

**James 1:25**

*But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

*Day 49*

## It's About Time!

Running late on a regular basis for rehearsals, worship services, and ministry events hinders our ability to focus and prepare. Arriving early to a location gives us time to troubleshoot and make adjustments or last minute changes. It is a distraction to the ministry if furniture or plants must be moved right before a dance. We can also be distracted if the music volume is too low or if the aisles need to be used and the ushers or sanctuary attendants are not aware of these needs in advance.

When we "come **before** His presence," we will have sufficient time to pray, meet with the sound technician, talk to the appropriate people, and get a feel for the spiritual atmosphere. "Early will I seek Thee" is quoted several times in the Scriptures. When we are prepared in movement ministry, we minimize any opportunity for mishaps. We cannot blame the enemy for our lack of preparation. Many times, we have worked against ourselves by being unprepared.

If this means that we have to gather our garments, CDs, location directions, and list of important contacts several days in advance, then we must do what is necessary to bring full honor to God. We must be diligent to combat every distraction that can be avoided through wisdom. Dance ministry reaches beyond what we do for a few minutes on a platform. "Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary..."

### **1 Kings 6:19**

*And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there.*

### **1 Chronicles 12:32**

*...of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command...*

### **2 Chronicles 27:6**

*So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.*

## Feet Don't Fail Me Now...

The feet are very important symbolically in the Scriptures. For both God and people, the placement of the feet denotes possession of territory. The washing of feet is an act of humility and a hallmark of being a servant. Bare feet are requested when standing on holy ground in the presence of the Lord. Covered feet are akin to the Gospel of peace.

We use our feet in the movement ministries to support our bodies. Our full weight rests on our feet. Having our feet planted on a firm Foundation (Christ Jesus) will allow us to be able to stand through the ups and downs of ministry. We must remain very aware of the placement and authority of our feet. It is a mandate that we walk worthy of our calling.

Knowing this, we must protect our feet. There are many times before ministry that I have stepped on glass, stubbed my toe, or sustained other foot injuries. The enemy wanted to distract me or make me give up, but to no avail. I am more careful now to guard my feet, especially before ministry.

We cannot neglect the proper care of our feet. Regular pedicures and foot maintenance will help us to maintain beautiful feet, even if we must do it ourselves. Walking barefoot outside may not be considered wise. Investing in well-made shoes will help prevent corns and calluses. When we realize the significance of our feet, a little care goes a long way.

### **Deuteronomy 11:24**

*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.*

### **Romans 10:15**

*And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

## Mu-sick

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* - Romans 10:17

The message in the music is important. If there are any distortions in the message, our mission becomes compromised. We must make every effort to let those with ears hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying to the church.

There are times when the CD track is dirty or scratched. It seems as though it is right at the "powerful" part of the song that the CD may malfunction in an attempt to destroy the atmosphere. Yes, we can keep dancing, but it is still a derailment nevertheless. **DISTRACTION!** When using iPods and the song is linked between two tracks, the pause in the middle of the two sections is noticeable and sometimes causes a delay in the music. **DISTRACTION!** When the music is not loud enough to hear the words, it is much harder to press through the piece. **DISTRACTION!**

When using a CD, it would be good to keep a clean copy of the track that has not been used for rehearsals or personal use. If you know a good DJ or musician, you can have the two separate tracks linked together and then uploaded as one track onto your iPod (I have tried it and it works). Whenever possible, try to do a sound check at the location to ensure that the volume is sufficient. Remember: Music that is too loud is also a **DISTRACTION!**

**Matthew 11:15**

*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

**1 Corinthians 7:35**

*And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.*

## Clothes-Minded

Our garments have a great impact on how our message is understood. Even if we do not understand the significance of colors and symbols, we all have certain preferences concerning them. Colors and symbols can produce an emotional response in us, even if we have not determined the reason behind it. I have seen the difference that a simple garment color change has had on the impact of a presentation.

We must also take care to make sure that our ministry garments are cared for properly. If we must have them dry-cleaned, then we should do so as soon as possible after the last wearing. This will also help us remain ready if we are called to dance without prior notice. If garments must be washed, a gentle cycle and hang dry will help them to last longer. Whites should stay white, and colors should stay bright.

Finished edges and hems help to keep a neat appearance unless the piece calls for tattered clothing. Many manufactured garments are being sold with unfinished hems for a one-size-fits-all product. Allowing hems to remain unfinished may produce runs in the fabric or look shoddy at the very least. It is always a good practice to carry scissors and a small sewing kit in case any repairs or maintenance must be done while we are on location. Just a few small steps will make the difference in the way our ministries are perceived.

### **Exodus 28:2**

*And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.*

### **1 Samuel 16:7b**

*For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

### **Revelation 16:15**

*“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”*

## The Depths of My Soul

What is on the inside of us will be revealed. Although some may try to mask the true essence beneath a beautiful garment or advanced technique, those that truly love the Lord cannot hide it. On the other hand, it will also be obvious when there is no sincere relationship with God. For those who are pretending to love Him (and there are many), the truth will be evident.

When we present our bodies to Him through movement, we must constantly aim to move in truth. We gain this by regularly studying the Word of the Lord and practicing His commandments. It is often said that worship is a lifestyle. When we walk closely with Him over time, this will help in the creation of choreography that accurately depicts the Word visually and spiritually.

We are in a position to be greatly used by Him if we allow the Lord to guide each and every step. The best way to teach others to passionately love the Lord is to show them by example. We are living demonstrations of the power of the Word of God in operation. Let's take a few moments to do some spiritual inventory:

**What are others saying about our ministries?**

**Is this observation consistent?**

**Are there some areas that we know need to be corrected?**

**Are we known more for "superstar" demands or for a servant's heart?**

**Do we ever find ourselves "faking it" until we feel it?**

**What is our appetite for the Word of the Lord and for prayer?**

**Deuteronomy 6:5**

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

*Day 54*

## Dancing in the Reign

Kingdom dancers are being called upon to demonstrate the Word of God beyond the traditional church setting. As dancers increase in the understanding and knowledge of the Scriptures, we are being called upon to function as a key component in ministry. The Lord has a track record of using vivid and visual demonstrations through His prophets as warning and encouragement. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore.

The fullness of the worship experience includes singing, instrumentation, and dancing. While we do not all have the same talents in the Body, we can find several instances in the Bible where we can read that **all** the people bowed down to worship the Lord together. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! We are now coming into a time in which we will truly understand our roles in the Kingdom through the revelation of God's Word.

We are each important in this season. We each need to grasp the knowledge for ourselves concerning ministry and where we fit in as movement ministers. As we continue moving forward in Him, we will discover that our options for being Kingdom servants are increased, and that the dancer develops into the disciple... the minister... the ambassador...

### **1 Chronicles 29:20**

*Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.*

### **Nehemiah 8:6**

*And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*

### **Psalms 34:3**

*Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.*

## Perfect Timing

God's Divine timing is always right. There are many times that we must wait on the Lord to open doors for us to dance, teach, or move when we are ready. Although we may be passionate about something, it is better to release it at a time when we will be effective and not offensive. We must make every effort to combat pride and subdue the flesh when we are not invited to dance at a particular gathering, not featured at a "big time" conference, or are not mentioned by name publicly.

There are certain seasons that are more productive than others. We must be rooted and grounded in the Lord and agree with His plans for us in life and ministry. Remaining humble in spite of doors that are opened or closed to us will cause us to know that it is Him and not us. The fullness of the rose is not observed in the bud. Only when it blooms can we see all that the Lord has designed it to be.

We must pray continually that our gifts and talents are not openly displayed before we are in our "blooming" season. Continue to be faithful and study the Word. We must endure the training requirements for technical classes that we need. Remain supportive when others are in the forefront and do not envy. There is no greater satisfaction than ministering the Word to the right people, at the right place, at the right time.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:11**

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

### **Habakkuk 2:3**

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

## Bless the Lord, Oh My Sole...

We can give honor to the Lord with our entire beings. Each and every body part functions together for the good of the whole. We must move beyond our natural limitations and step into Divine purpose. Often, we are our own worst critics when it comes to obeying the Lord every step of the way. This not only applies to us naturally, but spiritually as well. Obedience also includes taking care of our temples to the best of our ability.

We must check our thoughts toward ourselves daily. What are we telling ourselves that we "can't" do? What is it that we will not even attempt because of fear? What issues do we have from childhood or mistreatment that we are now perpetuating upon ourselves? It's time for our feet to move from the place that has held them immobile and walk in the power of His might!

We can do ALL things through Christ which strengthen us. The Lord is looking for obedience, and also for those who will not only hear His voice, but put the Word to work. Let us prepare for a greater stretching in the Spirit and allow the Lord to move us wherever He desires. As we allow the Lord to guide our feet, even our soles will bring glory to His name.

### **Deuteronomy 11:4**

*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.*

### **1 Kings 5:3**

*You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which were fought against him on every side, until the LORD put his foes under the soles of his feet.*

### **Psalms 8:6**

*You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.*

## Men, Women, Boys and Girls

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them as compliments to each other. Although in Christ there is neither male nor female, this is a Spiritual revelation of how we are one. In Genesis, the Lord created them male and female (naturally and physically). There should be a distinction of this truth in our movement ministries.

I often see females in movement ministries dressed in overtly masculine attire, and at times see males in what could be perceived as feminine attire. The Gospel is universal, so this refers to perception more than our cultural differences. We must be careful to guard against anything that would open up a doorway for error. We should not be deceptive in our demonstration of the Word. When we worship Him in Spirit and Truth, then we must not seek to display what He has not created.

We do not want to send mixed signals when we minister. If we trust the Lord, He will instruct us concerning exactly how we are to move, what we are to wear, and what message He is trying to send. When we trust Him with all that we are, the Spirit will lead us into all truth.

### **Genesis 1:27**

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

### **Deuteronomy 22:5**

*A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God.*

### **Matthew 19:4**

*And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female'"*

### **Mark 10:6**

*But from the beginning of the creation, God "made them male and female."*

## It Wasn't the Nails...

We must be careful when coming up with "the rules" of movement ministry. The Lord's will and design for each of us is precise and exact. Is there ever a time that we should sacrifice our personal sense of style for the sake of the ministry?

**For the Ladies:** Are your fancy fingernails a distraction to the message that you are trying to deliver? Do you ever consider your hairstyle just as relevant to the ministry as the music and garments? Bright green and blue designs on our fingernails may lead to the admiration of our peers, but may very well be a hindrance to the message. Do you want to hear someone compliment your "nice nails," right after you minister and have nothing else to say? I pray not.

**For the Gentlemen:** What role does your hair play in ministry? Do you favor fanciful designs or colorful personal expressions with your hair or earlobes? Do you try to hide that tongue ring while you are dancing so that no one will notice it? Is there anything that you are doing right now that brings more attention to you and less to God?

Nail artwork, facial piercings, neck tattoos and hair art may be interesting subjects of conversation and may be very creative; however, when the message of the cross is overshadowed by "us," we are doing a disservice to the ministry. We must seek the Lord earnestly concerning how He wants our temples adorned. There will be no greater satisfaction than hearing the words "Well done!"

### **Romans 6: 11-13**

*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

### **2 Corinthians 6:3**

*We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.*

## May I Ask Who's Calling?

Understanding our function in the Body will help ease frustration along the movement ministry journey. There is a difference between being a liturgical dancer and a movement minister. The lines in between the two vary greatly, depending upon where we may be in our relationship with the Lord and the understanding of our calling.

Anyone can be a liturgical dancer. Not everyone is a sincere praiser, worshipper, or minister. We may start with the basics and the Lord will develop us as we move in Him. The understanding of our function as a dancer will help us decide which invitations to accept and which to decline. I have been propelled into the arena of ministry in dance and prophetic movement. This means that I am often frustrated during many traditional "dance concerts" and "stage productions" because my assignment is not necessarily to be watched. I am a dancer on Kingdom assignment.

We must be secure enough to know when to say no. When I am unable to accept an invitation to dance, I will offer an alternate dancer or ministry that may be a better fit for what the host is looking for. This does not mean that I think that I am better than anyone else. The Lord has not called the ministry He has given me to provide entertainment for people. We must continue to ask the Lord to lead us in the paths that He ordains, so that we may obey His direction.

### **Isaiah 1:12-14**

*When you come to appear before Me,  
Who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts?  
Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me.  
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—  
I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.  
Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates;  
They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.*

## Tor-Mentor

It seems as though mentoring is all the rage in the world today. Top dollar is being charged by entrepreneurs, professionals, and many accomplished people in the church. "Be like me," seems to be the selling point for many of these "expert" training systems. Training is orderly and often necessary for us. There are times when mentoring can cross the line.

In the movement ministries, mentoring should never seek to produce exact copies of the teacher. Once, one of my friends in ministry commented on how the ministry that I was training looked just like me. I realized that the goal was not for them to look like me, but to become who God has designed them to be.

We must pray and seek God regarding those who would come into our lives that intensely desire to mentor us. I have found that some of my best mentors have been the people who want no public recognition and understand why the Lord brought us together. I have also experienced some who called themselves a mentor in my life, but were really a tormentor.

The enemy always seeks to pervert God's design. We must guard ourselves against ravenous wolves who seek us out for their own gain and notoriety. The goal should always be to look to Christ and not man.

### **1 Corinthians 11: 1-3**

*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*

### **2 Corinthians 3:18**

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

## Acting a Fool

We should all remain teachable. We can learn something even from the smallest children, and even just by observing His creation around us. There are times when people think that they can only be taught by those who have more influence and popularity. Not so.

It's not always about the movement. Instruction and study of the Word will teach us to hear directly from God and remain sensitive to His Spirit. We can easily do the right thing at the wrong time. It is one thing to build our core and increase our strength naturally, and another to do it spiritually. It is time for a supernatural increase in the strength and power of God.

If you only go out to gatherings that have invited you as a guest...

If you only attend conferences that feature you as a dancer or speaker...

If you only go to church when the dance ministry is scheduled to present...

If you only study the Word regarding dance and nothing else...

If you only take the classes that make you feel comfortable...

If you only listen to music that celebrates your culture...

If you are never willing to pay to get additional training...

If you are always the teacher and never the student...

### Examine yourself!

#### Psalm 69:5

*O God, You know my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from You.*

#### Proverbs 1:7

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

## Moving Day

If you have ever experienced the process of moving from one place to another, you discover in the packing process things that you had forgotten that you still possess. You also realize that many things that you are still holding on to are no longer needed and must be tossed into the trash. Others may have a moving sale. There may be things that still have value and are donated or given away so that others may benefit from them.

Ministry can be that way too. Sometimes in the dance ministry realm, we are storing things inside that we need to get rid of. Past hurts, disappointments and missed opportunities must be released for us to make a move. If we have a wealth of knowledge or information, it is a blessing to share it. Are there churches in our communities that would love to have a workshop or fellowship? Some may feel the need to sell the information that they have obtained in books, conferences, and DVDs.

The point is that we all must release some things in order to keep moving forward. If we never shed our extra possessions, then we will find ourselves unable to move. There is no fear in letting go and sharing what we have. We are blessed to be a blessing.

**Matthew 5:42**

*Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.*

**Luke 6:30**

*Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back.*

**Luke 6:38**

*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*

## Hear and There

Advertising alone will not launch our ministries into the Hall of Fame. When we lift up Jesus, He draws people unto Himself. Many people today use slick marketing, ministry logos, and catch phrases in an attempt to prove validity. Only what we do for Christ will last.

If we stay faithful to the calling of the Lord on our lives, He will exalt us in due season. Excellence in ministry should be a hallmark. We also have a responsibility to demonstrate truth-in-advertising. If we have a flashy image and outstanding "packaging" but are empty on the inside (not filled with the Holy Spirit), then we will not be able to stand the trials that come with ministry and being a servant.

Billboards will not keep us in business. Television exposure and news features do not make us more powerful or anointed. National and international platforms can be our downfall if we are not prepared for the appointment. Promotions and titles in ministry will test our true character.

When we are truly following Christ and walking in His footsteps, then our names will be uttered and recognized as Kingdom Ambassadors. People will follow us as we follow Christ. We must stay faithful to the course that God has designed for us. When we operate in the Spirit of the Lord, our works will be known throughout the land.

### **Joshua 6:27**

*So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.*

### **Esther 9:4**

*For Mordecai was great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai became increasingly prominent.*

## Picture This

***God is not visible, but He is visual!*** - Rekesha Pittman

How we present ourselves counts. In the era of websites, social networking, video uploading, blogs, and digital imagery, we must be very careful. Many proclaim to be ministers of the Lord, but will have questionable photos, comments, and images for the public to see. Using these tools in a questionable manner can greatly compromise our integrity and ability to minister effectively.

If we are truly ministers of Truth, our lives must be a reflection of this. Not one of us is perfect, but we should not do anything that would compromise our testimonies as dancers for the Lord. When we say we love Jesus, but our online friends are talking about going to the club, drinking, and smoking, our influence will be questioned. Using profanity to discuss our current mood online will be seen by more people than we realize. Leading double lives will not allow us to keep up the charade between the Church and the world. We will be exposed.

We must look inside and ask the Lord if there is anything that we are exhibiting that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God. Cell phones, camcorders, digital photos and modern technology can be used to advance the Kingdom. They can also be used to show our true selves if we are not walking the straight and narrow path.

**Proverbs 15:21**

*Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, but a man of understanding walks uprightly.*

**2 Corinthians 4:2**

*But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

# Prison Ministry

People do not have to be behind bars to be imprisoned. Many are bound in their minds. Some are held captive by tradition. Others are chained by fear and unbelief. When we minister with the authority of God through the power of the Word, yokes will be destroyed to the glory of God!

Many express a desire to dance because it's fun and exciting. We must move from the place of dancing for our own enjoyment and have a sincere burden for souls. People need to experience the true presence of the Lord like never before. We must make it our business to show them the open door that is before them through Christ Jesus.

Pray and ask the Lord what songs and choreography can be used to destroy yokes because of the anointing. Be sensitive to Him when He speaks and reveals instructions, even if they may seem strange or farfetched. The foolish things are used to confound the wise. Have faith that the Lord uses imperfect people, and that we are not worthy, but because Jesus lives in us, we are free to release others from bondage. He came to set the captives free, and freedom starts with us.

## **Psalm 142:7**

*Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me.*

## **Isaiah 58:13-14**

*"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

## **Acts 16:25-26**

*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.*

## Take Me by the Hand

The hands are very important symbolically and Scripturally. The hand is a symbol of power, position, possession, burden, strength, authority, and justice. The right hand is a place of favor and honor. A handshake equals agreement. Miracles happen through the laying on of hands. We lift our hands in prayer and praise.

What we do with our hands should be taken seriously. In the movement ministry, hands are used more than anything else. Some dancers new to the movement ministries dance only from the "waist up," primarily using their hands through sign language or other motions to convey meaning. Mimes may use their entire bodies, but often wear gloves on their hands so that the message is clearly understood. Dancers use the entire body to tell a story, although hand positioning is very important.

Prophetic movement ministry often involves the laying on of hands, the pointing of the fingers, or ministry that directly impacts those that are watching. We must keep our hands clean (literally and spiritually) and understand the power of them as we minister. We cannot haphazardly lay hands on anyone without the direction of the Holy Spirit. We can learn the mechanics of movement through classes and training, but only the Lord can endow us with His wonder-working power.

**Job 17:9**

*Yet the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.*

**Psalms 18:34**

*He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.*

**Psalms 90:17**

*And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.*

## "Spotlight Spirits"

Beyond the platform, people are paying attention to how we live. Ministry starts when we wake up each morning. How we respond to our neighbors, how we handle "road rage," how people view us at work and in business all impacts the ministries that God has entrusted to us. We can work against the calling on our ministries when our "mess" overshadows the message.

It is amazing how some movement ministers become completely different people in the spotlight, but show a different side of themselves on the internet, through text messages, in e-mails, on the telephone, and in person. We must not be lukewarm, but must be distinct regarding Who we have chosen to serve. Our message must be consistent and not hypocritical.

People who only behave righteously in front of a crowd have what I call "spotlight spirits." These are those who have bad attitudes, unpleasant personalities, and bad reputations (justifiably so), but are in competition for the title of "Most Extravagant Worshipper." These people often shout the loudest, run around the most, and love to stand out in the crowd. The Lord loves a radical worshipper, but it must be rooted in truth, and not exhibition. Let's pray that our lives and our ministries agree with our conduct and our passion for movement.

### **Job 24:13**

*There are those who rebel against the light; they do not know its ways nor abide in its paths.*

### **Mark 8:33**

*But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

### **1 Thessalonians 2:4**

*But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.*

## Seam Stress

Searching for the right garment for ministry can be stressful. Some ministries purchase dance garments from costume catalogues or online, while others have garments that are made-to-order. It is wonderful to find a seamstress or tailor that can make custom garments, if the vision becomes a reality.

When the Lord gave instructions to Moses regarding garments, they were to be made according to the pattern that the Lord showed him. I cannot describe how many times I have met a wonderful seamstress or tailor who did not make the garment that I had in mind. Often the skirt was not wide enough, the sleeves were too tight for movement, or the design was not what was drawn or discussed. This has caused "seam stress" when the garment is needed for a particular time or season and does not "fit" the pattern.

Skill does not qualify a person to sew a ministry garment. Eagerness does not equal qualification. When the Lord provides a skilled craftsman that can sew according to the pattern He has shown you, do not take it for granted. If an anointed garment maker has not yet been discovered in your area, pray that the Lord will provide. The stress, money, and time spent on creations that do not "seam right," will make you appreciate those anointed for the task.

### **Exodus 28:3**

*So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.*

### **Proverbs 31:24**

*She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants.*

### **Acts 9:39**

*Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.*

## Idle Worship

If we are not careful, our ministries can become a god to us. We cannot enjoy dance more than we enjoy our relationship with God. There are some that may say "Dance is my life," but it should not be so with us. We should make it known that the Lord is the strength of our lives. If the movement ministry has become an idol to us, then we are engaging in "idle" worship. Idle worship can turn into idol worship if we continue to go through the motions while remaining at a spiritual standstill.

Anything that we exalt higher than God must come crashing down. It feels great to celebrate the victories and recount the lives that have been changed because of the ministry of movement, but we must never mistake the true source of our power, which is the Holy Spirit. We must continue to keep our gifts in perspective, and never let them compete with God, the Giver of all good and perfect gifts.

Our conversations should always point to the handiwork of the Lord. When we receive praise and accolades after a ministry outpouring, we should redirect it to the Lord. Many flattering words may tempt us to receive the glory, but we must guard against pride and selfish ambition. It is only in Him that we live, move, and have our being. It is only in Him that we should boast.

### **Psalm 34:2**

*My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad.*

### **Matthew 4:10**

*Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

### **Revelation 19:10**

*And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

## Take Me Back?

Music is powerful for many reasons. When the Lord wanted the children of Israel to remember His Word, He told Moses, *“Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.”* (Deuteronomy 31:19) Songs can be remembered for many years, even when they have not been heard recently.

We must be careful when mixing secular songs with the Gospel message. Contemporary music often samples other artists whose message does not bring glory to God. While this has been done in an attempt to reach the world, this is not our mandate. When we lift up Jesus, He will draw others to Himself.

These songs may take people to a place in time in their minds when they had a struggle with sin in a particular area. Funky baselines of yesteryear often lead a congregation into dancing that is reminiscent of the parties and clubs that they once visited. The body naturally responds to music with movement. We will often find ourselves singing familiar songs before we realize it. In the ministry of movement, let us always take care to lead others to Christ.

### **3 John 1:11**

*Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.*

### **Psalms 149:1**

*Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints.*

### **2 Corinthians 6:14**

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

## Talking Loud and Saying Nothing

"Actions speak louder than words," has been told to us time and time again. We can all say things that are nice and uplifting, but do not truly express how we feel on the inside. In the movement ministries, it is not about performance, but truth. We can pretend to be emotional and dance with intensity in front of people, but the Lord is not fooled by what we show on the outside.

Competition on the inside of us will push past our words and be revealed by our actions. Negative thoughts and offenses can only hide for so long before our smiles fade and we begin to pray for self-control to behave in a way that would bring honor to God. People are constantly searching for any hints of hypocrisy in our lives based on past disappointments and hurtful life experiences. In everything that we do, we must constantly submit to the Lord to discover if what we are doing is for us or for Him.

My mentor has ingrained the statement "You can show them better than you can tell them," into my mind for years. It is true that whatsoever we do should be to the glory of God. In movement ministry and in our daily lives, we are to be "doers of the Word." We must always remember that we are being watched more than we are being heard.

### **Ruth 1:18**

*When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.*

### **1 Kings 10:7**

*However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.*

### **Job 2:13**

*So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.*

## Red and Yellow... Black and White

We used to sing a song in church when I grew up called "Jesus Loves the Little Children." In the lyrics we said, "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight..." as we referred to the many different types of people in this world. If we are truly to minister to the masses, we must be open to a variety of songs to spread the Gospel message.

When we get stuck on our favorite song or favorite artist, we close ourselves off from hearing what the Lord may be telling us to minister to someone else. We must continually pray earnestly and ask the Lord to open our ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying to the church. Often, we will find that it is not about us, but what the Lord wants to do through us.

It's time to move from the place of comfort and into the place of faith and complete reliance on God. When we walk upright before Him, He will direct our steps. This includes not only the movement, but the Message of the Living Word that He wants to reveal to His children. Because the Lord loves creativity and diversity, we must train ourselves to love what He loves.

### **1 John 3:1a**

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*

### **Psalms 96:3**

*Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.*

### **1 Peter 2:17**

*Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

## "Trust Issues"

We must continue moving forward so that we do not grow stagnant in movement ministry. Everything has its season and time, and we must stay before the Lord to know what we ought to do. The way that it is now may not remain the same tomorrow. Things may change in a few days, weeks, months, or years. We must prepare our hearts for change and accept it as part of the growth process.

There are dance ministries that are not growing spiritually or in number because they continue to do the same thing that worked yesterday. There are ministries that have experienced growth, but will become stalled because of comfort and pride in thinking that ministry is a formula. There are ministries that are built on the personality of the dance leader, but this will not endure. Ministries based on friendships alone will be tested and tried. Some of these emotional separations are allowed by God to ensure that His will be done in our lives.

Has He told you to release that ministry or dance partner and walk towards what He has ordained for you? Has He told you to start something new over and over again, but you have been fearful about how things will work out? Did He tell you to do something that will take Supernatural intervention, but you have not made your move yet? Are you listening? Have you obeyed? We must trust in the Lord and not in our own limited feelings.

After we have experienced separation, betrayal, and loss, we will discover that God alone will never leave us nor forsake us. Just as Abram had to separate from Lot, it was so that the Lord could increase Him and bless many Nations through him. The thing that we seek to embrace the most will be the thing that we have to set free. Let us grasp God's unchanging hand firmly, and trust His plans concerning us for our own good.

### **Genesis 13:13-14**

*And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever."*

## Sit at the Master's Table

How we maintain our bodies is important, not only for our well-being, but for us to be unhindered when we minister through dance. We want to be at our greatest level of energy and health when we go forth, both naturally and spiritually. Drinking water and adopting a regular habit of eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, proteins, and lean meats will not only promote good health in us, but will also make us look better in the process.

Because many things will try to work against us when we are serious about Kingdom movement, we must pay attention to what we eat (or do not eat) right before we dance. Some people choose to fast, others choose to avoid junk foods, and others will eat whatever they choose. It all comes down to what the Lord has instructed us to do, and not what everyone else thinks. I make it a regular practice not to drink too much water right before I dance for obvious reasons.

The Lord prepares a table for us, even in the presence of our enemies. We must be careful to select that which the Lord has provided for us. In the book of Daniel, he requested not to eat the delicacies from the King's table, but to eat vegetables and water to show the sustaining power of God. We also have a choice today to partake in the Lord's goodness. When we maintain our temples, we can minister more effectively for the benefit of the Kingdom.

### **Romans 14:17**

*For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

### **1 Corinthians 10:31**

*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

## Pro-MOTION

Divine motion births promotion. Kingdom advancement is not like corporate advancement. The Lord exalts the humble and resists the proud. When we walk in our callings as believers, the Lord will open up doors for us that cannot be shut. Our gift makes room for us. When we try to press our way into a position, we will have to keep pressing to keep those doors open.

There are many today that are working the "Corporate Model" of the church. As a result, positions in ministry often birth rivalries and foster competition when a person sets his or her heart on advancing themselves instead of advancing the Kingdom. Like Joseph, the Lord may show us that we are to be great leaders, but also like Joseph, we must do it according to the Lord's timeline. The Lord placed him in the position to rule. Joseph did not bang on the King's door with a demand to operate in his gift.

We must wait on the Lord, and continue to do the work that He has set before us. If we are found doing His will, then phone calls, dance ministry invitations and opportunities will come from even the most unlikely places. We cannot concern ourselves when others seem to be advancing while it seems that we have been forgotten. An invitation of honor is always better than a denied request.

### **Proverbs 4:7-8**

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. Exalt her, and she will promote you; She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.*

### **Job 36:7**

*He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.*

### **Matthew 23:12**

*And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

## Separation Anxiety

If we are operating in Kingdom authority, we will experience a separation process in ministry. Because dancers are often creative and emotional people, we crave acceptance and approval. We want people to like us and say that our dances have ministered to them. We want to be embraced by Pastors and church leaders as a bona-fide ministry inside and outside of the church.

Our will must be to do what the Lord has sent us to do. Jesus Himself experienced ridicule and rejection in ministry, but kept His eyes on the mission that was appointed to Him. If we thrive on acceptance and approval, we will be headed for disaster. We must seek to please God and Him alone. He will then give us favor with men.

When it is time to move from a position or ministry, it is for the perfect will of God to be done. We cannot allow anxiety or panic to overtake us when it seems like our best friends are abandoning us. We must not be shaken when adversity comes against us. We must not take it personally when dancers decide to leave the group. We must recognize this and ask the Lord to protect our hearts when transition comes. If we do not lean on the Lord, we will find ourselves misunderstanding His purpose and not recognize that He is indeed ordering our steps.

### **Genesis 13: 8-9, 11**

*So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."*

*Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east... And they separated from each other.*

## Tra-Veil

To travail is to bring forth something that takes much effort or labor. This often results in strenuous physical or mental effort which can be overwhelming if we operate in the flesh. There are dances that take both physical and mental stamina to bring the Word forth. We must prepare to take people into the manifest presence of God.

There is nothing that hinders our access to Him. The veil is no more. We can move forward in confidence, knowing that Jesus paid the price for us to be in relationship with God. Our dance ministries should reflect this freedom and lead others into His presence. It is there we will experience the fullness of joy.

Dance before the Lord with no limits. Walk boldly in His Word and witness new life take place in others. Leap for joy! Let us treasure the friendship that we have with our Awesome God. If there is anything that is standing between us and Him, remove it! If there is anything in our lives that hinders us from drawing near to Him, overthrow it! If there remain any veils over our eyes, ears, and hearts, know that it was already destroyed by the power of Jesus Christ's death on the cross when we are His. Travel beyond the limitations of the former veil and press into your passion for His presence. Access granted!

### **2 Corinthians 3:16**

*Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

### **Hebrews 10:19-22**

*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

## The Task Master

When we understand our unique positioning in ministry, we will be able to flow with power and accuracy. The Lord did not mandate us all to dance the same way, wear the same garments, and minister to the same songs. The problem is that many dance groups are copies of others that have inspired them. It's wonderful to be an encouragement to someone else, but it's another thing to covet the gift and try to duplicate it. We cannot have a form of Godliness and deny the power.

We must study the Word in regards to all aspects of ministry for us to be effective. We cannot merely go to conference after conference and run with the words that we hear. We only get true confirmation when we study it for ourselves. With so many people hosting workshops and events, there is no guarantee that the information that we receive is rightly dividing the Word. Too many are teaching opinions as the rules of ministry. When we are His sheep, we are able to discern His voice.

We do not have to wait until everything is perfect for us to step out in obedience. He trains us as we go forward in service. The tasks that He appoints will breed obedience in us when we submit to His leading. We should have a standard of excellence in our movement, garments, websites, brochures, business cards, or anything else that we use to represent the Lord's appointment. In essence, we should make it our object to master obedience to God, and He will make our paths straight.

### **Numbers 4:27**

*Aaron and his sons shall assign all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, all their tasks and all their service. And you shall appoint to them all their tasks as their duty*

### **2 Timothy 2:15**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

## Keep Your Clothes On!

When God grants us favor, we should not walk in fear of its use. We cannot stumble over affirmation by others when God places us in position. As dancers, we must view each God-ordained assignment as an opportunity to advance the Kingdom. Our lives are a testament of His awesome workings through mankind.

Joseph's favor was confirmed by the receipt of a garment given to Him by his father. This outward symbol sparked jealousy in the eyes of his brothers. As a result, his robe was stripped from him by those who should have celebrated him. The favor of God on our lives cannot be hidden. Dance ministry is visual, and people will be able to see what mantle is on our lives.

In the case of Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39, she could not get from Joseph what she wanted from him, so she removed his cloak from him and used it to accuse him of something he did not do when he left it behind. We must be watchful of those who would manipulate us for their own gain. Accusations may arise against us, but false ones do not stand. If we are faithful to the Lord, we will receive our reward and be a blessing even to those that meant to harm us.

Joseph did not remove his garments for anyone. He continued to wear them until they were taken from him twice. We should never hide the favor of God on our lives to please others. The enemy of our souls may try to strip the favor of God from us, but deceptive tactics will not prevail. Our dances must please Him, and our lives must line up with His Word. When we please Him, he grants us immeasurable favor. Keep your spiritual garments on, and do not lay them aside. Make no apologies for God's favor. Step into the place He has for you.

### **Genesis 37:3, 23**

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him.*

*So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the richly ornamented robe he was wearing*

## "God Made the World in Color"

It is amazing how many dance ministries are still limited regarding garments. When we study the Word of God, we actually have more freedom and options when we apply what we have learned. I always like to say that "God made the world in color!" When are dance ministries going to get the picture?

There are several references to colorful garments in the Bible. We can research colors and their meanings and use this information to bring more truth and revelation to our ministry presentations. Black and white garments do not work for all pieces. Over-sized garments may hinder our ability to move safely while dancing. When the Lord gives us instructions to follow, they always turn out right.

We all may have colors that we prefer over others, but ministry is never about our wants, it is always about the message and delivering it effectively. We can allow arguments and strife to enter in when we want to incorporate our own personal visions into the garments. If we are sensitive to the voice of the Lord, our fleshly nature will be challenged in the area of obedience to Him. I have had to wear garments that I did not personally like initially, but discovered that they were very effective in ministering the message. When we follow His lead, we will always have a testimony verifying the reward of obedience.

### **Esther 8:15**

*So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.*

### **Isaiah 63:1**

*Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."*

### **Revelation 1:13**

*And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.*

## Falling Flatter

Humility is a thing that is challenged on a daily basis. If someone refers to us as humble, it should always come as a surprise to us. If we think that we are the hallmark of humbleness, then we are not humble. It is not difficult in movement ministry for pride to come in. If we have effective dance ministries, we will constantly be presented with compliments, praises, and comparisons to other dancers. Pride can come suddenly and must be cast down as soon as it tries to enter our thoughts.

Authority, recognition, and entitlement seem to be sought by many who seek to be validated in their gifts. Our flesh wants to feel satisfaction from people who anticipate **our** ministries, **our** anointing, **our** presence, and **our** contributions. It's time to stop fighting to get ahead of one another, and fight for the advancement of the Kingdom of God! Promotion comes from Him. Let's make sure that we know what He has given into our hands, and move in obedience concerning our own assignments.

There is no sin in giving honor when it is due. There is a problem with giving people flattering compliments in order to obtain favor from them. Many of us were taught that, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." The revision should be "If you cannot speak the truth in love, don't say anything false." Flattery breeds destruction and pride. Since the Lord searches our hearts, we must keep them yielded to Him.

**Job 32:21**

*Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; nor let me flatter any man.*

**Jude 1:16**

*These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.*

## Control Freak

There are no limits to Kingdom expansion. It was once thought that the preacher was the only person that was able to win souls for the Kingdom. Because God is omniscient and humans are not, He has gifted us with many ways to "preach" the Gospel. One of those ways has been through movement ministry. We must no longer hinder the Gospel by trying to control the way it is spread.

As arts ministries from all over the world gain influence, respect, and win souls for Christ, there seems to be a perceived threat that has gripped congregations and ministries worldwide. Instead of viewing worship arts ministries as partners, many church leaders are holding dancers, singers, and creative artists hostage by limiting their ability to reach the lost. Although I am not advocating ministry without accountability, it seems as though many that preach the Gospel put the messenger in front of the message. I have had the opportunity to share the Gospel beyond the dance platform and consider dance as another way for me to "preach."

When we train dancers to become ministries, we can serve as great partners for our churches and Pastors in the spreading of the Gospel. Dancers may participate during the sermon in creative interpretation, dance to a song that compliments the preached word, or simply create an atmosphere that makes it easier to preach. I am a living witness that dance ministry wins souls for the Kingdom. After all, the Gospel message is being heard through the lyrics as well as from pulpits and street corners the world over. Let's continue to lift the name of Jesus, and not our individual rights to be heard!

### **Isaiah 56:11**

*Yes, they are greedy dogs which never have enough. And they are shepherds who cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own territory."*

### **Galatians 1:11-12**

*But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

## A Mixed Multitude

When many dance teams step into the ministry of motion, often more zeal is displayed than knowledge. All of us have to start somewhere, and honest efforts to dance before the Lord should be welcomed and encouraged. Our total bodies are for the Master's use, and we should make every effort to move our hands and feet. As we grow and develop in our choreography and understanding of the Word, we should show growth in the way that we deliver the message.

When studying the statistics of movement ministry, we can agree that most dance ministries are comprised of women and girls. We are beginning to see more men and boys dance before the King with power and understanding. It is important that we allow mixed-gender ministries to dance together on one accord. This does not mean that we are to all execute the same movements at the same time. There are some movements that appear to be more feminine than masculine. Slight adjustments to the hands or feet can allow the men to move with the women and remain distinct.

There are many men who are waiting in the shadows for their opportunity to dance before the Lord. As we witness the restoration of David's tabernacle, we must remember that David was a radical dancing warrior king for the Lord. We must clear the way for the men to lead the great procession in dance. We can do this by ensuring that men have a place to express themselves with freedom, understanding, and effectiveness.

### **Psalm 148:12-13**

*Both young men and maidens; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven."*

### **Jeremiah 31:13**

*Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow.*

## Dancing for Dollars

We must be careful to keep pure motives in ministry. Temptation comes in many forms, and money is often a means of influence. What are we willing to compromise to make a check? What dances are "off limits" to us? We must know what we are not willing to do in movement ministry. We must make the decision as to whether we serve God or mammon. We cannot be slaves to both.

A little compromise is still disobedience. If the Holy Spirit warns us that certain garments, songs, events, and affiliations are not to be an option for us, are we willing to stand in the face of ridicule? Can we endure criticism from those who may think that we are trying to be "deep" in the things of God? Will we embrace being labeled "peculiar people" for the sake of obeying God?

Let us not let anyone control us with filthy lucre. There is nothing wrong with being blessed for serving in the Kingdom; however, when our deciding factor becomes money, then we have chosen to yield to another god. If we dance for dollars, we are no better than those that work as entertainers for hire. Let us retain the promise of the Lord to be our Provider. He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

### **Acts 8:20-21**

*But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God."*

### **1 Corinthians 9:18-19**

*What is my reward then? That when I preach the Gospel, I may present the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel. For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more.*

### **1 Timothy 6:10**

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

## Do as I Say

We keep going back to obedience because everything else falls into line from there. It is very difficult to obey God when we do not know His voice. We learn to recognize His voice by reading His Word and spending time talking to Him and listening to what He reveals. When we follow Him completely, dances, songs, and anointing work together to produce powerful results. Without Him, we can do nothing.

When our dances line up with the Word of God, we will always accomplish what He sent us to do. When our lifestyles bring glory to God, we will not be dancing deceptively before Him and His people. When our conversation promotes healing, those who are watching us will be willing to receive the movement ministry as well.

Let us not be afraid to obey the Word of the Lord. He is faithful to His Word. He is the greatest Director that we will ever have. When we move our feet into the path of righteousness, we will watch the Lord increase us as never before!

### **Deuteronomy 12:28**

*Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.*

### **Isaiah 55:11**

*So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

### **James 1:22**

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

## Walk This Way

Several years ago, the Lord demonstrated a spiritual principle to me through the depiction of a closet full of shoes. If we only have one pair of shoes to wear, then there is very little question as to what we will put on our feet for the day. If we have a closet full of shoes to choose from, the choice becomes a little more challenging if we are blessed with several pairs of shoes of the same color in different styles.

This would be the equivalent of a multi-talented, multi-gifted person. Many creative people, including movement artists, often have several creative gifts to employ. When we are passionate about each area in which the Lord has chosen to give us gifts, we may find ourselves torn between two ministries or functions with frustration.

The dilemma was resolved for me like this: We cannot wear two different types of shoes at the same time and maintain balance. If we wear a sneaker and a dress shoe on opposite feet, we will walk unevenly. This opens us up to potential pitfalls and danger if we try to walk in a way that is unstable. There were times when I directed the choir, danced, and sang all in the same service. By the end of the day, I was drained and exhausted.

We must remain balanced in our walk before the Lord. It is ok to have several gifts, but in order to be fully effective, we may need to run the race one lane at a time. Many are burned out, overwhelmed, and off target simply because we are trying to do too many things at once. Let us continue to pray to the Lord for direction so that we are where we are supposed to be, doing what we are called to do for that place, season, and time.

### **I Corinthians 12:4-11**

*There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

## He Restoreth My Sole

The Lord is a Protector and a Shield for us. We must realize that hurt comes with the territory of ministry. Even though we do not look forward to pain, we must understand that this develops character, compassion, and longevity. We must pray for our dance ministries on a regular basis so that we do not get trapped by the many pitfalls that await us when we pledge allegiance to the Kingdom of God.

Some of the pitfalls include arguments, pride, betrayal, envy, abandonment, rejection, discouragement, criticism, competition, etc. Some dancers may be sources of discord within the ministry. The key is to not take any of these attacks personally. We must recognize the spirit behind the activity and put the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) to work. We wrestle not against flesh and blood.

We must be on guard concerning the spiritual condition of each of our ministries. We must aim to remain alert and address issues as they arise quickly. During each rehearsal, we must pray (for each other, our churches, communities, etc), study the Word (and know which Scriptures support the dances we are rehearsing), and keep the assignment and vision of the ministry at the forefront. When we acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, we will stay on the path that He has ordained.

### **Psalm 51:12**

*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

### **Psalm 91:11-13**

*For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.*

### **Matthew 18:7**

*Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!*

## Right in Front of Our Eyes

We often wait until a crisis comes to put ministry guidelines in place. When we have no written plan for the ministry to follow, we can get caught in compromising positions. When there is clear direction, there is an understanding of expectations and ways to govern ourselves. This provides a balanced system in ministry that allows us to operate in agreement, as well as keeps leadership from abusing authority.

Each of our dance ministries (even soloists) should have a written set of standards that include the ministry vision, foundational Scriptures, and organizational structure. We should know how we go about scheduling ministry dates, rehearsal schedules, travel schedules, garment purchases, budgets, etc. We must always leave room for the Lord to work in our ministries and realize that our guidelines are not "laws," but provide a mechanism for us to stay in line.

It would be beneficial to review the ministry vision at least once per month and examine whether our ministry activities are in line with the vision. It is easy to get excited about being offered opportunities to dance, but we must make sure that it is our assignment to accept them. The Bible speaks of a time when King Saul invited David to dinner, but Jonathan warned David that the invitation was to be declined: *But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David* (1 Samuel 20:33).

Every invitation received does not merit a "yes." When we do what is right in the sight of the Lord, our way will prosper. Though challenges will indeed arise, when we have agreement and clear vision, we will be able to handle them with security and assurance in the Word of God.

### **Deuteronomy 12:28**

*Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.*

### **Habakkuk 2:2**

*Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.*

## Carry On!

When we realize that even the slightest things can act as hindrances in ministry, we will counter-attack these ploys by making an effort to prevent obvious distractions for the dance minister. There are several areas that can be sources of stress that include music, garments, traffic, and phone calls. With some planning and wisdom, we can make ministry less stressful.

**Music:** We should carry a clean copy of our music on both CD and iPod. When carrying an iPod or other music player, please bring your own cable, just in case. If at all possible, arrive early and talk to the person that will be running the music. Include any instructions (keep it simple) in writing on the outside of the CD cover. The more professional the presentation, the more respected we will be. CDs that skip or music without sufficient volume can be challenges to our patience and damper the impact of the ministry. Preparation is the key. Remember to thank the sound technicians each and every time!

**Garments:** If necessary, get a custom-made garment bag to protect your garments. When travelling, try to carry your absolute must-haves in your carry-on luggage. Airlines can lose or delay baggage, and if the garment is needed in a hurry, having it on hand will promote peace instead of panic.

**Traffic:** When driving to a location, leave as early as possible in an effort to get to the location as early as possible. Irritated drivers, accidents, and simply running late will cause stress that may be prevented if we plan ahead. This will also help us find a great parking spot. Remember, if you are early, you are on time; if you are on time, you are late!

**Phone Calls:** Home phones and cell phones may ring off the hook with people wanting to gossip or pull us off track. Unless it is an emergency, limiting personal phone calls and text messages right before ministry will help us to keep our minds stayed on Him. If we must leave the communication devices in the car, then we will do what we must so that the Word may go forth without limits.

### **1 Corinthians 7:35**

*And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.*

## The Honor System

The problem with the perception of many Christian leaders from both inside and outside of the church today is the intense desire and demand from many who serve in ministry and leadership to be honored and revered. When we walk with a sense of entitlement, we can forget the service aspect of ministry and begin to operate in pride. We have seen enough high-profile celebrities in ministry. When we decrease, He increases.

The love of God can be demonstrated through a smile, hug, or kind word. Many today are searching for a love that can only be experienced through an encounter with the One True Love, the Lord our God. When we are promoted to positions of higher service, we should watch our words and deeds even more closely. Dance ministers should not have "diva" reputations or be labeled difficult to deal with. We must not be overheard criticizing other dancers regarding skill level or anointing. Because we have been rejected and challenged concerning where our gifts fit in the contemporary church, we should be even more sensitive to the struggles of others.

Yes, we must give honor when it is due. Problems surface when we expect to be honored and the demand to be celebrated invites offenses to come in and cause division. We must not seek the high place, but stay on our faces before God. People may select to honor us for various motives and reasons, but when the Lord chooses to honor us, we can count it a true blessing.

### **Luke 14:7-9**

*So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place."*

### **John 8:54**

*Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God."*

## Shame Faced

When we decide to commit our lives to the service of the Lord, the enemy will always try to hinder us. The easiest way for us to stumble is usually over things that are already an internal battle for us. If the enemy can get the message into our minds and remind us of what we once were, what we once did, and where we came from, we will be afraid to succeed in ministry. As we obtain notoriety in the places that we labor, there will be those who are standing on the sidelines ready to assail us with rumors and accusation. Some of these are those we call friends.

When we prepare ourselves to dance freely before our Lord and King, we must remember that we are in great company. If there are any shameful things we may have done in the past that we are running from, we must face them and turn it around as a testimony declaring the Resurrection Power of Jesus. Noah was a drunkard. Abraham was a liar. David was an adulterer and murderer. Rahab was a prostitute. Paul once persecuted the church. These seemingly shameful blemishes on their records were used to the glory of God.

In the church realm, we see what is on the outside. Perfectly pressed clothing, groomed appearances, and great grammar do not equal salvation. Beautiful dance garments and precise choreography do not make a dancer a "minister" of dance. The Lord Himself has set us free to worship Him liberally. Let us embrace what the Lord has brought us out of, and dance with authority. We refuse to let anyone hinder us, including ourselves. We know that we are more than conquerors. Since we have been made new in Him, we can minister deliverance to others with the truth of our own personal encounters with God and His power to save.

### **Psalm 71:1**

*In You, O LORD, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame.*

### **Romans 8:1**

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

## Tech-No-Logic

If we think that people are all we have to worry about in ministry, we are wrong. In the ever-evolving age of computers, e-mail, texting, blogs, and other instant modes of communication, we have been able to use them for the glory of God. The enemy does not like this and will try to hinder us in any way that he can. I have had computers freeze several times when I was trying to deliver a Word concerning dance ministry. This has also happened to the computers of others working on ministry projects for me as well. God is definitely up to something, and the enemy knows we are on the move; however, he cannot stop the move of God!

On the other hand, information technology can be a danger for us too. When we are in rehearsals, do our cell phone ringtones frequently interrupt our progress? Are we thinking about the text message we have to send when we should be worshipping? Many sit in the pews during service moving their hands, but not in praise. Are we overly consumed with social networking, the number of friend requests we have, and how many names we have in our e-mail databases?

The amount of time that humanity spends in cyberspace is illogical. Let us keep our eyes focused on the Lord so that we remain alert to the enemy's tactics. Let us do a personal inventory to measure how much time we are spending with the Lord versus how much time we spend online and with our electronic devices. Before we are carried away without realizing what is happening, let us make sure that the Lord gets His due.

### **Luke 16:1-4, 8**

*He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'*

*So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.*

## Good Mourning

There were many times along my dance ministry journey that I wanted to give up. My despair was not because I had lost my love for the Lord, or because I did not enjoy dance ministry. Enduring years of disappointments, hurts, and heartaches seemed to be too much to bear at times. I did not realize that there would be people who would see the Lord working in my life and want to latch on to me for selfish gain. I did not realize that cherished friends would become enemies. I was not ready for the rejection and criticism from the "saints."

I have danced through depression, sorrow, hurt, pain, anger, betrayal, hindrances, and the like. I have come to realize that obeying the Lord is never about how I feel. Many people would come to me after I danced and share how the Word in the dance ministered to them in a life-changing way. I shudder to think what would have happened had I not obeyed the Lord in those dark moments. He turned my mourning into dancing again!

Mourning in the Bible indicates the absence of dancing. We see this in Lamentations 5:15, "*The joy of our heart has ceased; our dance has turned into mourning.*" Dance is associated with rejoicing and celebration. In ministry, it is never about the dance. Our service is always about Him and our praise, worship, and obedience to the only Living God. We must always be ready, even when our flesh is weak. We must keep our spirits submitted the Lord at all costs. Our obedience will transform many lives and cause others to walk out of darkness into the Light.

### **Jeremiah 31:12-13**

*Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, streaming to the goodness of the LORD— For wheat and new wine and oil, for the young of the flock and the herd; their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, and they shall sorrow no more at all. "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice rather than sorrow."*

## Two-by-Two

We limit ourselves when we stay hidden inside the four walls of our own churches and residences. In the ministry of dance, we can grow beyond our limited experiences when we fellowship with others who desire to serve the Lord. We do not reach out to other ministries for recruitment purposes, but for Kingdom unity and support. Our trust remains in the Lord, and not in others. Though we receive advice and engage in beneficial conversation, we learn through our relationships how to discern the voice of the Lord.

There are certain customs and traditions that may be unique to our communities. When we travel and extend our understanding of dance ministry, we will experience many ways to glorify the Lord through dance, praise, and worship. The purpose of this is not to replicate what we see, but to realize that there are no limits concerning God.

When we have God-ordained relationships in life and ministry, we will remain accountable concerning our own ministries and place in the Body. Healthy relationships birth creativity and community. I praise the Lord for many friends in ministry all over the world. Knowing them has helped me to stand in awe of the wonderful diversity of God. Being able to travel has inspired me as I observe the creation of God from the sky and the highways. How wondrous are His works!

### **Proverbs 12:26**

*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

### **Ecclesiastes 4:9**

*[The Value of a Friend] Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.*

### **Luke 10:1**

*After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.*

## Watch Your Mouth!

All that we do in dance ministry must be with purpose. There has been the great debate over whether or not dancers should sing along with the songs as we dance. In the Old Testament, the dance often accompanied singing and instruments. Miriam sang a song as she danced with the timbrel. We must ask ourselves whether or not what we are doing serves a purpose. In the traditional dance setting, the emphasis is on the movement. In the ministry arena, the emphasis is on the Word. How do we marry the two?

We are all not going to do things the same way. There were times that the Lord instructed His prophets to provide visual demonstrations of His decrees. We must always keep things in perspective. There is a difference between dance and visual demonstration. Dance is a visual demonstration, but a visual demonstration may not be a dance. The key is that we must not rely on the strength of the song to get the message across. The total picture (movement, music, and ministry) should bring the Word to life before the eyes of the people. The recorded and live music that we minister to should be based on the Bible and be clearly heard.

If mouthing the words while dancing causes us to be lax in creativity and limits our discernment of direction from God, then we must pray concerning what we are to do for each and every song. All of our dance renderings should not be predictable and look alike. I have experienced many presentations when I thought, "I have definitely seen that somewhere else." Let us to continue to glean, learn, and grow as we follow the Lord concerning what He wants us to do specifically.

### **Psalm 19:14**

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.*

### **Ecclesiastes 5:2**

*Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.*

## Name It and Claim It

There is no other name by which men can be saved but Jesus. When we operate in the authority of the name of Jesus, miracles will take place. Since dance ministry is a visual vehicle, we are not just limited to movement to tell the story. Banners, flags, and images projected onto a screen can make an impact as we minister before people. When we are led by the Holy Spirit, the impression will be lasting and difficult to forget.

We have many choices when it comes to song selection. If we are to win souls, we must be wise; however, we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. If we have to compromise the name of Jesus to dance on a particular program, **BEWARE!** If we can only dance to "inspirational songs" that exclude the name of Jesus, **BEWARE!** Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

When ministering in public places, there may be restrictions on outright "preaching," but dance ministry presentations with the name of Jesus in the songs are viewed as less intimidating than a sermon. I have personally witnessed the power of God manifest in public places during dance outreach efforts, resulting in souls won for the Kingdom. All of this was without a literal "sermon," but the Word still went forth. The name of Jesus is still not welcomed everywhere we go. We must decide to take a stand for the Kingdom of God on Earth. Let us exalt His name together!

### **Acts 4:12**

*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

### **Philippians 2:10**

*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth*

### **Colossians 3:17**

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

## "Priorit-ease"

If we are not careful, we can make our ministries a god in our lives. The excellence factor may mean larger platforms and prime invitations, but we cannot allow ourselves to be distracted by the "fame" of ministry. We must keep everything in order and in perspective. Balance is not only an important element in dance, it is also important for our lives.

The more popular we become the more tempting it is to accept invitations to dance when we should spend time with family or manage our personal affairs. Those back-to-back dance outings may lead to unwashed clothes and dirty dishes. Excessive telephone conversations to discuss the mighty move of God through the dance may mean fast food dinners and less time spent with our closest loved ones. Though there is no wrong in doing right, we must make sure not to forget about the importance of keeping a balance between life and ministry. Ministry begins at home.

Let us take a look at all of our activities and ask the Lord where we are struggling and need His help to fix. If this means that we may have to rehearse once per week for a longer time period instead of twice per week, this may give us some more time in another area. Too many time-wasting conversations, frequent tardiness, or lack of preparation before our gatherings will hinder our progress. True friends will understand the need for priorities and will not monopolize our time. We are constantly working towards balance and must always make the Lord the number one priority in our lives, and not the activities of ministry.

### **1 Corinthians 7:33-35 (NIV)**

*But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world— how he can please his wife— and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world— how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.*

## Homecoming King

When we waste time procrastinating, making excuses, and putting off what we know that we are supposed to do, we are behaving foolishly. The time for the Great Coronation is coming, and we must stay ready for His return. In movement ministry, rehearsals prepare us for when we have to step forward and be doers of His Word. In the bigger picture, our lives must be a rehearsal to prepare us for His arrival.

The discipline of dance takes place long before we gather for rehearsals. Proper nutrition, sufficient sleep, and regular exercise make us ready for when we come together in dance. If we wait until the last minute to gather choreography and direction for the ministry, we may find ourselves focusing more on our own faults than on the Lord. If we do not train our bodies for service, we become prime targets for injuries and may be unable to deliver an entire piece with power. We do not want to "fall out" due to shortness of breath.

Let us repent for any areas of neglect concerning our temples, and stand ready for the Lord's entrance. We are getting ready for that Great Day! Let us dance with expectation that He may enter in at any moment. If we dance as though He will return to us today, then we will never take our moments of public and private expression to Him for granted. Let us make ready for the King to come!

### **Ezekiel 38:7**

*Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.*

### **Matthew 24:44**

*Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

### **Revelation 19:7**

*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.*

## Knock, Knock

There is a difference between inspiration and imitation. We have witnessed too much of the latter in the church setting today. The controversy regarding hip-hop dance and step teams in the church is often viewed as a battle between the traditional church vs. the contemporary church. Jesus warned us about teaching the traditions of men in Colossians 2:8, *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ."* We must always ensure that all that we do lines up with the Word of God.

Greek fraternity and sorority traditions have been almost exactly duplicated in the church setting. The style of dress, hand props, hand-clapping, rhythmic movement, and stomping can be seen in many churches and youth groups. There are great elements of movement in step that can definitely bring glory to God, but if the impression left is that of a Christian "knock-off" version of Greekdom, we must seek the Lord for direction concerning our participation in it. In all of our ministry offerings we must consider the following questions:

**Did we hear from the Lord?**

**Is the message and purpose clear?**

**Are we proclaiming the Gospel?**

**Does it glorify God or bring undue attention to us?**

**Is it more appropriate for church services or outreach efforts?**

We are to be examples to non-believers, not copycats. There is nothing new under the sun; however, He made each of our ministries unique. We must not be afraid to do something new that we may have not seen before. Forget the "rules" of tradition and ask the Lord for precision in following His direction. His purposes and plans will always prevail!

**3 John 1:11**

*Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.*

## Night and Day

We should celebrate His birth and resurrection every day. It seems that certain times of the year bring out the standard "Christmas" and "Resurrection" songs. It is true that these are the times when those who have stayed away from church fellowship usually fill the sanctuaries. We must remember that there are those who sit in church Sunday after Sunday and are still lost. Let us bless the Lord at all times.

When we depend on the Lord to lead us, His Word will always bring confirmation. Trying to pick songs to match a certain theme or occasion may be great to a degree, but if the Lord wants us to say something different to His people, we must always stay in the place where we can hear Him clearly. When we try to force a song to fit a theme exactly, we run the risk of operating in the flesh. There are many songs that can reflect the concept of a theme without being literal.

There are some dance ministries that do not have as much freedom and liberty to make these choices. In the ever-growing corporate invasion of the church, many dance ministries are governed by leadership that tells them which songs to dance to. Although we all desire to be on one accord, it is stifling to minister to songs that are only being choreographed because we have been told to do so. If trustworthy dance ministers are selected to lead, then some liberty should follow concerning the choice of songs used. When we agree to follow the Lord wholeheartedly, He will make the way clear.

**Psalm 28:7**

*The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.*

**Psalm 69:30**

*I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.*

## Hour Father...

If we have been in dance ministry for any significant amount of time, there should be signs of growth both spiritually and physically. All dancers are not called to the same assignment, but those of us who have embraced the ministry of dance may experience some transitions as we walk further with the Lord. The key is to not be fearful when the Holy Spirit prompts us to do the unexpected.

When we listen to the Lord, there are times when we may have to move outside of the scheduled 4-7 minute pre-recorded song. We may dance with the praise team or live music... We may dance while the Word is being preached... He may direct us to wave a banner over someone... We may lay hands on people for deliverance... We must be careful, for we are only to operate in this realm at the Lord's direction, and with the appropriate leadership approval, when necessary.

We may not have two weeks notice to get ready to move. When we are called, we must answer. As we continue in the Word and seek the Lord, He may have us step out in an instant to show His wonder-working power. Our flesh cannot get in the way of the Lord's glory. If the Lord tells us to do the unusual this very hour, will we be ready to perform what He says?

### **Luke 12:12**

*For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.*

### **John 4:23**

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

### **John 12:27**

*Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour"? But for this purpose I came to this hour."*

## Mo-Shun

If we are operating in the name of Jesus, we will be rejected. Many dancers have experienced emotional wounds and pain because of lack of preparation for this reality. We cannot spend our time arguing with people who refuse to accept the ministry of dance as legitimate. We are responsible to know what the Word of the Lord says concerning dance, praise, and worship.

Unfortunately, some rejection inside of the church has been due to movement artists who have rendered a poor representation of dance ministry. Inappropriate garments, poor presentation, and lack of research concerning the intended audience can shutter the doors for our ministries as well as others. Because so many dance teams have stepped out before seeking God for instructions, the dancers have been hindered because of offenses to the congregation. We are to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. As long as we are not committing offenses in pride, arrogance, or dancing with the wrong motives, we are free in Him.

We must not take rejection personally. We also cannot assume that we are being shunned because we are doing the right thing. Confidence in the Lord comes when we can testify that we are waiting on His leading. If we are guilty of causing the ministry of dance to falter because of our own misguided steps, then we can start again today and walk according to the Spirit.

### **Numbers 14:11**

*Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?"*

### **Psalms 118:22**

*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.*

### **Mark 7:9**

*He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*

## Eye for an "I"

When we are selecting songs for ministry, we must always be aware of lyrical content. There are some songs that make us feel good and stir our emotions when we hear them. There are also songs that bring us to tears. Other songs may make us want to get up and dance. Many songs can evoke either good or bad memories.

If we are not careful, we can select songs that bring more attention to "us" than the Lord. Just because a song is listed in the Gospel and Christian music categories does not mean that it acknowledges Christ. If the songs use "I" a lot and do not glorify God, then we must do inventory on our own spiritual well-being. We may choose songs at times that are based on what ministers to our personal life situations. Let us always remember, as with the prophets in the Bible, the Lord will give us messages that are also directed towards other people.

If it will help, take a look at the written lyrics of a song and dissect what each word is saying, and then its overall message. We have liberty through the Spirit and can minister spiritual songs as long as they are in line with the Word. This same evaluation can apply to our choreography as well. Are all of the movements pointing to us (chest, heart, head, etc)? If the words repeat "I," "me" and "we" often and refer to man instead of the Lord, then we need to confront who the song is really about, and determine who gets the ultimate glory.

### **Luke 1:46-47**

*[The Song of Mary] And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

### **Colossians 3:16**

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

## Timing is Everything

There may be times that the Lord will show us a particular song to dance to or a vision for a future event. When we are in tune with Him, we will realize that just because we see what is coming does not mean that it is to be accomplished immediately. Larger visions require proper preparation. Some visual ministry offerings require time to obtain the proper pageantry items, garments, dancers, location, etc.

**A Personal Testimony:** The Lord showed me a vision for a Liturgical Dance Conference in early 2000. I wrote down everything that He showed me, including the class titles and conference schedule. I even created the brochure. It then sat in my computer for 3 years. During this period of "waiting on the Lord," I continued to labor in dance ministry through teaching at my church and relationship-building with other dance ministries. When the time was right, the Lord provided the location, the teachers, and the delegates. The inaugural 2003 Liturgical Dance Conference was not only an overwhelming success, it was standing room only!

In this "microwave society," we too often want instant results without waiting for the Lord's timing. On the other hand, we must not delay in obeying the Lord's directives. Waiting beyond the appointed time to complete His instructions equals disobedience. When we are in the right cadence with the Lord, the timing will always be Divine.

### **Jeremiah 8:7**

*Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.*

### **Habakkuk 2:3**

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

## Disc Jockey Dancer

Let us do what is right in the sight of the Lord. There are some things that are not outright sins, but if it is the wrong thing for us to do, then it is unrighteousness. It is important to know what our function is in the Body, as well as our individual roles in the movement ministry.

I am gifted to minister through movement, but that is not my only assignment. As a result, I am being challenged on a regular basis. I refuse to be entertainment or forced to accommodate spectators because a "praise dancer" would be a great addition to the program in question. I am frequently asked to minister to specific songs chosen by the event host, but I must decline if the Lord has not appointed me to minister to that selection. I am not a "jukebox" or "on-demand" performer. If the request is confirmed in my spirit, it may be considered, but is not automatic. Trust God for His leading.

Spectators also selfishly desired to see Jesus "perform" as evidenced in Luke 23:8, "*Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.*" We do not dance to give people chills and thrills. We must be careful not to be lured with bright lights and large platforms. We must go where the Lord leads and minister as He mandates.

When we become puppets for people, we run the risk of operating with controlling spirits. Look at the story of Herodias' daughter. It is not always that the motives of people are impure, it is that our own loyalty and obedience will be revealed by what we agree to.

### **Matthew 14:6**

*But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.*

### **Mark 6:21-22**

*Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you."*

## Beat It!

We have so many ways in which to praise the Lord! We are not limited to one style of dance. We are not relegated to one style of praise garment. We are not bound by age, gender, or physical ability. There is a place for everyone in the worship experience. Take the shackles off!

Tambourines in the traditional church setting often accompany the musical instruments. Currently, we are seeing tambourine ministries develop and flourish in the churches as liberty in worship prevails. Timbrels were often used by female dancers in the Bible in conjunction with dancing. Miriam the Prophetess and Jephthah's daughter danced with timbrels commonly known today as tambourines. The timbrels of today, often beautifully decorated and embellished, are used to bring glory to God.

We are to make a joyful noise unto the Lord! Let us gather our instruments of praise and exalt Him. Let's not be afraid to try something new as choreography is being developed. Allow the Lord to ignite a fresh passion for worship in the beauty of holiness!

### **Exodus 15:20**

*[The Song of Miriam] Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

### **Psalm 68:25**

*The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the maidens playing timbrels.*

### **Psalm 81:2**

*Raise a song and strike the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lute.*

### **Psalm 150:4**

*Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!*

## Skin Deep

If we are going to make an impact for the Kingdom in this earth, then our lives and ministries must be a reflection of this. It is more comfortable for some people to stay in fellowship with the group of people that they can most easily identify with. This can also serve as a hindrance for us.

In order for us to obey the mandate to go into the world and preach the Gospel, we have to familiarize ourselves with different cultures and people. We can do this through broadening our musical horizons, taking cultural dance classes, watching the Global news, tuning in to travel shows, reading books, etc. Beyond that, there are daily things that we can do to become more culturally aware. Our personal friendships should include people who do not share our same ethnic backgrounds. Our worship experiences must go beyond what we do in our home churches.

All we have to do is look around us to see that the Lord loves diversity. If we are going to be effective in dance and ministry beyond our own neighborhoods and churches, then we must move out of the comfort zone. There may be many ways to Praise the Lord, but ultimately, we will all bow before our Great and Mighty King!

### **Matthew 28:19**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

### **1 Chronicles 16:24**

*Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.*

### **Matthew 24:14**

*And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

## Dirty Dancing

Having more than one option for dance garments is very helpful when we have multiple engagements or dance frequently. It is a good practice to have our ministry garments cleaned as soon as possible after wearing them so that they will remain fresh. We may be called upon to minister in dance at the last minute, and if our garments remain ready for use, then we too will be ready for the task when we are called.

On the other hand, we can be an offense to the congregation when our garments are not in order. The best scenario would be to bathe as close to the time of ministry as possible. When this is not an option, it is a good practice to carry moist wipes, fresh undergarments, deodorant, and breath freshener so that our ministry offering will not be a hindrance to those we come in contact with.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, our perfume or cologne should not be too overpowering. There may be a special fragrance or oil that the Lord may lead us to wear for ministry purposes that is separate from our everyday fragrances. Every element of our presentation should highlight the truth of the Word. Let's make sure to be a sweet-smelling savor unto Him.

### **Proverbs 27:9**

*Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.*

### **Zechariah 3:4**

*Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."*

### **2 Corinthians 2:15**

*For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*

## Sign Language

Our discernment must remain sharp. Often, we are "wowed" with extravagant pageantry, skillful dancing, and impeccable garments. It is not to be automatically assumed that these indicate the anointing or presence of the Lord. We can attend multiple conferences and be Bible scholars and still miss the mark.

In the various ways to move in ministry, some employ the art of sign language with dance. Although sign language is traditionally used for those who have impaired hearing, witnessing the Word of God in motion can help add to our faith. This conversation by hand is the way that some people are able to "hear" the Word. If faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, then we are in essence getting a double-dose of the Word when movement is paired with it!

Though there are some who specialize in one particular area of movement, it will only broaden our horizons to allow God's creativity to show in every format. We do not have to limit it to hand motions. We may incorporate written signage as well that accentuates the Word. A word of caution must be offered here: Let us not rely on the power of the "signs," but only in the power of the Lord God Almighty. Flashy presentations are also used by the enemy as a lure. Let us make sure that Jesus does the drawing, and not creative manipulation.

### **Daniel 4:2**

*I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me.*

### **Mark 16:20**

*And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*

## Eyedentification

We are being carefully watched, whether we accept it or not. People are taking note of how we interact in public, how we communicate (by phone, e-mail, and in writing), and how we present ourselves in cyberspace (pictures, websites, etc). Our cell phone ringtones will also expose us, for good or for bad. All of these elements will contribute to whether someone sees our ministry as authentic or not. We are not to put on a show when people are watching. If we lead lives that are full of the love and fear of God, then men will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

It is not glory to produce images on business cards, websites, social networking sites, or other outlets that compromise our Christian testimony. If we minister in dance by day and promote nightclubs by night, this will breach our authenticity. If we have wonderful dance ministry images online and bikini photos in another online photo album, others may see this and label us a "Certified Hypocrite." When what we are doing does not glorify God, we are not obeying His Word.

Who do those that are closest to us say that we are? When we uphold the righteous standard, there will be those who will offer criticism. Overall, we will be able to keep a good name in ministry and move with liberty if we obey the Lord God concerning how He wants us to represent Him. Let us choose to walk in the Light.

**Matthew 5:16**

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

**Luke 16:15**

*And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

**Colossians 3:23**

*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men*

## Paper Work

We can get so caught up in "doing" dance ministry that we have not taken the time to make sure that we have stayed the course. Having ministry guidelines will ensure that balance and order remain. If we are more excited about taking work orders (ministry engagements) than how to deliver the work with purpose and excellence (ministry assignments), then we are laboring in vain.

After receiving a mandate from the Lord, what we have heard must be written as a reminder of God's promises and instructions. This is not the dance ministry "how-to" book, this is the **"who/what/why"** directive for long-lasting, powerful, God-directed ministry. The **"who"** focus (the Lord, you, or your ministry) should always keep Christ at the center of its foundation as the reason we live, move and have our being. The **"what"** are the reasons why the ministry exists and outlines what it is specifically called to do. The **"why"** may include the motive (heart) behind the ministry, and what the goal is to accomplish. We see a wonderful example of this in Isaiah 61:1-3...

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, (WHO)*  
*Because the LORD has anointed Me (WHO)*  
*To preach good tidings to the poor; (WHAT)*  
*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, (WHAT)*  
*To proclaim liberty to the captives, (WHAT)*  
*And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; (WHAT)*  
*To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, (WHAT)*  
*And the day of vengeance of our God; (WHAT)*  
*To comfort all who mourn, (WHY)*  
*To console those who mourn in Zion, (WHY)*  
*To give them beauty for ashes, (WHY)*  
*The oil of joy for mourning, (WHY)*  
*The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; (WHY)*  
*That they may be called trees of righteousness, (WHY)*  
*The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. (WHY)*

If our direction is clear, it will be difficult to stray from His path if we keep His divine "roadmap" in front of us. This can be reviewed often in rehearsals, written on ministry calendars, published online, or even written on simple pieces of paper. Whatever methods we choose to keep our spiritual focus intact, let us always remember to place the Lord above all else.

## Goodness and Mercy

We are doing the Body a great disservice when we become dance ministry "elitists." There are many who aspire to worship God in truth through movement. When we condemn instead of instruct, we can exhibit prideful behavior that causes us to become disjointed. Many dancers have had technical training, and some have toured with professional dance companies. When we hold the entire movement genre to our own lofty standards, we can fail to have compassion for those that may need some guidance along the way.

Granted, there will always be those who have no desire to excel or present the Gospel with accuracy. We do not focus on the rebels. There are many local ministries who are hungry for instruction concerning the function of movement both inside and outside the church. Those who provide instruction for others must be very careful not to teach humanistic opinions or personal preferences as the Gospel. The Word endures when we do not. Sharing wisdom is wonderful, but the Lord gives individual instructions concerning His people. What works for us may not be the Lord's counsel for another.

Leaders and pioneers should be celebrated for championing the cause of Christ. Idolizing these leaders will only cause them to fall in our eyes. The important thing to remember is that we are co-laborers together. When we are obedient and humble, promotion will follow. The world also promotes people to stardom, only to revel in the latter destruction of its celebrities. The leader is never beyond learning. Let none of us dare to think that we are the ultimate source for knowledge concerning movement ministry. Our most accurate and anointed teacher is Christ.

### **Hebrews 5:12**

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*

### **James 3:1**

*My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

## Needy

Woe to the dancer who does not have a burden for ministry! There are many whose lives are hanging in the balance, and some of our fellow laborers are still dancing for dancing's sake. There are enough concerts, programs, and dance-a-thons! We are in a very pivotal moment in time and must rely on the Lord to direct the songs, movements, garments, and select the ministry platforms.

Dance ministry for many looks exactly like the entertainment business. Some movement artists employ managers who seek to get them "booked" on as many programs as possible. There are others who will solely dance for a check in the bank. Others have the mindset that if others do not "perform" up to certain standards, they are to be dropped from the lineup.

God is calling His ministers forth! Now is the time for Kingdom manifestation! We need the Lord now more than ever before. As we prepare movement pieces, we must also remember that there are many who do not know the Lord in His desire to meet every need as Provider. These needs stretch far beyond material things. In the time that we are living in there is a need for peace, healing, health, sanity, and wholeness. The Lord knows exactly what we need to accomplish His ministry. When we minister to the needs of His people, we are truly showing His character as living epistles.

### **Proverbs 31:20**

*She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.*

### **Titus 3:14**

*And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.*

### **1 John 3:17**

*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

## Patty Cake

Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions-on a sesame seed bun- may not be helpful to us as we prepare for ministry. Eating lots of sweets can broaden our waistlines as well as attack our dental health. What we eat or how we fast on the day of ministry can have an impact on our energy level and stamina for that particular day. More importantly, our dietary habits on a daily basis matter much more. Heaviness may not stop us from dancing, but it can definitely hinder us. Being thin does not mean that our nutrition is well-balanced. We want to be able to endure as we dance with power and might.

Beyond the visuals of choreography, pageantry, and garments, our facial expressions are also a significant aspect of dance ministry. There are certain foods that will assist with maintaining a great complexion, healthy hair, nails, and skin. When we are radiant and healthy, ministering songs about healing, joy, and happiness may be even more meaningful.

If we seek the Lord concerning what we put into our bodies, we will know when not to eat or drink a particular thing. The Lord has filled the earth with many wonderful choices, and this does not mean that we cannot enjoy the less-healthy items from time to time. Overall, we should make a regular practice of eating what will aid us in being in the best condition we can for the Master's use. Let us continue to be fruitful.

### **Genesis 2:16**

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat*

### **1 Samuel 30:12**

*And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights.*

## Childish Behavior

When we train up the little dancers to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, then that is exactly what will happen. When we think that the "young people" must have hip-hop beats and dance in jeans and t-shirts, then what do we expect them to do as they mature? Youth dance ministry leaders must seek the Lord so as not to lead the little ones astray.

It disturbs me when I hear parents of young dancers screaming "Dance, baby!" from the congregation. Dancing for applause and verbal encouragement trains our children to be men-pleasers. This does not mean that we are not to encourage them. Youth ministry presentations should not be talent shows. Children can learn to have a sincere reverence for God and a genuine relationship with Him.

Too often we underestimate the value of these important worshippers. Many leaders in churches today aim to please the children and "wow" the crowd instead of training children to enter into the presence of the Lord. Samuel's mother presented Him to the Lord at a young age so that he could be trained to serve as a prophet. Not every child is called into "the ministry," but the Word reminds us to let everything that has breath praise the Lord. It is imperative that we take responsibility for the up-and-coming generation of praisers.

The movement ministries do not belong under the "Youth Department." Dance and movement is a function for all ages and includes both males and females. When we move the dance department into the "church activity" category in our places of worship, we fail to fulfill the purpose of the church. Serving the Lord is enjoyable and fulfilling. There is nothing greater than experiencing the fullness of the Presence of the Lord as a child or an adult.

### **2 Chronicles 20:13**

*Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.*

### **Psalm 71:5**

*For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth.*

## DestiNation

The vastness of God is immeasurable. When we view things from a heavenly perspective, we realize that we cannot rely on our limited vision to determine His purposes for our lives and ministries. Although we may not necessarily be called to travel to all the nations in the earth, it is important to prepare to minister before people unlike ourselves. Casting fear aside, we walk by faith into God's territories.

The Gospel must be preached throughout the world. How do we proclaim a Gospel to people who do not understand our language? The beauty of movement and dance is that the Gospel message can be conveyed without understanding the literal meaning of the words. Choreography, garments, pageantry, and live demonstration of the Scriptures will be evident to all who watch as the Spirit speaks His Truth. I have personally witnessed movement ministry set to songs in other languages, but understood the meaning based on the successful interpretation of the Word.

Let us prepare ourselves for enlarged borders! Even if we are not specifically called to travel to another nation, the Lord may lead us to send resources to a ministry group laboring in a particular territory. If we claim to support the cause of Christ, then we must show ourselves faithful, even when another is appointed to do the work. The Lord determines our paths and has given us footsteps to follow. Allowing Him to lead will propel us into Divine destination.

### **Isaiah 55:5**

*Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.*

### **Jeremiah 1:5**

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."*

## Getting Defensive

We can contend for the faith without defending ourselves. Too often we may think that what is going on is about us and not about Him. If we are moving forward in Jesus, then attacks must come. There will always be critics, detractors, and competitors. If we are on assignment and sent by God, we can relax knowing that the Lord is the Captain of Hosts.

If we become overwhelmed by people and circumstances, we can be derailed from the course if we spend time focusing on our enemies (we wrestle not against flesh and blood). When it seems that an attack is upon us, we must proclaim the victory that He has already won. We must stop and remember Who this is all about. If we remain on our watch posts, we will be prepared and ready.

Some of these contentions will come from those who we thought would be the most supportive. When the enemy cannot penetrate from the outside, he will try to launch an assault from the inside. His schemes are not new. When we set our hope towards our Great and Mighty God, we can step aside and watch Him do what we cannot in our own strength.

If God gave you a dance and "they" criticize it: **Stand still.**

If "they" think that your garments are too extravagant: **Stand still.**

If "they" will not allow you to dance because they call it "ungodly": **Stand still.**

If you do not have years of dance experience and "they" say that you are unqualified: **Get up and dance!**

### **2 Chronicles 20:17**

*You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, Who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD is with you."*

### **Isaiah 30:32**

*And in every place where the staff of punishment passes, which the LORD lays on him, it will be with tambourines and harps; and in battles of brandishing He will fight with it.*

## What a Waist!

A lot of emphasis is placed on the center (or core) of the dancer's body in technical training sessions. Stability, strength and stamina are all emphasized as central to the dancer's efficiency. Beyond the physical center of our bodies, we must also strengthen our spiritual center.

It is no coincidence that we are to gird our waists with Truth. In whatever capacity the Lord has designed us to move, we must keep the Truth of His Word at the center. When Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall, the workers stood guard with their swords at their sides. The Word of the Lord is likened to a Sword! We must stay sharp (read it) and be prepared to use it (do what it says) to accomplish and endure.

The waist is also a dividing line between the upper and lower regions of our bodies. Spiritually, what we have on or take off of our waists is the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness. Let us make sure that beyond the dance, we are living a life that keeps Christ at the center. Let us remain in the place where we pay attention to our "waistlines," so that we are always able to keep the Truth on our sides.

### **Isaiah 11:5**

*Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.*

### **Jeremiah 13:2**

*So I got a sash according to the word of the LORD, and put it around my waist.*

### **Ephesians 6:13-15**

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

## About Face

Our facial expressions should be as purposeful as our music, movement, and garments. When a parent looks into the face of a newborn child, the first thing that he or she looks for is a family resemblance. When we have the DNA of someone, it shows in most cases. When we minister through dance and movement, the truth of the message should also show on our faces. In the church sector, the debate continues regarding the wearing (or not) of make-up for dancers and face paint protocol for mime ministers. Everything that God does is with purpose. When we are led by the Spirit, we will always do what is appropriate.

There are pros and cons to wearing make-up and face paint. For females, wearing heavy make-up or foundation, lipstick, and eye make-up can look great for video recordings and photographs. The results of intense movement combined with makeup may result in strange, but colorful artwork on the front of our garments. Many mime ministers wear face paint and dark garments. Face paint can enhance the portrayal of emotions during a mime piece. If it is not applied properly, the observer may start to pay attention to the paint as it travels away from the face and onto the collar, chest, and arms of the mime.

There may be times when the Lord is calling for us to let our natural faces convey the "unveiled" ministry and His transforming power. Just because "everyone else is doing it" does not mean that the Lord has called us to follow the existing model. We must always adhere to the basics of seeking the Lord's face for direction. When we do, His glory will shine in ours and be a confirmation that we have spent time with Him.

**Job 9:27**

*If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face and wear a smile'*

**Isaiah 50:7**

*For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.*

**Joel 2:6**

*Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color.*

## Hands and Knees

We have freedom and liberty when we pray. As movement ministers, we can honor the Lord in our prayer lives in ways that we had never imagined. The Word gives us liberty to pray as He directs. Some of us have made a devout practice of the traditional way that we learned to pray. Kneeling is considered customary by some people as a mandatory prayer posture. When praying in groups, many people form a circle and hold hands as a way to "touch and agree."

The Lord does not want us to follow the traditions of men. If we only do what we have always done, we can enact rituals that are no longer spiritual. God wants us to be led by His Spirit. When we seek prayer references in the Bible, we find that prayer was described in several different ways, many of which incorporated movement. Let us shake off the things that "bind" us and loose a fresh wave of prayer that avails much!

Instead of standing in a circle before and after rehearsals with our hands locked together, we can incorporate prayer movement as outlined in the Word of the Lord. We are not limited to music and preaching to convey the things of the Spirit. The dancer can also be used for intercessory prayer in motion. Let us not be fearful when the Holy Spirit prompts us to render our petitions in unconventional ways. When we are able to discern His leading, then we can move according to His direction.

### **Psalm 141:2**

*Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

### **Acts 20:36**

*And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.*

### **1 Timothy 2:8**

*I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*

## Stretch Out Your Hand!

Movement has significant meanings in the Bible. The simple act of stretching out our hands can mean many things, depending on how it is used. When we are aware of the power in demonstration, we will seek the Lord to ensure that every move accurately reflects the Word of God.

Not only do technical classes increase the vocabulary of the dancer, reading the Word will give spiritual vocabulary to us as well. Technical movement without Divine revelation will only result in public exercise to Gospel music. The beauty of movement ministry is that the Word takes form right before our eyes. For many, the viewing of a God-breathed dance is life-changing and liberating.

We must be as diligent in grasping an understanding of movement in the Bible as much as we are about rehearsing and expressing it. Without Him, we can do nothing. Living, moving, and having our being in Him takes on greater meaning when we understand what it means to live, how He wants us to move, and who He wants us to be. The following Scriptures are just a few examples of the stretching of the hands:

**Petition- Psalm 77:2**

*In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; my hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted.*

**Judgment- Psalm 138:7**

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me.*

**Deliverance- Psalm 144:7**

*Stretch out Your hand from above; rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of foreigners*

**Miracles- Matthew 12:13**

*Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.*

**Compassion- Mark 1:41**

*Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."*

## Well Done!

What is missing in far too many movement ministries is excellence. It seems as though dance ministries, conferences, and programs are multiplying faster than ever. Those that take the time to seek the Lord concerning His Excellency will indeed stand before great men. The goal is not to become famous, but to serve the Lord to the best of our abilities. When we honor the Lord from our hearts, treasures will manifest from the inside out.

When we know God on an intimate level, we cannot help but to offer Him our very best. It does not take a lot of money to impress God. When our utmost desire is to worship Him in the beauty of holiness, we will find favor with men when we look for garments, buy supplies, or need space to rehearse or fellowship with others. By the same measure we give, we will receive: Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over!

Upholding the "standard" of excellence is like lifting up a banner or standard (sign of victory) that does not come down (a sign of defeat). Maintaining the standard of excellence reminds us of the everlasting victory that the Lord has already obtained. In all that we do, whether arriving on time, keeping our garments clean, being faithful to rehearsals, studying the Word, eating properly, loving each other, and so on, must be done in a way that would illuminate the excellent name of our Lord God.

### **Proverbs 31:29**

*Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.*

### **Daniel 6:3**

*Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm.*

### **Hebrews 11:4**

*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

## Mind Your Business!

There is more to dance ministry than meets the eye. We must learn to be good stewards over the ministries that the Lord has given us. If the church dance ministry is under a local church, then most of the finances and budgeting of that ministry will be handled through the church. Many dance ministries today still have very limited budgets in the local church and rely on the finances of the participants for ministry purchases. As ministries increase in excellence, skill, and faithfulness, many churches will recognize the need to sow into the ministry of dance. With permission, church dance ministries can also offer to add money to the budget with participation from the dancers and congregation. This must be handled with prayer.

Ministries that operate on a community or individual level have various options when it comes to Kingdom business. Whether one selects to incorporate, obtain a 501c3, become a Sole Proprietor, or file as an LLC, we must be aware of the regulations to conduct business transactions for our ministries. Banks require official documents to open business accounts. The local Post Office may ask for a business license to establish a PO Box.

Stewardship can work to our advantage as we can obtain tax write-offs for purchasing garments, obtaining music, booking ministry-related travel, etc. We must make sure that we are accountable and that what we itemize is legal. It is advisable to keep accurate records and save all receipts. Most importantly, we need to pray and ask the Lord to guide all of our business decisions. We must not turn His temple into a marketplace! We must conduct business at a proper location. People with experience may be able to give advice, but the Lord's counsel will stand in the end. Let us keep all of this in perspective: Ministry is about serving the needs of others, not ourselves. If our intentions are not pure, we will ultimately fail.

### **Psalm 107:23-24**

*Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.*

### **Luke 19:13**

*So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'*

## Unleash the Whirlwind

When we have a firm grasp on Biblical content, the Lord will be able to speak to us in a way beyond human comprehension. Although we may not all be "Scripture Scholars," the more we study the Word, the more we will be familiar with the voice of the Lord. As we read, we will discover that the Word is full of visual imagery. As we continue functioning as "doers of the Word," we can use some creative tools to demonstrate the Scriptures through movement.

Let's take a look at the whirlwind, for instance. In the Bible, a whirlwind can signify the presence of the Lord, the fury of the Lord, and also serve as heavenly transportation. David the dancer was seen whirling and leaping before the Lord, accompanying what was symbolic of the Presence of the Lord. How can we demonstrate this concept through movement? Through the use of fabrics and creativity, combined with Divine instruction, we can construct flags or overlays to wear that would symbolize a type of whirlwind. Depending upon the color used, we could show deep meaning concerning the move of God in Scripture. As dancers, we can whirl with our own bodies to celebrate the great procession of our Lord. With fabrics or flags, we can show the spectacular ascension heavenward using white or iridescent colors.

A whirlwind used in dance can also represent the voice of the Lord. When we present warfare pieces, rich reds and awesome metallics can be used to signify the destruction of the enemy as the Lord tramples His foes under His feet! We are not limited to the lists of colors that we may have seen in books or on the internet. We must let the Lord lead. When we do, it will always line up with His Word. Oh that we would hide the Word of the Lord in our hearts! As movement ministers continue to get an understanding of what we do, His creative and awesome power will manifest on earth through us.

### **Psalm 77:18**

*The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.*

### **Nahum 1:3**

*The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.*

## Shaken and Stirred

Some people experience what is called “stage fright.” An overwhelming sense of nervousness overtakes them and affects the mind and body at the prospect of standing before other people. God has not given us the spirit of fear. There may be many instances in which the dance minister feels a sense of "nervousness" before ministry that has nothing to do with the fear of others. Often, this sensation is the result of the dancer not knowing for sure what will happen once the music starts and ministry partners with motion.

We should never get to the place of over-confidence in our talents. Trusting in the Lord is required for His will to be done through us. Psalm 111:10 tells us that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." We tremble in His presence when we realize how great and awesome He is.

The enemy also trembles at the name of Jesus. When we go forth in the name of our Lord, we have no need to fear the tactics of the enemy. Maintaining a righteous lifestyle and relationship with the Lord is essential, or we may find ourselves shaken for the wrong reasons (and standing behind enemy lines).

Incorporating movements that appear to shake and tremble while dancing can have a powerful effect if done with the right intentions. Dancers who may have little training but lots of passion may too often rely on dramatic movements to tell the story. We must know when to tremble and when to stand still. Most importantly, we can rest assured that the movement that the Lord gives us can be referenced in His Word.

### **Daniel 10:10-11**

*Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.*

### **Psalm 96:9**

*Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.*

## Having a Fit

If we are not careful to plan ahead, we can invite distraction during ministry. Crying babies, ringing cell phones and sound system glitches have happened to most movement ministers who have labored for a significant amount of time. The Spirit of the Lord can move beyond the distractions and cause them to work together for good. We must not be anxious regarding anything that would attempt to hinder us.

If our garments are ill-fitting, they can serve as a distraction and a danger. Significant weight loss can result in pants and skirts that are too long, shoulder-slippage (and possible undergarment exposure), falling pants (dare we say it?), and potential danger of falling over excess material. On the opposite end of the spectrum, extremely tight garments can rip (causing embarrassment), or hinder our range of motion. Just as we rehearse dance movements on a regular basis, we must inspect how the garment "fits" into the big picture.

An experienced tailor or seamstress can make alterations when adjustments are needed. There may even come a time for new garments to be purchased when safety or excessive wear indicates the need for a change. Let us always be watchful and never take for granted the little things that can trip us up.

### **Exodus 28:42**

*And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs.*

### **Revelation 3:18**

*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

### **Revelation 16:15**

*Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*

## Best Friends Forever

We often hear people say, "It's not about religion, it's about relationship." For the dancer to operate under the anointing and deliver movement in a way that ministers, we must spend quality time with the Lord. We dance before our Father and King, but we must also remember that the Lord loves us as His friends. We have many ways to show relationship through movement.

As we build friendships and relationships in ministry, our best example of how to be a friend is found with the Lord Himself. There may be times in choreography that we can show love to people by taking them by the hand, giving them a hug, touching someone's shoulder, or simply smiling at them. The Lord loves us enough to "touch" us and show His love toward us. We must be led by the Spirit when we do this so that our expressions of friendship are not misunderstood.

Even though we desire to worship the Lord and honor Him as Father and King, there is another dimension that we can show people. As we continue to draw near to God, He will give us a variety of ways to express these relationships in action. Although the Lord gives us friends in the earth realm, we will find that there is no better Friend that we can have.

### **Exodus 33:11**

*So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.*

### **John 15:15**

*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

### **James 2:23**

*And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

## You CAN Take it with You!

We cannot offer what we do not have. We often focus on moving our bodies in dance, but we must also move our lips. If we are to bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord, then we must already have it with us when we get there. Some who call themselves "praise dancers" often only give praise to the Lord when an audience is watching. It is almost if these impostors are acting on a stage, playing a role that has been inspired by the life of someone else.

Praise and worship starts with the individual. It is not enough just to go through the motions without declaring our thanks to the Lord. It should not be difficult to get movement ministers to participate in praise and worship settings, but at times it seems as though some dancers and groups are only waiting to hear their names called to leap into character.

The lines are being drawn and the true church is being revealed. It does not matter what we prefer or what makes us comfortable, we must praise. Praise is able to be given by every breathing thing. It is only in truth that we are able to worship. We must eradicate everything that would get in the way of giving the Lord our very best sacrifice. When we wake up in the morning, when we go to bed, or when we think of His goodness, we can offer a praise that will be pleasing to the Lord. It's time to move our mouths in praise!

### **Psalm 27:6**

*And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.*

### **Jeremiah 33:11**

*The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for His mercy endures forever"— and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.*

## Show and Tell

Many of us have heard it said that "actions speak louder than words." When we try to measure the sincerity of our relationships, we often do so by remembering what has been done more than what has been said. The beauty of movement ministry is that we have the opportunity to show on the outside what we feel on the inside. The stark reality is that what is going on in our hearts will ultimately escape through our mouths.

The words that we express through movement (songs, Scripture reading, prayer, etc.) must agree with the words that we live by. When Jesus expressed His love for us, He made an open show of it on Calvary. No matter how much we dance, we will all be challenged with what we allow to come from our lips. Operating in the movement ministry takes both words and deeds to be effective.

We will be tempted to react verbally to challenges that may arise during rehearsals, worship services, and in our daily lives. It is easy to slip into "diva mode" as creative people. Because we are celebrated often, we tend to get defensive when we are challenged. If we are to remain humble before the Lord, we must refuse to "tell it like it is" when we need to sit still (or move on) and hold our peace. We must learn the difference between "show" and "tell" to retain wisdom as Kingdom laborers.

### **Deuteronomy 32:7**

*Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you*

### **Psalms 50:23**

*Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.*

### **Jeremiah 33:3**

*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.*

## Outer Space

Movement ministries have many variables when it comes to using the spaces offered to us. There are times when a large stage seems almost impossible to fill, and there are times when the space is so limited that there is hardly any room to turn around. The beauty of the Holy Spirit is that even in limited spaces, we can still get the concept across. At other times, the area that we have to dance in is just not sufficient for the message to be delivered to its fullest potential.

There are precautions that we can take before we arrive for a ministry assignment. If it is possible to view the location beforehand, this will give us an estimate of how much room is available. If it is not possible to see the location in advance, we can ask questions to get a good idea of how many people the space will accommodate. It is also good to find out if the ministry will be dancing on an elevated platform, a ballroom floor, carpet, etc. We should also determine if there are any restrictions regarding the use of space, especially in the church setting.

When we are afforded optimal space, we should use it to the best of our abilities. Too many dancers are confined to choreography that works in small spaces because there may not be sizeable spaces available to them on a regular basis. In turn, this results in choreography that may appear cramped and limited in movement. As dance and movement ministries continue to step into enlarged territories, we will be able to extend the range in which we are able to operate.

### **Joshua 1:3**

*Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.*

### **1 Chronicles 4:10**

*And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.*

## Slip and Slide

Things happen. Sometimes people are so quick to jump to conclusions when "unplanned interruptions" occur in ministry. A ministry mishap does not automatically mean that the Lord is not pleased with a dancer or that the enemy is on the attack. There are definitely times when the enemy will try to distract us or stop us from moving forward. There are also times when equipment is faulty, the floor is slippery, and human agility malfunctions.

We pray that all goes well each and every time that we dance before the people. When missteps occur, dancers may try to blame themselves for the error. If he or she knows that a warning was given to them in advance by the Holy Spirit, then the lesson is to remain obedient. If someone else is to blame, frustration may set in against the individual who may be assumed to be the culprit. We must always pray for everyone involved in making the movement ministry possible. It is important to stay humble before the Lord, and commit every step to Him.

There can be times in choreography when we may show someone falling or slipping. This is appropriate when coupled with the message during the presentation. We must not take for granted the safety of properly executing these types of movements. We must not let the fear of falling hinder us from demonstrating more advanced choreography. No matter what happens, when we earnestly desire to please the Lord in our lives, He will watch over us for our good.

### **2 Samuel 22:37**

*You enlarged my path under me; so my feet did not slip.*

### **Psalms 17:5**

*Uphold my steps in Your paths, that my footsteps may not slip.*

### **Psalms 37:30-31**

*The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

## A Lover and a Fighter

In the United States, the image of "Justice" is often depicted as being blindfolded while holding a balance in her hands. Man's concept of righteousness is not always God's concept of righteousness. God's eyes are open and He watches over us concerning all that we do. There is nothing hidden from Him. Our expressions through movement may appear righteous to people, but if they are not upright before the Lord, they are performed in vain.

We must always remember that if we love Him and keep His commandments, He is just to deliver us from the traps of the enemy. We can be confident, knowing that the foundation on which we stand will never be dismantled or fail us. Although we must couple works with faith, we can rest assured knowing that everything is in the Lord's hands.

In the dance ministry, it is also important to present a balanced perspective of the Lord. He is a lover and a fighter concerning what belongs to Him. If all of our song selections are about love, people may forget that He is also a Mighty Warrior, Strong Tower, and Avenger. If all of our songs are about warfare and struggles, then people may not remember that He is a Victorious Delivering Waymaker. If we function as representatives of the Kingdom on earth, let us make sure to present the message in a way that conveys the magnitude of the God we serve.

### **Exodus 14:14**

*The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.*

### **Deuteronomy 3:22**

*You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.*

### **Psalms 37:28**

*For the LORD loves justice, and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.*

## It Must Be the Shoes!

This will not be a discussion on the opinion of wearing shoes vs. dancing barefoot. Movement ministers need to understand the importance of our body parts from a spiritual perspective. We may know by now that our feet are vital in movement, and the use of them can indicate victory, battle, increased territory, and stability. When we realize that our soles are protected, we will not be afraid to tread into the unknown.

Shoes in the Bible are often discussed in terms of putting them on or taking them off (i.e. Moses at the burning bush). Bare feet denote that the ground is Holy. Covered feet indicate protection, peace, and readiness. There are times in dance when we are sharing a message about holiness that necessitates bare feet. When we are warring and taking territory through the dance, the wearing of shoes can demonstrate strength and conquering.

Whether for war or peace, our feet are an integral part of the message through movement. Let us not take for granted what our feet mean in the context of Scripture. When we stand on the Word of God, we will not be moved by tradition and opinions. Confidence in Him will compel us to move by His Word.

### **Deuteronomy 33:24-25**

*And of Asher he said: "Asher is most blessed of sons; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. Your sandals shall be iron and bronze; as your days, so shall your strength be.*

### **Song of Solomon 7:1**

*[THE Beloved] How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! The curves of your thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a skillful workman.*

### **Ephesians 6:14-15**

*Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*

## Prophe-Sigh

There may be seasons in movement ministry when the territory we are sent to is dry. The dances we present may be powerful and anointed, but receive very little response from the people watching. Dance ministry participation during a concert or special event may be the equivalent of a halftime show in the opinion of some. There may be a need for a refreshing to overtake a gathering, but the viewership may seem to be dull of hearing and have impaired vision.

These are the times that we sigh. It is not that applause and praise are desired for ourselves; we should earnestly desire that the Lord be worshipped with the magnitude due Him. It can be heartbreaking to bring water to a people dying of thirst, not understanding that deliverance is at their lips.

There is heartache in knowing that not all will receive us, because they have rejected the Lord. In these dreary times, it is important not to lose heart. If the people do not receive the movement ministry, then we must release that concern to the Lord, knowing that we may be planting a seed that another will water in time to come. We must continue to pray for congregations and people who do not embrace the diversity of worship, praise, and honor for the glory of God. Diligence will cause our hearts not to be hardened but will strengthen us by His Word.

### **Psalm 12:5**

*“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise,” says the LORD; “I will set him in the safety for which he yearns.”*

### **Psalm 38:9**

*Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You.*

### **Isaiah 35:10**

*And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

## Least, Likely to Succeed

Sometimes the ones we expect to be the most successful may end up falling short of the intended destination. It is natural for people to favor the most talented, the most "anointed" or most outstanding people. God's selection process often does not work that way.

Because God is Sovereign, we must be very careful when we discontinue associating with fellow dance ministers because we have already selected our favorites. God's boot camp takes place in the strangest locations and circumstances. Alliances made with motives for ministry invitations, prestige, and special consideration will not last. What looks like rapid growth can in reality be accelerated death. When we operate in the flesh, it can turn into a "if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" type of situation. It is better to have the Lord's endorsement than that of men.

What we do to the "little people" is being monitored by God. Keeping this in mind, we must treat each and every person we come in contact with in a loving manner. Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul can all testify to the success of the unlikely candidate. Without the Lord's favor and grace, we would not be able to move in the gifts and talents that He has so liberally given. Let us not count anyone out just yet... God is working.

### **Deuteronomy 7:6-7**

*For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples*

### **Ephesians 3:8**

*To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*

## “Danceaholics” Anonymous

It can be exciting to pursue our callings and be successful at it. When a passion becomes an obsession, we are headed for trouble. Dance can be very rewarding, but can consume our lives if we are not careful. There are some people who love dance more than they love the Lord. If we fall into this temptation, then we can unknowingly invite idolatry to enter into our hearts.

Those who are blessed to minister through dance must love the Lord above all else. Trained professional dancers spend countless hours in classes and rehearsals. With schedule overload, there is little room for anything else. Although commitment and faithfulness are important factors in dance ministry, real success comes from the quality of the time we spend in the Lord's presence.

If we overextend ourselves through over-bookings, extended rehearsals, lengthy dance concerts, dancing in multiple productions, etc., we may find ourselves being discouraged when things take an unexpected turn. This can come in the form of injuries, sickness, strained interpersonal relationships, financial need, and more. It is not always the case that spiritual forces are at work. It may just be that we have worked the body too hard, neglected to reach out to friends and family, spent too much money on dance products, and so on. When we remember our first love, He will help us to bring all things into order.

### **Psalm 127:2**

*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep.*

### **Isaiah 49:3-5**

*And He said to me, “You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” Then I said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, and my work with my God.”*

### **1 Corinthians 15:10**

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

## Going "Green"

There is a movement that seeks to preserve planet earth by recycling and using renewable energy resources. The thought is that by seeking to preserve the environment, future generations will be able to survive and remain healthy. This is referred to as "Going Green." When we look at this from a spiritual perspective, the Lord also encourages us to "Go Green."

Is our "spiritual environment" littered with debris from yesteryear (unresolved anger, arguments, poor self-esteem, or dissention among fellow believers)? Are we squandering the valuable deposits that the Lord has placed on the inside of us for temporary pleasures? Will the personal decisions that we make today have a negative impact on our children, churches, and communities tomorrow? Are we training the next generation of dancers for mimicry or for continued ministry?

There is a time when we must pull back to allow the Lord to reveal to us any areas in which we are being wasteful. This may include procrastination, overspending, gossiping, worrying, slothfulness, being stubborn, etc. In order to effectively prepare for the future, we must use wisdom with finances, develop new relationships, increase our movement vocabularies, study the Word, demonstrate love, and serve the Lord with gladness. He will show us when we need to rest, and where we need to be planted.

### **Psalm 52:8**

*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.*

### **Psalm 92:13**

*Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

### **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.*

## Here, There, and Everywhere

It used to be that we had to meet in person for ministry decision-making. Countless hours in life and ministry have been spent driving to locations, coordinating rehearsals, establishing schedules, etc. With the advancement of technology, we are able to be better stewards of our time. E-mail, teleconferences, social networking, and text messaging makes it easy to stay updated. If we use these tools wisely, then we will be able to make the most of our time.

If we rely too heavily on technology, then we will fail to fellowship as we need. The key is to utilize the best options to the benefit of all. When ministry servants are better time-managers, there will be more time spent with our families, less stress regarding calendar coordination, and more time for rest.

In this multi-tasking society, we must be wise not to overextend ourselves. We must periodically reassess how we spend our time. Though God has imparted knowledge and revealed creative inventions to mankind, when we use them for purposes other than His glory, we can get caught up in the trappings of obsessing over the latest cell phones, laptops, personal digital assistants, and communication devices, and miss the Lord Himself.

### **1 Chronicles 12:32**

*Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command*

### **Daniel 9:22**

*And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand."*

### **Isaiah 33:6**

*Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the LORD is His treasure.*

## Furnished for Victory

The Lord furnishes His dwelling place. From the tabernacle of Moses to the many mansions in the Father's house, the Lord understands the importance of preparing His temple. The Lord's furniture is often depicted as a heavenly throne, with the earth as His footstool.

The more enemies that we have, the larger the "footstool" or platform we will have. It is easier to stand on a larger platform than a smaller one. We must be careful when we are making enemies amongst ourselves. Our unwillingness to reconcile will only be an opportunity for our opponents to prosper. Romans 12:18 reminds us, "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*" We do not have to be enemies just because we disagree.

We all have enemies if we are standing for the cause of Christ. Unfortunately, some of these enemies are those who are supposed to be brothers and sisters of the faith. Most of us would rather not have enemies, but when we realize the need for opposition, we can get in a position to receive the promise. In the spiritual aspect, we need the necessary "furniture" in place for us to have success in the face of the enemy.

### **Esther 7:8**

*When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?" As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.*

### **Psalms 23:5**

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.*

### **Psalms 110:1**

*The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*

## Help Wanted

We all need help from time to time. Pride will prevent us from accepting the assistance that we need. If we are to be one Body, then we need its other members in order to function properly. There are many in the dance ministry community with excellent resources including literature, garments, worship tools, etc. No one person is the "Dance Ministry Guru." Beware of anyone who only wants you to rely on them for all of your information and support.

The Lord is our greatest Helper. When we trust in Him, He will send others along to assist us. When we try to do it all ourselves, we will find ourselves overwhelmed, overworked, and over-extended. Prayer is a must when discerning whether someone is offering help from the Lord, or offering a service with an ulterior motive. Communicating often with the Lord will sharpen our ears to hear Him more clearly.

We must remain humble enough to realize that we alone cannot help each and every person financially, emotionally, or spiritually. If we find ourselves being to "go-to guy" for everything, then we must take the time to train others to serve. Many are helped by the Word that goes forth during dance ministry. We must also be a help and support to others who labor in the Gospel, that there is no division among us. Our help is not limited to our friends. True service is shown when we are willing to help those who we know may never return the favor.

**Psalm 28:7**

*The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.*

**John 14:26**

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

## Company Keepers

"Birds of a feather flock together..." It may seem mean or heartless to stop affiliating with those that share a lifelong history with us. When we begin to make a stand for the Kingdom, the enemy is ever-present to try to take us off the path of righteousness. A decision must be made. Where do you stand? Who's on the Lord's side?

If this means that we cannot go to lunch with certain people, so be it! If people who call themselves friends will not respect the calling of God on our lives, it's time to change our circle of influence. When we say "No, I will NOT have this dance," because it compromises our position a dance minister, our decisions should be final. If our associates get upset because we do not attend every party, gathering, and social event, it's time to press the ignore button.

There is no room for compromise. It's the "little foxes" that spoil the vine. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Those who have the most influence in our lives must be willing and honest enough to tell us when we are veering from the path. As iron sharpens iron, we will have some uncomfortable challenges with those who truly love us. If we are not being advised to do the will of God, it is time to make a change. (In laymen's terms, "Dump 'em!")

### **1 Corinthians 5:11**

*But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.*

### **1 Corinthians 15:33**

*Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

### **Proverbs 13:20**

*He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.*

## From Sea to Shining Sea

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. When we allow the Lord to reveal to us the vastness of His presence, we will be at liberty to dance whenever He prompts us to move our feet. The church platform should not be the coveted spot to dance. When we can dance in marketplaces, public locations, and wide-open spaces, then we are walking in true authority.

If we are truly "ministers of dance," we will walk in our assignment whenever the Lord has need of us. This will mean that we must always be prepared to minister. While we may not wear praise garments each and every time we gather for worship, the clothing that we wear should be suitable to dance in if needed. Being ready in and out of season will always mean that we stand prepared for our mission.

Though we may be peculiar people, I am not advocating that we appear as crazed lunatics in public. We must never limit the possibilities of the workings of God. Jesus performed miracles in the streets and public places. He likened himself to Living Water. When we find ourselves visiting dry places, because He lives in us, that refreshing can affect those who witness us in motion. If we are truly His followers, then we should do as He did.

### **Isaiah 43:2**

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.*

### **Ezekiel 47:9**

*And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.*

### **Matthew 14:29**

*So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.*

## Back Talk

Let's face it, we must understand the importance of our bodies as tools in the Master's hands. In the traditional sense of dance ministry, lots of emphasis is placed on the front of the body, and less on the rear. Dancers are often discouraged from exposing the back of the body to a congregation for fear of offense. There is a way to incorporate the powerful meaning of the back if we do it in a way that brings the Word to life.

The back is a vulnerable part of our bodies because our eyes are not able to see what is behind us. The act of "backbiting" is often so surprising because it is something that catches us off guard. In the Biblical sense, turning ones back in a negative way can mean rejection, defeat, or faithlessness. The back is also depicted as more tolerable than the face (as in the case of Moses wanting to see the Lord's glory).

If we get a balanced understanding of when to face something head on or when to back up, each and every movement will have meaning as it relates to the Word of God. Exercising wisdom as we move will diminish the potential for error, but increase the depth of the pieces we demonstrate. We must not be limited by what others have deemed to be "wrong" or "right" movements in ministry. If we get our directions from the Lord, we will not miss a beat.

### **2 Chronicles 29:6**

*For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him.*

### **Jeremiah 32:33**

*And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction.*

## A Time to Remember

Though we do not live in the past, we can use it as a tool. Remembering what the Lord has done will remind us that He still works things out for our good. When we review what the Lord has promised, we build our faith concerning His calling on each of our lives. Revisiting a "God Moment" in dance ministry will remind us of the sweet fragrance of His presence, so that we may long to be in that place again.

Rehashing old memories, hurts, disappointments, and setbacks will hinder us from moving forward. We must rehearse the Scriptures more than we rehearse any dance routine. Filling ourselves up with the Word of God will cause choreography to flow more easily and "speak" in a way that it never has before.

Remember why He called you. Remember your passion for dance as ministry. Remember how He delivered you from the hand of the enemy. Remember how many lives have been impacted because of your obedience. Remember to seek Him daily. Remember that He has placed you in this time and season to give Him the glory. Remember the Lord thy God!

### **Numbers 15:40**

*And that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.*

### **Psalms 42:4**

*When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.*

### **Psalms 45:17**

*I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.*

## "Winging It"

When wings are used in ministry presentations, the representation is usually of an angelic nature. The Bible describes cherubs and seraphim as winged, but it does not end there. Many times in Scripture, angels are depicted in "wingless" ways. At times, angels appeared in fire (Exodus 3:2), with drawn swords (1 Chronicles 21:16), in dreams (Matthew 1:20), or dressed in white (John 20:12). How is it that we may entertain angels unaware if they are always winged and wearing halos?

There are other creative ways to use wings in worship that are not directly related to angels. Other Scriptural symbolism includes wings of doves, eagles, birds, and even the Lord's wings. At times, the wind is described as having wings. As long as we draw our creativity from the Word of God, we will be accurate in our display.

Wings used in dance pieces do not always have to be literal. Let the Holy Spirit lead with what types of fabrics, supports, and props will convey a Spiritual message. Beyond the wings, the songs used must also be supported by the Word. Let us make sure not to fly off in the wrong direction.

**Psalm 68:13**

*Though you lie down among the sheepfolds, you will be like the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

**Psalm 91:4**

*He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

**Isaiah 40:31**

*But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

**Malachi 4:2**

*But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

## Cross it Out

We must all take up our crosses daily. The absence of dancing is a sign of mourning. If we rejoice in the Lord always, He will turn our mourning into dancing! Whatever our personal “cross” is, it is not a place of comfort or satisfaction. When the heat is turned up, that is the time that we must endure so that the pure treasure inside of us will be revealed.

Some of the external "crosses" in dance ministry can include negative dance ministry members, sabotaging actions, lack of ministry support, competition, rivalry, verbal assaults, blacklisting, slander, and the like. Internal "crosses" can include self-condemnation, sin, shame, defeat, faithlessness, and more. When we commit our lives to the Lord's care, He will give us the strength we need.

The cross is a powerful visual symbol for many, and is often used in dance ministry presentations. Whether made of wood, sewn on a flag, or painted on a banner, we must lift Jesus up so that men can be drawn to Him. Let each one of us continue to bear the burden and be strengthened for the journey ahead.

### **Matthew 16:24**

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

### **Mark 10:21**

*Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”*

### **Luke 14:27**

*And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

### **Galatians 6:14**

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

## Stick Your Neck Out

Many sacrifices are made for ministry that matters. Often, personal finances, time, and talents are devoted to meeting the needs that are not met through offerings or church budget allotments. We become vulnerable when we have to take a risk of personal loss for the sake of the Message. If we are not willing to place our treasure in a place, then our hearts are somewhere else.

The neck of the body is what the head rests on. Necks provide support and allow the head to go in its intended direction. Unwillingness to submit is what the Bible calls "stiff-necked." Many stubborn dance ministry participants refuse to personally invest time, resources, or faithfulness to the work. We reap by the same measure that we sow. If we invest little, there will be little return.

Kings adorned the necks of honored servants with gold chains. An ornament about the neck is a symbol of honor and grace. A yoke on the neck indicates bondage. Our actions as dance ministers can result in a reward or a burden. How we handle the work of the Lord will be returned to us. Let us make sure to keep our necks bowed down to the One Who is able to set us free.

### **Deuteronomy 10:16**

*Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*

### **2 Chronicles 30:8**

*Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you.*

### **Nehemiah 9:16**

*But they and our fathers acted proudly, hardened their necks, and did not heed Your commandments.*

## Those Who Trespass Against Us

Those of us who labor in the creative arts ministries will suffer many hurts. Many "walking wounded" are dancing in front of congregations and audiences today. The Lord is a Healer and a Redeemer. If we are injured emotionally, spiritually, or physically, we can begin to walk in complete deliverance right now.

Forgiveness is a thing that we must practice daily. Offenses must come, but we do not have to hold onto them in our hearts and long-term memories. Our ministries will be negatively affected if we do not continue to walk in brotherly love. We must yield our hearts and minds to the Lord daily, so that we may present ourselves holy and acceptable to Him.

Concerning that leader that does not offer support: Forgive them, Father. Regarding those "church folk" who call us crazy: Forgive them, Father. For the dancers who refuse to support each other and remain divided: Forgive them, Father. For every ridiculing statement made against us: Forgive them, Father. For each person that does not believe that you have sent us: Forgive them, Father. For every time we have doubted, disobeyed, procrastinated, or condemned ourselves: Forgive us, Father.

### **Genesis 50:17**

*Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.*

### **Mark 11:25**

*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.*

### **James 5:16**

*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

## Ex-Spectation

Sitting back and waiting for "something" to happen is not the order of the day. A time for being passive in the church while the world is dying is inexcusable. The Bible instructs us to be "doers" of the Word and not hearers only. It is time to act on what the Lord has been saying to us for far too long. Let us get up and move!

Inactivity and passivity in the church during praise and worship has often been labeled the "spectator spirit." Many who have been drawn to dance ministry may have once been sitting in the pew, watching the ministry of movement. At some point, many dancers have had a life-changing experience that moved them from being a spectator to an expectant participant.

If we remain moldable concerning our expressions of adoration unto our Father, the corporate worship experience will receive the mandate to "do" the Word openly. As dancers, it is an awesome sight when the viewer moves from his or her seat, and is inspired to praise the Lord in the dance. If we study the Scriptures, the truth that we gain will become evident in our movement. As we continue to move in Him, He will continue to transplant the hearts of the people to draw them to Him.

### **Psalm 40:10**

*I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.*

### **Luke 8:47**

*Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.*

### **Acts 20:20-21**

*How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Seating Assignments

We have many options with visual symbolism in the worship arts. We must reconsider calling ministry visual enhancements "props" and let the Lord open us up to a whole new dimension of worship. Our ministry pieces can come alive and gain depth of understanding from the congregation's perspective when we are able to do more than just pretend to accomplish a thing in movement with imaginary items.

A visual tool that is often used in movement is the chair. Folding chairs are transportable and lightweight, and can be embellished with chair covers or decor for a more regal appearance. Chairs or stools can be used for sitting, offering a seat to someone else, or for diversity in levels during the dance. In pageantry, the use of a throne or ornate chair can inspire a sense of awe and worship unto the Lord. These furnishings are often less mobile and more challenging to move from place to place.

Furniture can be used creatively as choreographic partners in ministry. It is important to exercise safety, practice often, and get a good grasp of the Biblical foundation for the use of the seat in motion. Simply using visual ministry enhancements for the sake of using them is not worship in truth. Let us continue to get an understanding concerning all that we do so that we are precise messengers of the Word.

### **Job 36:7**

*He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.*

### **Psalms 47:8**

*God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.*

### **Daniel 7:9**

*[Vision of the Ancient of Days] "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire*

## Spin Control

If we are not careful, we can begin to operate in a way that is controlling to those around us. Many people attempt to do this even through manipulating the Word of God. Those who oppose dance ministry often use personal experience to sway people away from receiving the movement ministries. This can be defined by what is termed "spin control."

**Spin Control-** Attempt to manipulate public: the attempt to evoke a desired public response by the presentation of biased or select information.

We cannot be guilty of presenting the ministry of dance in a deceptive way either. When we manipulate the Scriptures to fit an individual viewpoint, we are in violation of God's principles. Though dance ministry is a powerful tool for the Master's use, it is only one part of the Body. We need the spoken Word, singers, musicians, supporters, garment makers, hairdressers, car manufacturers, airlines, and much more to move in our assignments.

Focus on what the Lord is saying. Obey what He gives as instructions. Only He is in control of our lives. We have liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is. Whether we spin, turn, leap, pirouette, or stand still in movement ministry, the Lord is the Director of it all.

### **Deuteronomy 4:2**

*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

### **2 Samuel 6:16**

*Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.*

## Dare to be Different

We do not have to feel pressured to move like anyone else. Too many ministries base their identities on what has been presented by another group or dancer. We do not have to wear the garments that the popular crowd wears. Making song choices based on sales charts and number of spins on the radio can result in many duplicate ideas as well. When the Lord selects us to minister before Him and His people, He has designed us in such a way that we are all created with care.

If the Lord speaks to you in a way that may seem abstract, allow Him to have His perfect work in you. Do not think it strange or odd when the Lord reveals an idea that has not been witnessed before in your experience. In turn, we must not immediately dismiss things that we see that are unlike what we do.

When dancers begin to celebrate the vastness of the Lord's creation, we will be able to fully enjoy the beauty of worship through movement. Learning various styles of worship unto the Lord in movement will also give us more diversity in our pieces. If we cannot appreciate the differences that we have and celebrate them as well, then we will only endorse the things that look familiar. Even the flowers are not all the same color and shape. Let us rejoice that we are not all alike!

### **Romans 12:4, 6**

*For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function*

*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith*

### **1 Corinthians 12:5**

*There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.*

## Look Over Your Shoulder

Dance incorporates much more than our hands and feet. Each part of the body is important to unify the whole. As we are all many members, but one body, our own bodies are a representation of how the Lord has a purpose for every part of us. Using our entire beings in movement allows us to experience the many joys of dancing for the Lord.

Using our shoulders in dance can be very symbolic. The shoulder in the Bible is a place where burdens were borne. It is also a place where things were carried or transported. This symbolizes strength and responsibility. We can include movement that highlights the shoulder in these ways. Our shoulders function in a greater capacity than the lifting of our arms because of the weight that they can carry. Let them demonstrate the strength that is in them.

When we study the Word in depth, we will discover more movement than we thought imaginable! We should not neglect any opportunity to glorify the Lord in our bodies. He created each joint to function together. Let us submit ourselves completely as members for His Divine use.

### **Psalm 81:6**

*I removed his shoulder from the burden; his hands were freed from the baskets.*

### **Isaiah 9:6**

*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

### **Isaiah 22:22**

*The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open.*

### **Luke 15:4-5**

*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*

## Write in the Palm of Your Hand

What we do with our hands is important. Our hands can be used to help, or they can be used to hinder. The same hands that worship can become weapons if we are not careful to place them properly. The washing of our hands is likened to purity and righteousness.

It is interesting to note that the Lord has writing on the palm of His hands. If the Lord has clean hands, then those who are inscribed there must be clean as well! Every thought, deed, and action must be done with sincerity of heart. Let us continue to lead lives of righteousness as we step out to minister in movement.

Because we dance and hold worship tools with our hands, we must also literally keep them clean. Unnoticed dirt or liquids can find their way onto our garments, flags, banners, or billows if we are not careful. We must also train our children and congregations to be careful when touching items reserved for ministry. It is not the items themselves that are sacred, but the Holy God that they represent.

**Isaiah 49:16**

*See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.*

**Job 17:9**

*Yet the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.*

**Psalms 18:20**

*The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.*

**James 4:8**

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

## The Power Company

It is not enough that one or two dancers on a team be powerful. If we dance with a group, we must strive for everyone to be effective and move by the Spirit. It is good and pleasant for us to dwell together in unity! Being on one accord helps us to combat pride and defeats competition within ministry groups.

Granted, we are all at different places in our personal relationships with the Lord. When we minister as a group, we stand before Him as one. If just one of us is out of line, the whole group is compromised! There is beauty in the holiness of worship. We are more effective as dancers when we rely on the Holy Spirit, and not our own abilities.

We only receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon us. Too many are operating in their own natural gifts and talents. When the flesh is leading, we will struggle with disunity, strife, rebellion, ambitiousness, and mutiny. Our prayers for our movement ministries should include the unity of the brethren and that we walk as one. We cannot accomplish this without the Holy Spirit.

### **Ephesians 4:2-4**

*With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.*

### **Philippians 2:2**

*Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

### **1 Corinthians 12:13**

*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

## Dance the Word

All of the technical training in the world will not cause us to be anointed. Having a sincere heart to dance before the Lord will give us grace for a season, but it is the Word that will sustain us. Many dancers are claiming to be dance ministries without a grasp on what the Bible tells us about movement and ministry.

Knowing the basic Scriptures concerning dance is a start. Miriam and David are household names among Christian dance supporters, but dance with an understanding will come with devoted Bible study and prayer. The songs that we select should line up with several Biblical accounts and the movement should demonstrate God's heart concerning the matter.

We cannot depend on others to do the research and the teaching for us. We are each accountable for what we know. Even children that dance should be able to recount a basic understanding of why they dance for the Lord. As each dancer does his or her part to study to be approved and unashamed, the corporate body of dance ministers will be helped as we open doors to more dance ministries who are sincere about the Lord and His calling.

### **Exodus 15:20**

*[The Song of Miriam] Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

### **1 Samuel 18:7**

*So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."*

### **2 Samuel 6:14**

*Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod.*

### **Psalms 150:4**

*Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!*

## Sole Objective

Our feet are powerful indicators of position, territory, and authority. We must be careful where we place our feet. The location of our feet determines what we stand for, what we stand on, and what we stand against. Our feet can be used to claim a territory for the Kingdom, and they can be used to destroy enemies and strongholds.

Stamping our feet can be done as a rebuke against sin and evil. When the Word talks about stamping the feet, it is in the context of sin that has taken place. Often in "warfare" style dances, rhythmic movement is used to stamp out sin and sound the advancement of the people of God against the workings of darkness. As the spirit realm is real, we must exercise care when faced with any type of warfare and direct confrontation of the enemy. We must understand what we are doing to avoid casualties.

Walking in an unworthy manner can represent dishonor and irreverence. Our feet are not authorized to walk wherever we see fit. When the Lord directs our steps, our feet are to be where He has ordained. As we continue to follow the Lord in life and in ministry, we must remember that we are not led by our feet, but by the Spirit.

### **2 Samuel 22:43**

*Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I trod them like dirt in the streets, and I spread them out.*

### **Ezekiel 6:11**

*Thus says the Lord GOD: "Pound your fists and stamp your feet, and say, 'Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.'"*

### **Ezekiel 25:6-7**

*For thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you clapped your hands, stamped your feet, and rejoiced in heart with all your disdain for the land of Israel, indeed, therefore, I will stretch out My hand against you, and give you as plunder to the nations; I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the countries; I will destroy you, and you shall know that I am the LORD.*

## Living Hand to Mouth

Dance by itself is not enough to save us. Successful movement ministries operate by faith and adhere to wisdom. Fellowshiping and gleaning from one another will make us a stronger unit. If we keep moving without stopping to get instructions from the Lord, we become prime targets for destruction and attack.

Some of us are very passionate and love the Lord intensely, but do not know when to be quiet. Our lips produce good or bad fruit. Some of us make a habit of condemning our fellow co-laborers with our lips more than we bless the Lord with them. There is much hurt in the body of movement ministries because of words that were said (offenses), things unsaid (broken fellowship), and things yet to be said (repentance). In this age of technology, offenses are spread over e-mail as easily as they are in person and on the telephone. May the Lord help us to guard our mouths, watch our hands, and speak right things!

What the Lord has spoken, He will perform. Sometimes what we speak, we fail to honor. If we continue to serve one another in love, our hands and mouths will be found to be great partners in ministry. Agreements are often spoken and written. Some are sealed with a handshake. Though what is spoken only in words is less likely to be upheld as proof; what is written will stand. Let us continue to stand on the Word and bless the Lord at all times. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!

### **1 Kings 8:24**

*You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.*

### **Psalms 149:6**

*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand*

### **Proverbs 12:14**

*A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, and the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him.*

## Spirit Fingers

The Word is confirmed with signs following. It is awesome to see how the Lord uses the movement ministries to show His Word from the Truth perspective. When we read the Scriptures from the Holy Spirit context, we will truly see that the Lord is using many aspects of the worship arts to spread the Gospel.

There are times when small motions can make a big impact. Many sign dance ministries rely on sign language to convey the Message, while many mimes primarily use the face and hands. The finger denotes a very powerful image in Scripture. Finger pointing can mean accusation in the modern-day context, but the finger can also represent the handiwork of the Lord.

The Lord's arms, hands, thigh, finger, back, and face are but a few of the "body parts" He is described as having in the Bible. Realizing that we are made in His image and likeness, it should come as no surprise to us that the Lord created us in a similar fashion. As we continue to seek movement and instruction concerning choreography in light of His Word, let us be confident that He created our entire bodies to be presented to Him as a living sacrifice.

### **Exodus 31:18**

*And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

### **Deuteronomy 9:10**

*Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.*

### **Luke 11:20**

*But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

## In Sickness and In Health

Many distractions will come to discourage us from moving forward. Sometimes we are looking for the major things to attack us, but often it is the little culprits that try to trip us up. We must stay prayerful against attacks, but there are some that are inevitable. The key is to press on in spite of them.

There may be times that a fellow dancer will call at the last minute to say that he or she cannot make it right before it is time to dance. Have we prepared ourselves to continue to function in an emergency? If we depend on people, we will definitely be disappointed. Do we allow mishaps to distract us from our mission?

There are some things that will happen unexpectedly. It may arrive in the form of a conversation that results in a choice to focus on the problem or focus on the Lord. Sickness may try to hinder us. Family concerns may try to overwhelm us. Financial needs may try to bombard our minds. We must recognize this and train our minds and spirits to submit all of our cares to the Lord. When we magnify Him, all else will become insignificant in His presence.

### **Exodus 23:25**

*So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you.*

### **Jeremiah 39:18**

*“For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me,” says the LORD.*

### **Romans 8: 38-39**

*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### **3 John 1:2**

*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*

## (Un)Easy to Love

When faced with opposition, we must always choose to do the right thing. There may be fellow believers in our midst who may irritate us and cause us discomfort. We may need more prayer to get through a dance rehearsal with fellow believers than we do when reaching out to the lost. If we are truthful, there are times when we feel that the absence of the offending individuals will bring us relief or peace. What profit would we get from that?

It helps us to grow when we face the trials of life and ministry. Sometimes we have rejoiced when someone has left our midst, but we need to be more prayerful about who the Lord has assigned us to. Yes, there are times when the season for a relationship has ended and we must part ways, but then there are other times... (Insert your personal struggle with challenging personality types here!).

Let us continue to ask the Lord to guide us when dealing with dancers that may need a little extra attention, care, or time. It is a sacrifice to maintain the bond of unity, especially when we have personal reservations with an individual or group of individuals. Our goal is to let nothing (sin) hinder us from operating in the fullness of His power. Dance is not the object of our affection, God is!

### **Matthew 5:44-46**

*But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*

### **Philippians 2:3**

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

### **1 Peter 3: 8-9**

*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

## 20 Questions

We can never stop seeking the Lord for instructions. Dance ministry does not work by formulas. Any movement ministry operating without a prayer connection to the Father will find themselves in error. We can stand with assurance when we are certain that we have heard the Lord's voice.

Prayer coupled with the Word will grant us clarity and confidence through Him. When we seek answers through prayer, we will be sustained, renewed, refreshed, revived, and accurate. If we are still questioning our purpose in the dance ministry, then it is time to be still and get an understanding before moving any further.

Answers from the Lord come in a variety of ways. There are times when we will hear Him "internally." These are times that a message will come from Him that assures us of the direct line of communication between us and Him. At other times, He may use a prophet, preacher, or another person to confirm what He has already spoken. We may also read printed material (especially the Word of God) that will encourage us and confirm His workings. Whatever way the Lord speaks to us, we must continue to inquire of Him. Our obedience is the key to results. Without Him, we can do nothing.

### **Judges 20:18**

*Then the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God to inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" The LORD said, "Judah first!"*

### **1 Samuel 1:20**

*So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."*

### **Psalms 27:4**

*One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.*

## "Hear Ye, Hear Ye!"

There are some sitting in our congregations who are unable to experience the world as we do. Our message through movement must be so clear that a person unable to hear will know Who we are lifting up when we express the Word through movement. Though we may not all be called to incorporate sign language in motion, there is a very distinct time and place for it to go forth.

Many are able to hear but choose to ignore the message of the cross. For those who may be hearing impaired, it is a blessing to be able to communicate the message of His love for all mankind. Creativity and connectivity can greatly enhance the sign language ministry. Inviting dancers, banner carriers, musicians, and singers to come together with the sign language ministries encourages every tribe and tongue to praise the Lord!

Those without the full use of their bodies are not exempt from rendering praise unto God. We should welcome fellow worshippers regardless of individual and physical challenges. Not only will we be able to be a blessing, but we will be blessed, knowing the magnitude of His benefits toward us.

### **Isaiah 29:18**

*In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.*

### **Isaiah 43:7-9a**

*Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him. Bring out the blind people who have eyes, and the deaf who have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled*

### **Luke 7:22**

*Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the Gospel preached to them."*

## Medi-Sin

If we think that we can keep dancing and ministering without taking a personal "sin" inventory, we are in for a rude awakening. It is time to check our "medi-sin" cabinets for anything that we are doing that is contrary to His will for our lives. Making a habit of sin should not be a routine practice for anyone confessing Christ, and especially those who are serving Kingdom purposes. Medicine only provides temporary relief. Healing addresses the problem and removes it from our midst. What sins are we masking through a "quick fix?"

Obvious sins are easier to pinpoint, but there are many of us promoting hidden sins within. Some of us proclaim to love each other with our mouths, but murder each other with our actions in secret. Others are so focused on promotion that they sabotage what the Lord is doing through someone else's life and ministry. There is a need for healing in every area that causes us to take our eyes off of Christ.

He is a Balm for those who need healing and deliverance from torment of the mind, impurity of heart, and a broken spirit. We often dance about healing, but what about those who need to be washed and purified from internal minefields and scars from years ago? Let us continue to let the mind of Christ be in us so that we may do the will of Him Who sent us. He paid the final price for us to be healed of sin in every form. The choice to be made whole is up to us.

**Genesis 4:7**

*If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*

**Psalms 103:10**

*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities.*

**Mark 2:17**

*When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

## Look Before You Leap!

This is not the time to dance on shaky ground. Many problems that arise in the church are indicative of a blatant lack of knowledge concerning the Word of God. The desire for praise and popularity attract many to the art of dance. Dance ministry involves much more than leaps and turns. If the movement ministry is truly operating under the direction of the Holy Spirit, not everyone who volunteers to participate will be left standing over time. Narrow is the way...

Each dancer must take personal responsibility for knowing the Scriptures. It is not enough for the dance leader to be the "guru" for an entire group. The enemy is not ignorant to the fact that dance ministry is growing in popularity, power, and effectiveness. Movies, television, books, social networking sites, online video services, and various media outlets are highlighting the powerful messengers of dance. As a result, the trappings of lust for money, power, and fame will try to derail us. Staying in His presence and knowing His Word will sustain us if we are obedient.

Let us no longer be babes! It is time to sink our teeth into the meat of the Word for our daily provision. When we seek the Lord and hide His Word within, it will manifest through movement. With the Scriptures come miracles, healing, salvation, and transformation. The Holy Spirit is moving... read all about it!

**Psalm 119:1**

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.*

**Matthew 22:29**

*Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."*

**Acts 17:11**

*These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

## Bending and Stretching... the Truth

There is a temptation to over-exaggerate or over-emphasize our accomplishments. This may not start off as an outright goal, but once we begin to realize our impact as dance ministers, the opportunity will present itself. This was Lucifer's problem. He began to get his own "fan club" (he was the President of it) and decided that he would mark his importance by placing himself in a position that did not belong to him. He quickly lost that bid for the Throne for eternity.

For example, some people want to lay claim to being the "Founder" of liturgical dance, or the "Pioneer" of movement ministry. That position was already taken by Miriam in Exodus 15:20. Others mark their territories by announcing to be "first" to accomplish a big feat or that they have the "largest" whatever. Often this information can be found in the bio of a movement minister, on the ministry website, or in print media. When we look at our own ministry bios and photos, who is really getting the glory?

There is nothing wrong with honoring one another as long as we do not make another person an idol in our eyes. When we internalize this honor and begin to praise ourselves, then we open the door to pride, arrogance, and competition. Humility will keep us in the place of promotion. Let us all do a self-survey today concerning our printed biographies, websites, and online photo albums. If there is more of "us" than Him present, then we must take the time to adjust these areas so that the Lord is in "First Place."

### **1 Samuel 2:3**

*Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed.*

### **Proverbs 27:2**

*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.*

### **James 4:16**

*But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

## Hairs of the Throne

Hair is symbolic as much as anything else in movement ministry. There are various opinions concerning what is the "proper" way for a dancer to wear his or her hair. While safety is an issue to consider and ministry unity may be a factor, the "hairy" situation should be based upon understanding the Word of the Lord. There is much greater liberty when we look at things from the Father's viewpoint instead of haggling over the little details.

In the Scriptures, hairstyles were at times indicative of vows to the Lord. Samson was under the Nazarite vow, which prevented him from cutting his hair or shaving his head. In other instances, a shaved or bald head represented a clean person (for men). Long hair for women is considered glorious. A head full of hair denotes safety and protection from harm. Also, different colors of hair are mentioned (gray, white, black, yellow, etc). When we understand what the hair represents in our movement pieces, this will make for a more vivid and truthful visual experience.

This is not to suggest that we incorporate wigs and hairpieces as a rule. When we are led by the Lord concerning all of our ways, we leave less room for error. All things with God are purposeful. After all, He knows the number of hairs on each of our heads (this means that He cares enough for us for it to matter).

### **Proverbs 16:31**

*The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.*

### **Song of Solomon 7:5**

*Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel, and the hair of your head is like purple; a king is held captive by your tresses.*

### **Ezekiel 44:20**

*They shall neither shave their heads, nor let their hair grow long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed.*

## Emotion

It is often viewed as "performance" when a Gospel dancer moves without emotion. To be emotionally invested in something means that we care and find value in it. The opposite spectrum reveals those who are a bit "too emotional," so emotional that they cannot make it through a dance without falling apart. If the experience comes from a place prompted by the Spirit, then by all means, emote!

A face that is frozen in a permanent smile does not always convey the truth of the piece that we are presenting. A strong look that can appear to be anger should not be plastered on our faces either. His leading will teach us the delicate balance of the appropriate expressions to use for the message. It is good practice to observe our faces in a mirror or watch ourselves on tape to get a true assessment of what our faces reveal.

There is a time to cry, laugh, and dance! We should let no one tell us that we are to be unemotional about our relationship with God. Knowing the Lord on a personal level will render us overwhelmed with love deeper than can be described. Let us express the truth of our love for Him. Get emotional!

### **Genesis 21:6**

*And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."*

### **Genesis 29:11**

*Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.*

### **1 Samuel 2:1**

*[Hannah's Prayer] And Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.*

### **Psalms 126:5**

*Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.*

## Uninvited Guests

Dance ministries should not function like talent agencies. For those who host conferences and major ministry events, it can be irritating to receive unsolicited requests from other ministries to allow them to dance during the program or teach during workshop sessions. Often, dancers who are scouting for "gigs" have not registered for the conference or are looking for a platform to claim. Our decisions to attend conferences and events should not be based on our opportunity to minister. If we are found faithful in what the Lord has assigned to us, the doors will open with very little effort on our part.

Motivation matters. It is good practice to make ourselves available through internet resources, networks, or be referred by others who are familiar with our work. It may not be so wise to overtly include "book me for your event" on our ministry websites. If we teach or dance, it is fine that people know that. When we start producing "infomercials," we turn into salespeople. If we push open the door of opportunity for ourselves, we will have to work just as hard to keep it that way. When the Lord opens a door, no man can shut it.

It is a powerful testimony when we can share with people how the Lord is faithful to reward those who diligently seek Him. It is outright embarrassing to be declined from ministering (sometimes for years) with others because we were over-zealous. If the invitations seem to be few and far between, be patient. Let us commit ourselves to prayer, serve the Lord and each other, and sharpen our skills in movement and the Word. It is important to be found doing His will, and not our own.

### **Proverbs 18:16**

*A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.*

### **Luke 14:10**

*But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.*

## "Cos-tomb"

Dance ministers do not wear costumes. The idea that dancers should select attire based on what is available in mass quantities at retail stores, through catalogues and online should be put to rest. Garments used in ministry should be done with the purpose of conveying the truth of the message. The garments worn should not be a distraction or an offense to the observer. If we ask Him, the Lord will instruct us as to what is appropriate for a particular piece.

Though we use our bodies as instruments, our flesh is not to be highlighted during movement. The Presence of the Lord should permeate our surroundings when we are led by the Spirit. Many books, websites, and teachings have discussed the garment controversy, but there are still too many dance groups who have not (or refuse to have) obtained a demonstrated understanding for the usage of garments in ministry.

Not everyone will wear a robe, dresses that touch the floor, or angel-sleeve blouses to get the point across. The fact also remains that not all dance ministries will seek the Lord for directions concerning ministry attire. We must continue to pray that we are in line with His will, and that we are not doing a disservice to the ministry.

### **1 Chronicles 15:27**

*David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers. David also wore a linen ephod.*

### **Psalm 45:13**

*The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold.*

### **Revelation 3:18**

*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

## Follow-the-Leader / Lead-the-Follower

Leaders must know who labors among them. Some people are sent to assist the ministry for an extended time, and others are leaders-in-training. The problem with many ministries today is that many leaders treat everyone like "eternal followers," instead of realizing that it is important to develop leaders as well. Dance ministers should be trained to dance and minister as the Lord is leading.

In our natural lives, it is not viewed as "normal" to live at home with our parents well into our adult years. Why is this happening spiritually so often in the church? The concept is that we are trained to be productive, responsible members of society once we leave home. Unfortunately, many today are being labeled as "unsubmitted" when leaving the spiritual "church home" to continue to learn and develop in a new place.

Many frustrated dance leaders feel as though they are being stifled by church programs and corporate visions and are not being released into the calling on their lives. There must be balance. We understand that there is a season for development and training, but David did not stay in the field with the sheep his entire life. His time spent there provided the patience and skill needed to manage many responsibilities to come.

Many leaders today would not be leaders if they did not seek training from many qualified teachers. Even educational institutes provide students with a variety of qualified teachers. Wise counsel is obtained through various sources, all weighed according to the Word of God. No one person should control or dictate our lives. Leaders that cannot discern the difference between training servants and developing capable leaders can potentially disrupt the function of the Body and hinder spiritual health in the lives of many.

### **Acts 18:24-26**

*Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*

## See/Saw

Those of us who believe walk by faith and not by sight. Those who do not believe should not be expected to walk by faith on the same level that we do. In this ever-growing, image-driven society, we realize that the Gospel can be "preached" in many ways. Just observing our natural surroundings can cause us to break out in spontaneous praise and worship when we ponder the goodness of the Lord.

Unconventional methods are usually met with much criticism. Jesus is the prime example of suffering persecution by the religious community. Many that followed His ministry did so after witnessing the awesome works that He had done and hearing His doctrine. Among the crowd of witnesses were also those who saw His miracles first-hand, and as a result sought to destroy Him.

Hypocrisy is words without action. Faith and works operating together bring life. Dance and movement ministries have fostered many testimonies of healing, deliverance, and renewed faith. Jesus reminded His critics that unclean spirits are not cast out by devils. If captives are being set free through the vehicle of movement, we must resist the temptation to listen to those who would seek to put a stop to it. Let us make it our priority to be true doers of the Word.

### **2 Kings 6:17**

*And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

### **Matthew 15:31**

*So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

### **John 1:50-51**

*Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*

## Arts and Crafts

Dance is an art. Dance ministry is artistic evangelism, edification, reconciliation, restoration, and rejuvenation, amongst many other attributes. Regardless of our technical knowledge and abilities, there are many skills that we can learn that will give us enhanced tools to improve our effectiveness as ministers of movement.

Advice that is often given to up-and-coming artists is to "study your craft." This is a reminder that natural talent can be developed expertly by submitting to training and understanding the art form. Many fledgling dance ministries have natural abilities to dance, and this is wonderful. Combining the natural ability with the functionality of training will garner the respect of movement as a ministry. It is prideful for trained dancers to inhibit the less-trained purely on mechanics. The Lord uses whomever He wills.

Many start training in the arts at a young age. It is never too late to develop our skills in both movement and the Word of God. Lack of training does not disqualify us from being dance ministers; however, it may hinder us if we want to dance in certain arenas. The main goal is for us to present the Lord the most excellent offering that we can. If it means spending a few extra hours at the gym, taking training classes, or reading the Word, it is worth it to give Him our very best.

### **1 Chronicles 15:22**

*Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor in charge of the music, because he was skillful*

### **Psalms 144:1**

*Blessed be the LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle*

### **Acts 17:28-29**

*For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.*

## The Court of Public Opinion

Everything that presents itself as "expertise" in the dance ministry is not to be taken as the Gospel truth. There are many who teach based on experiences and personal preferences. The Word of God is the only authority from which we should base our teachings. We may present wisdom and share best practices, but even these should be Scripturally based. There is safety in a multitude of counselors. Danger lies in basing our practices solely on the word of one witness.

There is more than one way to minister before for the Lord. Because the Gospel is to be preached throughout the world, we must also take culture, economics, and demographics into consideration when preparing to minister before diverse crowds. Personal testimonies, conferences, workshops, books, DVDs, CDs and websites can give us an idea of what challenges and expectations there are in movement ministry. We must keep it all in context, remembering that individual circumstances, traditions, and socio-economic status can influence each point-of-view.

We can become dependent on people if we do not research for ourselves what we are being taught regarding movement ministry. A ministerial title, church affiliation, network membership, or technical resume are not indicators of true servants of the Lord. There comes a time to stop running from place to place, and allow the Holy Spirit to instruct us in the way we should go.

### **1 Corinthians 2:13**

*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

### **1 John 2:27**

*But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

## Steal Away...

We must remember to appreciate those who labor with us. Most dance ministers are operating on a volunteer basis. Very few dance ministries have payrolls from which to compensate dancers. When hosting conferences and events, often those who commit themselves to service end up incurring expenses related to the event.

The people who serve should not end up in tears over mistreatment, abuse, and for working extra-long hours. We must use wisdom when scheduling activities and reviewing our staffing needs so that those who labor will be able to serve with joy. Let us not try to do more than we are reasonably able to do with excellence.

If payment is not an option, it is still important to show appreciation for service rendered. Although those who serve in ministry should not serve for monetary purposes only, we must give honor when it is due. A card of appreciation, public thanks, heartfelt gifts and notes may seem like little, but mean very much when the day is done. Even if we are not planning major events, let's take the time to thank someone today who has blessed us by their service.

### **Leviticus 19:13**

*You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.*

### **Jeremiah 22:13**

*Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice, who uses his neighbor's service without wages and gives him nothing for his work*

### **1 Timothy 5:18**

*For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

## Ever Ready

When we prepare for a variety of circumstances in ministry, we will be able to deliver with skill and precision. There are those who operate in prophetic dance, which means that there is a Word from the Lord that is to be demonstrated through motion. If there is no regular practice of Spirit-led movement, there may be intimidation and fear when asked or prompted to dance in this realm.

Not everyone will be able to function as a prophetic dancer. If someone is called to this ministry, he or she must study how God uses prophecy in Scripture to stay orderly and accurate. Continued application of prophetic movement will develop wisdom and increase sensitivity regarding the appropriate time and place to move under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

If done correctly, confirmation usually follows a prophetic dance. It may come from the ministerial staff, event emcee, or observers in the audience. The confirmation will usually address a specific situation or circumstance experienced by the observer. It may be followed by a prophetic word released over the people as to what the Spirit of the Lord is saying to the church. Just because a dance is spontaneous does not make it prophetic. Prophetic dance is to be held to the same standard as a prophetic Word. It must be accurate.

### **1 Peter 4:1**

*If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

### **2 Peter 1:19-2**

*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

## Delayed, but Not Denied

There are times that we may plan for everything to go according to our plans, and then we experience an unexpected delay. The first thing that we may want to do is to blame it on the devil. There may be times that we are scheduled to dance and we may encounter a flat tire, a car accident, a car that won't start, or other delay. We must remain focused on the Lord so that our mission is not aborted.

Come what may, we should be able to praise the Lord and give thanks in everything. Adversity helps us to know that the Lord will surely deliver us out of all of our afflictions. Facing different storms allows us to have diversity in our song selection and sensitivity to the struggles of others, because we are able to relate to a variety of life situations. We also learn how to trust the Lord in the fire.

We must not allow ourselves to give the enemy any credit when we are hit with surprise delays and setbacks. Let us ask the Lord to teach us how to see Him at work in all that we face. When we do this, we will continue to bless Him at all times.

### **Genesis 24:56**

*And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master."*

### **Romans 1:13**

*Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.*

### **1 Thessalonians 2:18**

*Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.*

### **1 Timothy 3:15**

*But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

## "Doing the Most"

In modern terms, the phrase "do you" is said to people to encourage them to be themselves and pursue their own interests. In ministry, people operating in the "do you" mindset can result in pride, egotism, exhibitionism, and selfishness. The point of movement ministry is not to compete for acknowledgement and personal attention, but to bring honor and glory to God. We should not focus on "doing us," but should make it our goal to do our best for the Most High.

If we are not careful, we can accept the opinions of men as the Gospel. The Lord created each of us individually and uniquely. He also loves to see us set aside our differences and dwell together in unity. Though many of us dance with our own groups, it is a blessing to come together as movement artists and present pieces through a unified effort. The Bible often highlights several instances when all the people worshipped together. What would we think if the Bible said that "most" of them humbled themselves, but the others proclaimed "I am going to 'do me'?"

We are to be doers the Word, and the Word is God! In movement ministry, our first and foremost priority is to love the Lord God with all that we are. Let us concentrate less on the things that concern us, and totally commit to all that is God's.

### **Psalm 92:1**

*It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High*

### **Isaiah 26:7**

*The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.*

### **Jeremiah 50:32**

*The most proud shall stumble and fall, and no one will raise him up; I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all around him.*

## Limits and Boundaries

If we do not set limits and boundaries in our lives, we may find ourselves outside of the will of God. Too many in ministry over-extend themselves and end up bitter, dissatisfied, and disgruntled. Dance ministries can fall into this trap very quickly. If we are running at full speed concerning all things ministry and neglecting our homes and personal responsibilities, we may need to take inventory and get rid of the excess.

Moses is an example of a leader in the Bible who was becoming overwhelmed with addressing the needs of so many people. He heeded wise advice and appointed qualified men who could deal with the less pertinent items so that he could better function. If we are ministering with a team of other dancers, there are other valuable gifts that we can benefit from within the team. Maintaining strength in ministry means that there are some things that we will not be able to do.

Prayer will allow us to determine what limits and boundaries that we must set to please the Lord and be good stewards over our personal affairs. It is fine to say no to the things that we are not supposed to carry as a burden. Operating in wisdom through the Spirit will keep us in line.

### **Job 13:27**

*You put my feet in the stocks, and watch closely all my paths. You set a limit for the soles of my feet.*

### **Job 14:5**

*Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.*

### **2 Corinthians 10:13-14**

*We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the Gospel of Christ*

## Covet Us

Our eyes must stay fixed on the Lord. It may be tempting to long for the power, prestige, and gifts of another dance ministry. We may be wowed by gorgeous garments, or greatly desire to minister the song that we just witnessed another ministry deliver. If we do not set a guard over our hearts, we can begin to be covetous.

Whenever we feel the pangs of desiring what God has given to someone else, we must immediately cast those thoughts down. If we are not vigilant, these thoughts can creep into our minds and take root before we know it. Keeping ourselves in a posture of prayer and humility will allow the Lord to reveal to us exactly who He created us to be.

When we walk outside of our calling, we may find ourselves investing in valueless activities, wasting precious time. It is not to God's glory to sweat and cry over a work that He has not ordained. One way to keep covetousness in order is to proactively support the efforts of other ministries without ulterior motives. The only things that we should covet according to the Word are spiritual gifts that would build the Kingdom, not for our sakes, but for the Lord's. Maintaining the attitude of a servant will quell the natural inclination for competition and diminish covetous actions in our own lives.

### **Acts 20:33**

*I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.*

### **1 Corinthians 12:30-31 (KJV)**

*Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

### **Hebrews 13:5**

*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

## Global Positioning

Dance ministry influence has reached beyond what we could imagine or think. When we venture beyond our lines of familiarity, we discover through "going into all the world" that believers come in many shapes, forms, and appearances, but it is the name of the Lord that must be common among us all. There is one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one God.

The Lord is preparing His Body of faithful servants for His return. As we continue to discover the interconnectedness of our many members the world over, we get a true vision of heavenly citizenship. The beauty of holy worship should be witnessed in every country, city, village, tribe, neighborhood, church, and family. Dance styles and traditions from different cultures and nations are being used to magnify the Lord.

We rejoice as we see and hear the name of the Lord being up lifted all over the planet. As we continue to raise Him up, He will draw people from afar to worship at His footstool. His footstool is the Earth! Let us expand our borders and celebrate the diversities and similarities in the Body as all creation surrenders in worship. It is often said that dance is a universal language. Let us all learn to speak it fluently.

### **Psalm 86:9**

*All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.*

### **Isaiah 2:2**

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.*

### **Revelation 15:4**

*Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.*

## It Depends on You

There are many opportunities for war. We will become battle-worn and weary if we move away from pursuing peace. Fierce competition seems to be an enduring thorn in the side of worship arts ministries. If we find ourselves in a perpetual war, we must aim to be peacemakers rather than full-time warriors.

The beauty of balance is that we must know how and when to do both. We will never know this through the flesh. The Spirit will guide us concerning wartime and peace. The enemy is not comprised of flesh and blood. Our fellow movement ministers should not be counted among those on whom we declare war. Brethren are to always reconcile and maintain the bond of unity.

The Lord's timing is impeccable. If it is possible, we are to be at peace with one another. If it is not possible, we must remain humble before the Lord to always allow the occasion for healing and reunion. We do this through practicing forgiveness daily. We must bless those who persecute us. When we remember the stain of our own sins and how the Lord has cleansed and forgiven us, we will become guardians of peace, and not supporters of war. Shalom.

**Exodus 14:14**

*The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.*

**Psalms 34:14**

*Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

**Proverbs 16:7**

*When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

**Romans 12:18**

*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

## Sweet Land of Liberty

Freedom in the Lord is unlike any other. The more we immerse ourselves in His Word and bask in His love, the more we realize that being a bondservant to Christ is the most liberating existence that we could ever have! Freedom in Christ will allow us to dance and minister in ways that we have never seen in the natural. He will give us the ability to bring the Heavenly vision into the earth realm through visual ministry.

The dictates of men may try to make us think that we are in some way hindered by our technical skills or inexperience. The Lord says that we are free. Years of dance classes and experience may give us confidence to dance, but do not validate us in God. Without Christ, we can do nothing. The rules of the church may place dance ministry in a box, but the Spirit sets us at liberty. People may scoff at the passion we have for movement ministry, but this does not deter us. Our God reminds us that we walk by faith.

Liberty must be exercised. We only have true freedom when the Spirit of the Lord is present. If we try to demand liberty in the flesh, we will cause chaos and dissention in the Body. Freedom is not forced. We desire to be in His will, and worship in His presence. Let freedom ring!

### **Psalm 119:45**

*And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.*

### **Galatians 5:13**

*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

### **James 1:25**

*But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

## Let's Face It...

The art of mime has gained increasing popularity in the movement ministries. It is done by both males and females and is often accompanied by gloves and face paint. The garments worn are usually unisex robes or black and white clothing, though many strides are being made in the area of mime garments. Mime ministries cross racial barriers and denominational lines. The face of the mime may be covered in face paint for highlighted expression. There are other times when this is not the case.

Whether or not the mime minister chooses to stay within the traditional confines of mime protocol, there is a unique mandate on each person to move under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We are beyond the place where we have to model ourselves after other ministries. The key is not to become a "character" but a reflection of Christ as we minister before Him.

As we continue to learn more about the Lord, He will give renewed vision and birth Divinely creative ways to break through the walls of "church as usual." The genres that we are aware of now may change and grow over the next few years. If we remain open, the Lord can use us to usher in a new and creative dance art form. We do not have to be relegated to borrowing our technique from the traditional dance world. We can change the face of movement ministry as we know it if we seek His face first.

### **Deuteronomy 5:4**

*The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.*

### **1 Chronicles 16:1**

*Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face evermore!*

### **Psalm 17:15**

*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.*

## Making a Name for Yourself

Many desire a famous name in ministry, but do not want to accomplish the work that it takes to get there. Marketing, television shows, and public appearances do not make a name that will endure. The name of Jesus is known throughout the world because of what He did when He was on this earth. If He would not have been obedient in ministry and endured the cross, His name would not have the impact that it does throughout the generations. A name can also become infamous through scandal. This is not the type of situation in which we want to find ourselves.

Movement ministries are facing the same type of pressure to accomplish what savvy business people have studied for years. There is the idea that if you are not a published author on the subject of dance ministry, then you are not knowledgeable. If your website is not flashy and professionally designed, then it may be thought that you are a "little fish" in the pond. If the opportunity for you to earn a monthly salary through the benefit of multiple engagements on your itinerary has not rescued you from your full-time job, you may be shunned from sitting on the front row of major dance ministry events. It is who the Lord says we are that matters.

We are all at different stages and places in our lives. If we build our houses on sand, they will wash away. The Lord gives witty inventions. We must wait on His timing to succeed at them with maximum effect. Let us stay prayerful not to envy what seems to be the success of our fellow laborers in dance. Sometimes a meteoric rise will be followed by a very public failure. It is endurance that wins the race.

### **Genesis 12:2**

*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.*

### **2 Samuel 7:9**

*And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.*

*Day 186*

## "Bored of Directors"

Leadership is not something to be used as a bargaining chip. There are many ministry leaders today who are holding onto positions for dear life, but are not leading the people in the way that they should go. Many dance leaders have been appointed to serve in a Ministry Director capacity for which they are not prepared. It is my prayer that churches are not implementing movement ministries out of a necessity to "keep up with the Joneses."

It is better for a leader to have the passion for dance as a ministry before accepting the appointment to lead. Experience is a bonus, but the impact that wrong motives or misdirected guidance can have on people can scar them for a lifetime. Politics and family/friend relationships too often play a large part in leadership selection.

Now is not the time to lead blindly. Too many dance concerts showcase groups with little or no understanding of movement as a ministry. Many dance leaders are frustrated, burned-out, or outright bored in their current positions. Many organizations are forcing movement ministries into a carbon-copy type of group activity and are not asking the Lord for His will to be done.

If He instructs us to move from a position, we should follow Him to experience the fullness of His calling. If we lack passion, we must seek God for restoration and instruction. There are lives hanging in the balance, and more leaders to be developed. Let us make sure to move our flesh out of the way so that we are not a stumbling block to others.

### **Isaiah 9:16**

*For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed.*

### **Matthew 15:13-14**

*But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."*

## Progress Report

It is said that bad news travels fast. Along our ministry journey, we will experience triumphs and tragedies. Encounters with victory and adversity will breed strength and endurance in us. Although people may speak evil of us for various reasons, we are not to try to address every rumor and supposition. We must be diligent to make sure that any bad reports about us are untrue.

We will have missteps in movement ministry. Humility reminds us to confess our faults and repent and reconcile for any wrongdoing. The enemy is the accuser of the brethren. If the Lord has delivered us from a past that did not glorify Him, then we should not be ashamed. If our lives are anything like that of Abraham, David, or Paul, the Lord can definitely use us for His Kingdom.

Let us also not be guilty of spreading bad reports about our fellow ministers of dance. The Lord is the Judge. Let us continue to check our own motives and stay pure before the Lord. A healthy body does not fight against itself. How we conduct ourselves can help or hinder the progress of another ministry. Rumors will continue to circulate, but we need only believe the report of the Lord.

### **Exodus 23:1**

*[Justice for All] You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.*

### **Numbers 14:36-37**

*Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the LORD.*

### **Proverbs 15:30**

*The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and a good report makes the bones healthy.*

### **Philippians 4:8**

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

## Calcu-LATE

Starting something new is always exciting. Many announce fervent interest in the movement ministry after seeing a dance in person or in the media. Others desire to join because of the perceived glamour and celebrity associated with dance ministry (or so they think). As soon as the subject of money for garments, conferences, books, or offerings surface, we will discover that there are less with us than initially began the journey.

Ministry incurs expenses. Though there are some who travel by all-expenses-paid arrangements, most movement ministries have not arrived at that place. Hosting several dancers and paying all expenses for events will incur a financial impact that most churches and organizers may not be able to reasonably provide.

Dancers often self-fund trips, purchases, and ministry education. This is a benefit in that the dancer is able to retain the experience, knowledge, and priceless opportunity to win souls for the Kingdom. It can also open future doors that can lead to ministry donations, sponsorships, and funding.

Ministries should serve out of a desire to obey, please, and magnify the Lord. The cost of discipleship will mean surrendering some of our desired comforts and pleasures. If there are specific things that we must have in order to accept an invitation to minister, we should not wait until the last minute to make our requests known. We should avoid placing ourselves in situations where we find out that we do not have enough resources or time to accomplish the task. By then we are knee-deep, and it is already too late.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:4-5**

*When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed- Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*

### **Matthew 25:8-10**

*And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.*

## Lip Service

Dancing is not enough. We must have enough Word in us that we can verbalize His goodness. Some prefer to sing along with songs as they dance. This is not a requirement or a suggestion. Too many dancers hide behind the songs and movements, and cannot tell one personal testimony of the transforming power of God in their own lives.

While we spend time practicing our routines, we should also spend time each day giving Him the fruit of our lips. This does not mean to grab a bullhorn and stand on the street corner and yell Scriptures to passersby. Wherever and whenever we find an opportunity to praise His name, we should jump at the chance. Whether we are in our homes, in the car, taking a shower, riding the elevator, or walking down the street, we can take many moments throughout the day to tell the Lord how wondrous He is to us. The joy that will result cannot be hidden.

The more we magnify the Lord, the more of Him people will be able to see in our lives and ministries. It is not difficult to show conviction, passion, and emotion through dance when we do it on a daily basis. Praise and worship does not start at dance rehearsal, it starts with us.

### **Job 8:21**

*He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing.*

### **Psalm 40:9**

*I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O LORD, You Yourself know.*

### **Psalm 63:3**

*Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.*

### **Hebrews 13:15**

*Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

*Day 190*

## Ain't No Mountain High Enough!

We can run, but we can't hide! Many who have been called to the ministry of movement have had challenging times in which it felt like the sacrifice was too great. The rejection, pressure, expenses, time, energy, lost relationships, and unexpected life situations have many believing that it is time to give up. The moment of the race that is the most painful is near the end. It is at this point that the legs seem to want to stop moving, the heartbeat pounds at maximum capacity, and the lungs burn like intense fire. It is also here that the reward is obtained.

When the people in the Bible wanted to honor other gods, they would set up a monument on a high mountain. God gave instructions many times that these false idols should be thrown down. When Jesus was tempted, Satan took Him upon a high mountain to show what he could offer. In our lives, there should be no "mountain" high enough to get us to walk away from the Lord, or serve anything else but His purpose. We must speak to every high place in our lives to come under the subjection of Christ!

Whatever our "issues" may be, the Lord will sustain us if we desire to be set free. Our testimonies will birth many dances that will see the prisoner unshackled if we allow the Lord to have His way in us. Let us continue to move by His Spirit, knowing that there is nothing higher than the Lord our God. Glory to God in the Highest!

### **Deuteronomy 12:2**

*You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.*

### **Amos 4:13**

*For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind, Who declares to man what his thought is, and makes the morning darkness, Who treads the high places of the earth— The LORD God of hosts is His name.*

## Bring Them In

Dances that remain disconnected to the Word and irrelevant to what the Spirit is saying are done in vain. In the ministry of Jesus, he dealt with real issues that were facing the religious and natural lives of the people. Many dances are meaningful only to the persons performing it, and are meaningless to the viewer. This is not the purpose of movement ministry.

There is no special quality in the dance itself that makes it anointed. It is the heart of the dance minister, and the Word of God that moves on our behalf. If we are not careful, we will neglect to acknowledge that the Word is at work, and mistakenly magnify the dance. We are doers of the Word, not doers of the dance.

For movement to be ministry, it must lift up Jesus so that He can draw people to Himself by the Spirit. We are not to merely wait for people to come into our churches to receive the Word. As when Jesus walked the earth, the sick, lame, tormented, and dead were brought to Him to inherit a life-altering testimony. Let us draw the viewer in by remembering that those who need ministry may need to be carried into His presence through the use of our hands, arms, and shoulders.

### **Mark 2:3**

*Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.*

### **John 12:32**

*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.*

### **Acts 5:16**

*Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.*

## Knit Picking

It is often said that we must be careful concerning who we are connected to. If we are not in relationship with the Lord, we will definitely make poor choices in selecting our companions. The decisions that we make in life and ministry will have an impact on us for better or for worse.

We should not develop relationships with ulterior motives. It is also not conducive to our growth to spend most of our time with people who agree with everything that we say and do. Dance leaders should forge close relationships with other leaders and Pastors who can help them improve in skill and wise understanding. Dance Ministers should walk closely with others who are striving to lead a life of purity before the Lord. We are more likely to stay on the path of righteousness if we select friends and associates who honor God.

David and Jonathan's friendship was so deep that they were described as being "knit" together by the soul. We must examine what holds our relationships together. For some of us, it may be a tangled web of obligation and controlling personalities. For others, it may be a past of unwise decisions and comfort in familiarity. Those who we once called friends can quickly become our enemies. We should pray that the love of God holds us together in relationships that do not seek to glorify the flesh.

Webs can be broken. Faith can overcome fear and move beyond the familiar. Love overcomes it all. Let us pray to the Lord concerning who we are "knitted" to. If we are always chosen by our friends and seldom find ourselves selecting them with care, then we must decide Who we will serve, and re-organize our relationships to support God's will in our lives.

### **1 Samuel 18:1**

*Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*

### **Proverbs 12:26**

*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

## Spare Change

As we observe the world around us, it seems that there is more tolerance for what the Word calls sin. Although believers are supposed to be separate from the Godless practices of the world, many are embracing the customs of it in the name of liberty. The dance ministry is not immune to this trend.

Many dance leaders are living in intimacy with others to whom they are not married. Countless dancers are living sinful lifestyles that do not glorify God. Self-absorbed, conceited “divas” terrorize churches, communities, and dance programs with spiritual terrorism and sorority-style superiority. It is time to confront these destructive tactics of the enemy and spare not!

Those who labor in the ministry of movement should not be overtaken by sin. We are more than conquerors! Perfection is a standard to which we aim, but the practice of willful disobedience sends shockwaves that cannot be measured if we do not yield to the Word of the Lord. Tolerance of gross sin and misconduct only serves to disqualify movement as a ministry if practiced by dance ministers. Let us lay the lure of sin on the altar, and let nothing sinful remain that can again spring up. No more excuses! Leave nothing behind for the enemy to claim. It's time to walk in righteousness.

### **Ezekiel 5:11**

*'Therefore, as I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish you; My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity.'*

### **2 Peter 2:4-7, 9**

*For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...*

*...then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment*

## "Scept-acular!"

The Word is teeming with visual imagery and symbolism. Our creative God is neither boring nor mundane. Movement ministry should be as vivid and limitless as the Word. The more that we understand the power of visual symbolism recorded in the Bible, we become more effective when incorporating visual imagery in dance.

A crown is often used to denote Kingship or royalty in many dance and pageantry presentations. Another powerful visual tool that can be used in movement ministry is the scepter. A King's scepter denotes authority and sovereign rule. It is a personal item in that it is held in the King's hand and can be moved by pointing and upright placement (like a staff), even in matters of decision-making. In contrast, a crown is often placed on the head and is rarely moved or used once in place. In the book of Esther, the extension of the King's scepter meant the difference between life and death.

Scepters can be made by hand, purchased online, or obtained at costume and prop stores for use in worship. Gold and silver are popular colors, often richly decorated with or without jewels of various colors. These can be ornate and long or short. Choreographic movements can highlight the majesty of royal symbols.

We must take care to remember that the Kingship is to be at the forefront. Scepters that appear feminine may give the impression that a queen is in power. There is no perfect scepter on earth that can capture what the Sovereign King would hold in the Heavens. When we seek and ask the Lord for Divine creativity, He will show us that it has already been revealed in His Word.

### **Genesis 49:10**

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.*

### **Hebrews 1:8**

*But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom."*

## Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Sin impairs vision. Because the Lord cannot look upon sin, He has to turn away from it. Wickedness will cause us to have impaired spiritual sight, as we are not able to clearly see the Lord's leading in our lives. If we are operating in movement ministry and habitually practicing sin, it will become apparent that we are disconnected from the Lord. What is done in the dark comes to light.

If we love Him, we are to keep His commandments. Hypocrisy has become a stain on the reputation of the church beyond the pulpit. The worship arts realm is especially vulnerable because of the many "fans" that are attracted to artistic gifts and the prospect of financial gain resulting from these talents. We must guard ourselves from being blindsided by sin. This will allow us to have the maximum impact as ministers of movement.

Dancers should not feel comfortable with ungodly lifestyles in a ministry that keeps God at the forefront through prayer, Bible study, and worship. The first ministry that must take place begins with us. A lifestyle of holiness should cause others to want to follow Jesus as well. When we seek Him in our personal prayer time and devotion, He will make his glory visible in us to those around us.

### **2 Chronicles 7:20**

*Then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.*

### **Jeremiah 4:1**

*"If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; and if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be moved."*

### **Psalms 10:4-5**

*The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts. His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight*

## Crying to Keep from Laughing

It is a false assumption that all dances should be done with smiles on our faces. Sometimes a sign of joy is a face wet with tears. Truth realizes that we have a range of emotions, and if we are worshipping in sincerity, then we will not always express the same emotion all of the time. The Lord is aware of our joys and sorrows, and there is a time to express both.

We should not be so unbalanced in that we are always crying during ministry either. Allowing the Lord to reveal to us when it is appropriate to express our emotions during ministry is gained through prayer and relationship with Him. It is significant to note that those who minister in mime may paint a smile or tears on the face to signal the tone of the piece to the viewer. Dancers use the face and bodily movements to convey emotion.

When we are freed from the mindset of the "rules" of movement ministry, we are then able to express ourselves with freedom in knowing that the Lord fully expects us to be expressive before Him. If we are overwhelmed with tears, those same teardrops will minister to many. Laughter may cause others to rejoice. The times that we express sorrow are vital to enjoy the deep laughter that only the Lord can give.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:4**

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance*

### **Ecclesiastes 7:3**

*Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better.*

### **Luke 6:21**

*Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.*

## Untitled

The dance ministry is experiencing the same challenges that are hindering the church. Being a servant seems to be regarded as a less honorable goal, and the privilege of being served has emerged in too many movement ministries. The designation of a specific ministerial title or office is relished by many who have forgotten the true purpose of ministry. Jesus Himself became a servant to His disciples and humbled Himself to wash their feet.

It is not that we should not honor those whom the Lord has ordained. Esteeming others maintains humility in our own lives. Those that we applaud should not solely come from our circle of friends. If we have to demand to be called by a specific "title" by others, then are we really operating in the realm that we claim? If we walk in the Light, who we really are cannot remain hidden.

Jesus Himself asked Peter to tell Him who He was. He did not have to convince people of His identity. His life and ministry testified for itself. Our lives should also speak for us. When we remember that "minister" means servant, we should remain in a posture of submission so that we do not attempt to rob God of His Glory.

Instead of desiring to be the "Principal Dancer," we should aim to be a servant to the Gospel. Rather than demanding to be esteemed, we should commend others who are laboring for the Kingdom. True honor comes from the Lord. If we have given ourselves labels that the Lord has not designated for us, then we will be found to be liars and deceivers in the end.

### **2 Corinthians 12:5-6**

*Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.*

### **1 Thessalonians 2:5-6**

*For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.*

## "Frienemies"

What often derails us is the unexpected. We should not embrace lives of fear and mistrust; however, we should not be surprised when those who proclaim to be with us transition from friends into foes. This reality is often necessary so that we learn to trust only the Lord and do not depend on others to reach the place to which the Lord has called us.

We should not be surprised if the strongest dancer in our ministry seeks to replace us. Revenge must be resisted when we discover that our fellow dance ministers have been gossiping about us. Dancers who seemingly betray us by stealing our ideas will teach us wisdom down the road. Heartache must not take up long-term residency when we are falsely accused and berated. We must bear our own cross.

Knowing that the Word warns us that these things will happen should make us better prepared when they occur. The pain of abandonment and broken relationships is very real. The enemy of our souls would desire to see that these hardships would cause us to give up and walk away from the ministry. Our Lord wants to see us prevail as more than conquerors through Him.

Jesus Himself knows the sting of betrayal on account of Judas. This was necessary in order for Him to complete His mission for this world. Our experiences are also pivotal, and we must embrace the life that results from trials. Let us not make the mistake of assuming that everyone who started out with us meant to harm us from the beginning. Judas served with Jesus in ministry, and then later allowed the enemy to enter in. Both friends and enemies are vital to our lives. Without enemies, the Lord would not be able to prepare a table before us in their presence.

### **Psalm 41:9**

*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*

### **Zechariah 13:6**

*And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'*

## "Alter" Call

The lure of flashing lights, throbbing music, and a dance floor versus the opportunity to dance in the Light to life-giving lyrics in the presence of the Lord seems a difficult choice to make for many dancers. The remedy is that dancers must realize that our gifts and talents are given to us to bring glory to God. Many will say that "Dance is my life," and "I was born to dance!" The truth of the matter is that the Bible does not define a "call to dance."

There is a warning that must be issued to those of us in movement ministry. We must be careful that we do not begin to devise alternative doctrines and teachings in order to justify why we do what we do. The Word provides enough Scripture for us to dance before Him with freedom and conviction. When we try to alter Biblical writings to fit our own beliefs, then we are in danger of leading people away from Christ.

There is hope in our calling. The challenge is to correctly define what it is that we are called to do. When we interject our own theories into movement ministry and begin to follow those ideas more than the Word of God, we will find ourselves building on sinking sand. Ministry can be accomplished in many ways. Dance and movement definitely minister to people for various reasons. Let's make sure not to add things to the Word which are not written.

### **Deuteronomy 4:2**

*You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

### **Psalms 89:34**

*My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.*

## Dearly Departed

We pray that we never experience a time when the presence of the Lord departs from our lives and ministries. A way to combat this is to remain humble and obedient to the Word of God. We must continue to move with Him in whatever way He chooses to reveal Himself. When we are trained to recognize Him, we are less likely to miss the move of God.

Dance ministries of yesteryear may find themselves stuck in the form and fashion of trying to work an equation in an attempt to invoke the Presence of the Lord. Our contrived formulas cannot force the Lord to permeate an atmosphere. It is our hearts that He searches. Nothing can cause an "Ichabod" experience like sin, pride, and self-reliance. Just because we seemingly carry the Presence with us often when we dance, does not guarantee a God-encounter in every ministry piece we render.

Our Lord is not limited to objects or particular ministries. He can work through the ministry down the street just as well as He can choose to use us for His Glory. A powerless dance ministry is a troubling sight to behold. Without the Spirit of the Lord operating through us, our efforts are fruitless. We need the Glory, not for ourselves, but to introduce the Savior to a dying world. Who else can snatch them from the grips of death and usher them into eternal life? Not unto us, Lord. Not unto us...

### **1 Samuel 4:22**

*And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."*

### **1 Samuel 18:12**

*Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul.*

### **Psalms 51:11**

*Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

### **Jeremiah 17:5**

*Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD."*

## More Than I Can Bare

It seems like we should be past the point where there is any question about what is appropriate for dance attire in a worship setting. Every dance ministry does not have to fit into the cookie-cutter mode of garments, but there are some basic commonalities that will prevent major fallout. What works in the church setting may differ from what works outside on the sidewalk. The key is to honor God and respect the viewing audience so as not to hinder our efforts.

It does not matter which culture we are trying to portray in our dances; we must be mindful of the culture that we are ministering to. If we think globally, we would respect the values of a country when travelling for ministry as long as they do not violate the principles of the Word. This will allow us to minister to them in a way that can be understood. Showing bare midriffs and bulging breasts will surely cause a ripple in the worship setting. Visible bra straps for females and boxer short on males (yes, I have seen this more than once) will distract. We should take precautions to avoid this.

There remains the segment of dancers who "feel" like we should have liberty to wear whatever suits us best. I would invite these dancers to refer to the Bible for instructions and pray for revelation in this area. Overly large, non-flattering garments can be dangerous and impair movement. We do not have to go to extremes. Wisdom and understanding will eliminate much of the discussion in this area. We must think beyond ourselves, and consider that others are watching our every move.

### **Ezekiel 16:8**

*"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.*

### **Revelation 3:18**

*I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

## The Art of the Perfumer

We should carefully consider how the perfumes or colognes that we wear can affect the movement ministry. A light, sweet scent may not be a noticeable distraction. Heavily doused skin or garments can cause an allergic reaction that we may not desire or expect. Each movement minister must know which direction to go in the area of fragrance selection.

It is better to smell sweet than to offend. The Scriptures refer to fragrances in the positive context as pleasant and sweet-smelling. One of the most remarkable acts of worship recorded in the Bible involves a woman and a costly offering of fragrant oil. The contents of her alabaster container were deemed extremely valuable.

The maidens in the Book of Esther were expected to come before the king scented fragrantly. King Solomon describes the love of his life as one who understood the importance of aroma. Perfuming ourselves is an indication of love, preparation, and worship. How much more thought should we put into the fragrance of our garments, skin, and worship instruments? Let's not go overboard. It's the thought that counts!

### **Exodus 30:25**

*And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.*

### **Proverbs 27:9**

*Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.*

### **Matthew 26:7**

*A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.*

### **Ephesians 5:2**

*And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.*

## Believing is Seeing!

Trying to debate critics about the validity of movement as a ministry may not be a wise use of our time. Even some of those who witnessed the miraculous works of Jesus doubted His legitimacy. We must keep obeying the directives of the Lord and watch as lives are transformed, miracles manifest, and the Body is edified.

Many instances in the Scriptures describe people who have eyes, but do not see. We rejoice when we dance before an audience that "gets it," but there will be times that we go before people who seem to be blind. This balance is necessary so that we are not puffed up in our own charismatic ability to "wow" the crowd with our moving presentations.

There are those who are spiritually blinded by traditions and embrace thoughts of dance as a fleshly activity that has no place among believers. Believing opens the eyes of people to comprehend the move of God. We are blessed if we believe and do not see, even though some will adhere to the old adage that "seeing is believing."

Once we taste, we will see that the Lord is good! Our prayer is that the ministry of movement will be an opportunity for unbelievers to come to repentance. After ministering in dance on several occasions, I have personally encountered several people who confessed that dance ministry was problematic for them, but was no longer as a result of the dance that was offered! Praise the Lord for His revelation to His people to see His Kingdom at work in the earth. If we believe, we will be able to see beyond the natural and into the spiritual.

### **Psalm 27:13**

*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

### **John 6:40**

*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

### **John 11:40**

*Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"*

# The Glorious Kingdom

Our God is glorious! As His children and joint heirs with Christ, we are to reflect the Majesty of His Kingdom. Let us offer the Lord our very best in the ministry of movement. Praise and Worship props can greatly assist with the understanding of the Message. The more authentic our items, the more powerful the representation will become.

There are times that the ministry may experience budgetary constraints. We may have to begin with something less ornate, but we can gradually upgrade to ministry visual tools that are more durable. We should consider these purchases to be investments in the ministry, as well-made items tend to last longer.

We are without limit in the use of glorious worship implements. If the Lord shows it to us, then it is possible. Let us pray for skilled craftsman that can provide us with the tools we need to enhance our visual presentations. There is a new level of Divine creativity awaiting us. Let's get moving!

## **Isaiah 11:10**

*And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.*

## **Isaiah 60:13**

*The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious.*

## **2 Corinthians 3:7-9**

*But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.*

*Day 205*

## Mortal Combat

Because we use our bodies as tools for ministry, the temptations that we face may often be carnal in nature. What is alluring to someone else may not be a trap for us. We may allow ourselves to overindulge in various areas if we are not watchful. Any areas that we find ourselves struggling with must be confessed and submitted to the Lord.

These problem areas may come in the form of food addiction, inappropriate physical relationships, unhealthy habits (smoking, drinking, lack of exercise, etc), and so on. Think that dancers in the church are not practicing immoral activities? Think again. We must daily surrender our personal struggles to the Lord and ask Him to purify our hearts. What is allowed to rule the mind will eventually show up in our bodies and destroy the validity of our ministries.

Ministers of dance must carefully guard against any inclination to practice unrighteousness. Each day that we overcome temptation is a victory. If we want to operate in the power of the Spirit, we must daily place the flesh under subjection. The call to discipleship involves discipline. Physically toning and training our bodies is not enough. Spiritual wholeness is a vital component for effective movement ministry to transform the lives of others. The combative process begins with us.

### **Romans 6:12**

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.*

### **2 Corinthians 4:11**

*For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*

### **Galatians 5:19-21**

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

## Perfect Imperfections

If we think that we have mastered movement ministry, we must remember that the only true Master is Jesus. There may be times when we feel as though our dance is not good enough, or that we somehow disappointed the Lord with our offering of movement. We may feel that our own shortcomings hinder us from giving God our best. Let us silence the false accusations of the enemy, and listen to the Word of the Lord.

If we have a tendu that is not an example of proper form, remember that He is Perfect. When our pirouettes spin out of line, we know that God is in control. If there are moments that we forget the choreography when dancing, we remember that He has not forgotten us. Our confidence is in Him and not in ourselves.

Whatever our physical limitations may be, we are qualified to perform the work that the Lord has given our hands and feet to do. If there are areas in which we can improve, we must commit ourselves to gaining the skills needed to operate at our most optimal levels. There is no condemnation for us. Let us allow His perfect will to be done in our lives and ministries.

### **Psalm 138:8**

*The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands.*

### **2 Corinthians 4:7**

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*

### **Hebrews 13:20-21**

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

### **Ephesians 4:12**

*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*

## Agree to Disagree

We may not all have the same opinion on a matter, but we can come to an agreement when we put our egos aside. Everyone will not agree to the same choreography all of the time. There may be some differing opinions in regards to the garments worn for a piece. We may not all share the same sentiment about a song at a particular time. It is during these times that the ratio of flesh to Spirit in us is revealed.

If the Lord is leading us to speak up when we are engaged in conversation, we must do so in a way that edifies and is not self-seeking. Too many dance ministry team members feel comfortable speaking to the dance leader in a way that is not honorable. It is not that we should regard leaders as "gods" in our lives, it is that we revere God and therefore honor those He has set in place.

In turn, leaders must also allow the Lord to guide the vision, direction, music selection and choreographic choices. Although the leader may not be responsible for all of these elements, ultimately someone has to make the final decision. When we agree to walk in unity, our gatherings will be good and pleasant.

### **Amos 3:3**

*Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*

### **Proverbs 12:18**

*There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.*

### **Matthew 5:25**

*Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.*

### **James 3:16**

*For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

*Day 208*

## Hand Shake

When we realize that each and every movement in a dance should find its origin in the Word of God, we will witness the Word come alive before our eyes. Even when the observer does not realize that a motion is based on Scripture, the life-giving truth of the Word works. The more we incorporate Word-breathed movement, the less physical the work becomes. The Spirit and the Word applied in dance ministry will make it effortless to move through the Power of God on a regular basis.

This serves as a reminder that we cannot be haphazard in our selection of movement. Putting choreographic elements together merely as "filler" to lead into the next section will not be effective. There are times in ministry when the Lord will lead us to re-choreograph a particular section or an entire piece as He sees fit. Learning to rely on His direction will make us dedicate ourselves to Him more than to the dance.

The shaking of the hands or fists in the Bible indicates judgment. When we shake our hands in choreography, we are not doing so from our own point of view. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Knowing the Lord as Righteous Judge will allow us to convey the judgment of the Lord in a way that provokes repentance for ourselves and the congregation of witnesses. Although we cannot limit shaking hands in motion solely to justice, knowing the various ways movement was used in the Bible will help us to be more precise in the ministry of dance. We often hear that taking dance classes increases our "vocabulary" to dance more effectively. Immersing ourselves in the Word of God will also increase our "spiritual movement vocabulary," so that we can dance with skill, power, precision, and understanding.

### **Isaiah 11:15**

*The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dryshod.*

### **Ezekiel 21:17**

*"I also will beat My fists together, and I will cause My fury to rest; I, the LORD, have spoken."*

## Attention to Detail

When we are searching for praise elements to incorporate in our dances, we must pay careful attention to all of the details included on them and in them. Items designed for the tabernacle were to be made in a specific manner by a specific type of thing or person. The Lord's instructions are saturated with revelation. Many of the symbolic instruments that we use today are not made expressly for Kingdom use, but can still serve a great purpose.

There are people who have the creative gifting to construct awesome worship tools by hand. Having someone readily accessible with this level of skill is not always an option. For example, if we need a sword or shield in a movement piece, we should examine them to see if there are any dragons, demonic images or sinister likenesses on them. The representation does not have to be literal. If there are images that are contrary to what the Word of the Lord says, we must continue to pray until we find a suitable representation.

Understanding Biblical symbols will aid us in presenting worshipful pieces rich with substance. Even the fabric that we choose for garments (especially brocades) should be examined to ensure that they do not contain any imagery that represents idols or images that do not honor God Almighty. We should not be paranoid about evil when purchasing ministry essentials. Seeking understanding and operating with keen discernment will allow us to be able to make these choices quickly and confidently.

### **Hosea 12:10**

*I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; "I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets."*

### **Hebrews 9:8-9**

*The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience*

## Let's Get Physical!

It is important to have a spiritual foundation in movement ministry. It is often quoted that we cannot be "So spiritual that we are no earthly good." Some dancers focus solely on the spiritual aspects of ministry, but forget about the physical portions of it. We must find a balance between the two.

Failing to care for ourselves will reduce our effectiveness as movement ministers. Lack of sleep, poor eating habits, and unrealistic schedules will cause harm to us both physically and spiritually. Our love for the Lord should compel us to nurture the bodies that He blessed us with. Proper stretching and positioning will aid in keeping our joints supple and develop instruments that are finely tuned for the Lord's use.

What we eat will also contribute to the functionality of our bodies. When we gain too much weight, we place undue strain on our backs, legs, and feet, which are essential to what we do. When we do not get the right nutrients, our bones may become fragile and susceptible to injury. Swollen feet and painful knees will only become excuses as to why we are unable to dance.

To be used at optimal levels, we must gain a foothold on our health. When we submit to the Lord, He will guide us as to what is required for our individual bodies. Maintaining good habits now will give us longevity in ministry and greater ease in performing our service unto the Lord.

### **2 Chronicles 15:7**

*But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!*

### **Nehemiah 6:9**

*For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.*

### **3 John 1:2**

*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*

*Day 211*

## Testimony Service

Hearing testimonies that we can personally relate to brings edification to the church. Hearing and seeing them through movement ministry should also benefit the saints. When we do not understand the purpose of dance as a ministry, we may find ourselves sharing scenarios that are not relative to others. Our struggles and testimonies are valuable, but may not always be appropriate for an audience at that time.

Dancers who face tremendous difficulties in life may sometimes use a ministry invitation as an occasion to work through whatever problems they may have through music and movement. We must remember that ministry is service. Though we may be blessed by the songs that we minister to in truth, the primary purpose is to serve others. Witnessing a dancer have an emotional breakdown during ministry may invoke sympathy, but will be less likely to bless the observers. Getting emotional is normal, but allowing negative emotions to run amok should be worked out before we step in front of people.

Songs about personal experiences should be used prayerfully. When we allow the Lord to select the songs that we minister, He will give us the time and place to minister them effectively. Divine timing will result in agreement from the viewer and encourage the people. Let our testimonies serve as opportunities to bring glory to God and Him alone.

### **Luke 21:13**

*But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

*Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

### **1 John 5:11**

*And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

## Paper or Plastic?

In the myriad of activities that we participate in every year, we agree that it takes money for ministry to go forth. Many of us have financed ministry garments, travel, and lodging accommodations. Conference registrations and ministry outings can definitely claim a sizable portion of our funds. It is wonderful to invest our resources into the work of the Kingdom. If we are not wise, we can also incur a significant financial burden.

Planning in advance will allow us to have the maximum resources available to us. Purchasing airline tickets early can save hundreds of dollars in comparison to last-minute shopping. Conferences often offer early-bird registration rates to delegates who plan ahead. Deciding dates for garment purchases beforehand, or even purchasing garment separates in stages will allow everyone to get the needed items with the least amount of stress. A solid color garment with different overlays can be a great money-saver and add to the variety of our garment options.

If we find ourselves spending all of our money before the next payday and getting into debt, we must pray to the Lord regarding stewardship. Our bills at home should not go lacking while we are "going therefore into all the world." If we have credit card debt or owe people money, it is a good idea to pay it before we spend it elsewhere. Setting a personal and ministry budget will allow us to stay on task and operate with integrity. The Lord provides where He guides. There may be times when we have to postpone an idea or journey to set our houses in order.

### **2 Kings 4:7**

*Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest."*

### **Habakkuk 2:6-8**

*"Will not all these take up a proverb against him, and a taunting riddle against him, and say, 'Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges?' Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty."*

## Kiss and Make-Up

What is and what is not appropriate in the church varies with tradition, doctrine, customs, gender, and even ethnicity. The Word tells us to greet one another with a holy kiss (2 Corinthians 13:12), but some people may use that as an occasion for error. We should not allow ourselves to get caught up in the condemnation of who is allowed to wear pants, jewelry, or make-up. The truth is that it matters to some people. Internal beauty is far more valuable than external beauty.

Wearing make-up and jewelry in some church settings is still a widely contested topic. For safety, larger earrings may be avoided, but total exclusion of all adornment and beauty products could place us in the position of legalism. The color of a woman's nail polish should compliment the message of the dance, if she so chooses to wear it. Extreme make-up colors and fingernail designs will produce a stronger focus on the dancer than on Christ. Ministry groups should come to a consensus regarding beautification and unity among the team of dancers. This should not be finalized without prayer.

It is unfortunate that many are still debating these issues while the world around us is perishing. We should search the Word regarding anything that offends us concerning the appearance of another, and base our conclusions on the Bible. Whether we dance in pants or skirts, wear shoes or dance barefoot, wear earrings or hair accessories, paint our faces or not, it is by His Spirit that we live and move.

### **Genesis 29:17**

*Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.*

### **1 Peter 3:3-4**

*Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

### **Revelation 21:2**

*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

## Public Defender

At times we need to be reminded that we do not have to fight for ourselves. There is a time to fight, and usually it is on behalf of someone else. We must contend earnestly for the faith. As dancers, there is a time to be valiant and combative in movement. There is also a time for peace. We must discern the cause for which we are fighting, and choose our battles with the Lord's marching orders.

Wasting time on critics is time that we will not recover. When the ways of the world impede upon our ability to stand on the Word of God, we must not be silent. Many dancers are still fighting against church politics, negative family members, and praise dance assassins who seek to immobilize progress. We cannot worry about the secretive attacks that we face from the adversary. The Lord rewards us openly, making a public spectacle of the enemy.

If there are areas in which we are fighting and seem to be losing, let us stand firm and rely on God Almighty to handle it for us. He will give us peace and rest in the midst of warfare. Strategic positioning includes daily prayer and studying God's Word. When we prepare on a daily basis for the weapons that may try to harm us, we will take courage in knowing that we are protected by putting on the whole armor of God. He is our greatest Defender and Advocate. With Him, we always win!

### **Psalm 5:11**

*But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.*

### **John 18:20**

*Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.*

### **Colossians 2:15**

*Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.*

## Arrivals and Departures

When we go out to minister in dance, how we arrive and how we leave have a great impact on the way that our ministries are perceived. If we arrive late, we cause the host anxiety and can potentially derail an entire program. Entering in a grand fashion, talking loudly, or being disruptive can also cause unneeded distraction. We should maintain a posture of worship and humility when arriving and exiting the ministry location. This will greatly aid in our ability to deliver the message that we intend.

It takes more than just dance to make a ministry piece a success. Greeting event hosts and audio technicians in a courteous manner will place everyone at ease and allow for unity to take place with all involved. If fellow dancers are present, it would behoove us to treat them with the utmost respect as well. Arriving early will allow us to properly survey all involved areas and adjust accordingly.

When departing, we should take care to give thanks to all involved and maintain a posture of humility. There may be people that would like to greet us, and we should treat all of them with grace. How we begin and end should serve as an overall compliment to the ministry. Let's continue to be prayerful concerning how we present ourselves in a general sense.

### **Psalm 18:21**

*For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*

### **Luke 9:6**

*So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel and healing everywhere.*

### **Mark 6:33**

*But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.*

## Rest Stop

Ever-moving and never resting is not a wise practice for dancers. Because of our love for the Lord, we can often find ourselves battling injury, sickness and fatigue because we do not properly care for our bodies. Excitement without wisdom will cause us to over-book and under-prepare. Even the Lord found it necessary to rest and also commanded us to keep the Sabbath as a day that permits no work. We have His permission to stop and rest.

If we neglect to renew ourselves, we will be weak, worn and weary. On a weekly basis, we should set aside some time to maintain personal care. Even if finances do not permit pedicures and visits to the spa, we can allot some time to care for ourselves at home. At least annually, we should schedule some time for vacation (even on a local scale), or just to sit and hear what the Lord wants to say. Clear minds and rested bodies are great assets to ministry. Confusion and fatigue give entrance to the attack of the enemy.

When we are weak and weary, we must yield ourselves to the Lord. There is a vast difference between sleep and rest. When we cast all our cares upon Him and consult Him concerning how He wants us to be renewed, revival will occur. If we allow Him to carry us in the midst of multi-tasking, He will definitely handle the rest.

### **Genesis 18:4**

*Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.*

### **Exodus 33:14**

*And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

### **Hebrews 6:10**

*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

*Day 217*

## Whips and Chains

What the enemy cannot destroy, he will try to keep in bondage. Many dance ministries have suffered attempts of destruction to overtake or derail the movement ministry. These attacks come in various forms, and often involve competition or jealousy. Outside of emotional baggage, what many dancers endure at home with families, children, and spouses can determine continuation in the ministry. In addition, dance ministries may suffer due to loss of members, lack of commitment, and lack of finances. We must remember that Jesus endured the whip that was designed to destroy His body and ultimately prevailed over the cross!

If destruction cannot claim us, bondage will try to keep us from moving forward. Anything that serves as a hindrance to us can potentially keep us from moving forward. Even if we are in a position in which we seem to be immobile, we can be encouraged when we remember that Paul continued his ministry from prison. Dance ministries face bondage when there is no support from leadership, family conflict and opposition from traditional religious systems.

Maintaining focus on the Lord in our ministries will bring healing to our spiritual scars and freedom to our hands and feet. Whips and chains in the form of adversarial forces cannot destroy or bind us when we apply the blood of Jesus. When the Lord is for us, nothing that stands against us will prosper.

### **Philippians 1:12-14**

*But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

### **Matthew 10:17**

*But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.*

## Remote Control

We can only exercise a lifestyle of self-control when we do it out of our love and dedication to God. The spirit is often willing, but the flesh in itself is weak. We need the power of the Spirit to reign in us. Our actions and motions should only be governed by our relationship with Him to use us for Divine purpose.

The channel through which we operate has to remain tuned to the voice of God. Ultimately, only He can select the right music, movement, and visual elements that we need for ministry. When we realize that He gives us the option of handing the "remote control" of dance ministry over to Him, we allow Him to show us the things that we should see. When we only want to watch what we want spiritually and naturally, we may miss out on what the Lord wants to reveal.

Submission to the process to become an anointed movement minister will involve releasing control into the hands of God. We are safe in knowing that He will not lead us astray. The path He has designed for us will always result in selecting the right steps. Yielding to His control will bring about encouragement, edification, and increased effectiveness.

### **Exodus 15:13**

*You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed; You have guided them in Your strength to Your holy habitation.*

### **Isaiah 48:17**

*Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go."*

### **Psalms 32:8**

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.*

## Humble Adoration

The culture of celebrity can cause us to desire recognition that is unmerited. When the Lord does a mighty work through the ministry of movement, people will want to praise the vessel God uses. We should not discourage people from sharing how the ministry has impacted their lives, but we must not allow ourselves to receive the glory. How we respond to both the accolades and the criticism is what the Lord is watching.

The Lord will give us wisdom how to respond to people who admire the ministry. Some may simply need a hug. Others may need a handshake or a smile. We should always demonstrate love when we are approached by people. Regardless of what the motive is, we must make sure that our own intentions are in the right place. It is easy to start out with a pure heart for God, but temptations arise to challenge our devotion. Maintaining humility should be a priority.

By the same measure, we should encourage those who labor faithfully in the ministry. If another dance ministry blesses us, we should share with them how the Lord used them to minister. The Body needs to be built up, and the persecution that comes along with dance ministry calls for balance. When anyone begins to require VIP treatment to work in the ministry, they have lost the essence of the service that ministers are supposed to render.

### **Deuteronomy 3:28**

*But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.*

### **2 Chronicles 35:2**

*And he set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD.*

### **Colossians 2:2**

*That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ*

## It's Greek to Me

We must have compassion even toward those who are unusual to us. Too many dance ministries behave as though every dancer should move, dress, and minister in the same way. God is Lord of the Nations. Different types of cultures praise the Lord in various ways, but it is important for all of us to be led by the Spirit.

When we are not governed by the Lord, our dances may appear confusing to the onlooker. If the message that we preach is not distinct, we can appear as mere entertainers to the crowd. Many today embrace "radical" dance styles, but there is a difference between the Holy and the profane. Clean hands and pure hearts will be apparent in the dance if the motivation for dancing comes from a place of reverence.

The Lord loves diversity, as we can see by looking at the world around us. Kingdom dancers are not all the same size. We do not all wear the same colors, nor do we listen to the same music. The Gospel that we share through movement ministry is for all people, tribes, and tongues. It does not matter if someone is Jew or Greek. Christ died for us all, and as a result, we must not act exclusive when we encounter people who may not do things the way that we see fit.

### **Acts 17:4**

*And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.*

### **Romans 10:12**

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.*

### **1 Corinthians 12:13**

*For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

## My Cup Runneth Over

As dancers, we should make every effort to minimize anything that would distract people from receiving the Word through movement. Dancers in the church setting may not fit into the typical body image of a professional dancer. A big problem with many top-heavy dancers is cleavage that overflows into public view. This is not just a female issue. Viewing the bare male chest in a congregation may also cause uneasy feelings if the exposure in no way relates to the song.

When we bend and bow, it may be very distracting to witness the lines of our flesh or body parts that fly out of bounds. Cheap undergarments are not the answer. Movement ministers should consider investing in quality undergarments that keep the entire “inventory” in order. We will be able to leap and jump with ease when we are securely anchored. Without a proper foundation, we may feel self-conscious or distract the audience unnecessarily.

Our legs may also need containment if we are not at optimal muscle tone. A unitard is a great solution to both problems for women, but we should make an effort to exercise some control. The Lord can use us as vessels, regardless of our physical attributes. If we are experiencing challenges in physical fitness, we should use enough wisdom to make the best of what we have.

### **Exodus 28:28**

*They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.*

### **Job 26:6**

*Sheol is naked before Him, and Destruction has no covering.*

### **2 Corinthians 5:3**

*If indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked*

## That's What Friends Are For

We have to be careful not to surround ourselves with people who will not tell us the truth. Many people feel as though anyone who does not agree with them is against them. This mindset will land us in trouble. No one person has all of the answers in movement ministry. Each part of the Body supplies something that another part needs. If we find ourselves behaving like a members-only Country Club, we must immediately put a stop to it.

Our friends should do more than offer criticism. We should have balance in our relationships through which our friends love us enough to speak the truth. The ability to receive the truth is a subject that we must pray about. All too often, many dancers take correction as criticism in rehearsals instead of an opportunity to develop. Love will teach us the difference between unwarranted critique and genuine concern.

If our relationships are God-ordained, the Lord will use our friends (and our enemies) to keep us on track. We cannot trust our friends more than we trust God. We should each choose our friends carefully. In ministry, the purpose of friendship should be understood. When our so-called friends are exhibiting traits of an enemy, we must pray and evaluate if that season has come to an end.

### **Job 6:14**

*To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*

### **Proverbs 27:17**

*As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

### **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**

*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.*

## The Fabric of Our Lives

When selecting fabrics for custom creations, many factors must go into consideration. There are moments in which we may view a particular fabric, and the Lord will give us a vision for a garment, billow, streamer, or other use for it. There are other times when the Lord may reveal an elaborate presentation idea, and we must find the fabric that brings it to life.

Depending upon where we live, accessing the right types of fabric may be a challenge in selection and expense. Larger metropolitan cities may have fabric districts where a large selection is available and is more affordable. Smaller towns may have few suppliers who will usually have higher prices due to location and shipping challenges. In the age of internet business, many of us can have fabric shipped to our homes. The disadvantage may be that we cannot see the detail and feel the texture of the fabric before we buy it.

In order to uphold symbolic representation, we should be discerning as to the images that may be embroidered onto the fabric. There are also options to have fabric with custom embroidery. We are not limited by what is being manufactured. If the Lord is showing us a vision that He wants us to bring to pass, then He will give us the people and tools that we need to make it happen.

### **Exodus 26:31**

*You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.*

### **Acts 9:39**

*Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.*

### **Acts 16:14**

*Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.*

## For Richer, For Poorer

Our dedication to the Lord should not depend on our financial status. Regardless of the state of the economy, the Lord is still our Provider. If we need dance garments, He will supply us with what we need. When we need to gain knowledge through books, DVDs, or conferences, He is able to make a way. We must use wisdom when desiring ministry products or further instruction. Just because we desire a thing does not mean it's time to buy.

Planning ahead will help us to be able to flourish in times of lack. If there are events that we would like to attend, we can set money aside in advance. Airline tickets, registrations and hotel accommodations may be easier managed if paid over time. When we are unable to attend a gathering in a particular year, we may opt to purchase the video instead. If we need new music, He knows that as well.

There are even times when the Lord will give us favor so that we will not need money to meet our needs. As a ministry, we can request music store gift cards to assist with our budget. By the same measure that we sow, we shall reap. The Lord will use others to bless us. Whether we need food, clothing, or shelter along the journey, He knows what we have need of and will not let us go lacking.

### **Philippians 4:11-12**

*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

### **Philippians 4:19**

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

### **1 Timothy 6:6-7**

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing.*

## Sticks and Stones

Our hands are mighty weapons for the Kingdom. We use our hands when we dance to gesture and point. With them we also wave flags, carry banners, hold props, and more. The Lord prospers the work of our hands. If we are diligent to use our hands for the building of the Kingdom, we will find ourselves fit for the Master's use.

In the ministry of movement, we must be mindful of what we place in our hands. A rod in the hand of Moses was used to perform many wondrous miracles. The power was not in the stick itself, but in obedience to the Lord. David also won a mighty victory over the Philistine with a stone and a slingshot. When we heed the Lord's direction, He will use uncommon things to perform His work.

Dance ministry is but one component of how the Lord uses uncharacteristic methods for His Word to go forth. If there are other areas that the Lord is calling us to, we must be dedicated to obedience in these as well. Remaining washed in the Word and keeping our hands pure will allow the Lord to use what He gave us without contamination. Let us continue to use our hands to build, and not to destroy.

### **Exodus 4:2**

*So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."*

### **1 Samuel 17:40**

*Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine.*

### **Ezekiel 37:19**

*Say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand."*

## Body Language

We can convey meaning and express much without saying a word. Dance and movement ministers are effective when we can tell a story without using our mouths. Granted, many of the songs that we use to minister are sung by others, using the Word as a base for us to demonstrate meaning. If we try to use movement that does not match the message, then the result becomes muddled.

The body language that we exhibit goes beyond the time that we minister. When we are waiting to go before the people, do we appear irritated or impatient? If we disagree with something done or said in a service, do we begin to show open displeasure? As ministers of movement, people will watch us very closely. As a result, we have to be even more aware of our unspoken communication.

Even if there are cultural differences or if we minister in various languages, there are movements that have universal meanings. What is acceptable at home may have a different meaning abroad. We must use discretion so as not to offend, whenever possible. If we ask the Lord to continue to reveal to us the areas in which we need to grow, we will become even more effective communicators through motion.

### **Daniel 10:15**

*When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.*

### **Psalms 19:2-3**

*Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*

### **Luke 1:22**

*But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*

### **1 Corinthians 14:11**

*Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.*

## Web Sight

Because the Lord has given us discernment, there are many times when we may see evil or temptation coming. Sin does not always appear in obvious forms. Sometimes our old nature will try to resurface, or thoughts of the past will taunt us. The ministry of movement has become a powerful influence and soul-winning tool for the Kingdom. As a result, we will face attack not only from the outside, but from the inside (old sin nature) as well.

Our reasons for becoming ministers of movement must extend beyond a desire to dance. Boredom in our lives does not constitute a reason to get involved in the dance ministry. General interest in the worship arts does not ordain an individual for service. If we are not careful to obey the voice of the Lord, we may find ourselves entangled in a web of sin.

The ministry of movement declares the Gospel visually. Making an open display of our allegiance to God will cause the enemy to want to make a public spectacle of us. Prayer is the key to avoiding many of the common traps that will try to hinder us from moving in freedom. It is important to lead holy lifestyles as an example to others, but it is even more significant to live righteously when we are alone.

### **Isaiah 59:5-6**

*They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed a viper breaks out. Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.*

### **2 Corinthians 4:2**

*But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

## Storm Chasers

Though many of us do not look forward to storms, they are necessary on many levels. There are people known as "Storm Chasers" who pursue tornadoes, hurricanes, and torrential weather out of sheer fascination to observe its power. In general, the majority of us would rather the storm land anywhere but where we are. Many people view storms as destructive, but when we realize that there are yokes that need to be broken, we will yield to those things that must be carried away. As Jesus had peace in the midst of a storm while at sea, He has given us the same ability to trust Him when things seem to be in a tumult. The Lord works miracles in the storm.

Dance ministry is not exempt from shaky times. Dancers whose sole purpose is to infiltrate the ministry and wreak havoc will be exposed during the storm. Whatever is not grounded in the Lord will eventually be uprooted. It may be more comfortable for us not to face adversity in ministry, but eventually we will appreciate the struggle and mature in ministry as a result.

Often in songs about storms, dancers demonstrate how to command the storm to go away. There is also a place for us to show how to endure when in the midst of them. If we are always focused on the future, we will not be able to encourage anyone to endure right now. Paul proclaimed that in whatever situation he found himself, he would be content. Ministers of movement can embrace the current truth and encourage hope to prevail. Though we rejoice about what may happen tomorrow, we should be thankful for what we face today.

### **Psalm 107:29**

*He calms the storm, so that its waves are still.*

### **Isaiah 25:4**

*For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.*

## Temper Mental

There are times in movement ministry that we will become distracted by the circumstances of life. We can deal with this in many ways including becoming angry, retaliating, showing grace, or practicing forgiveness. If our minds are distracted from the purpose to which we are called, we will be hindered as we try to get the message of the Gospel to others. If we become consumed in our minds, it will affect our bodies as well. It is often said that the mind is a battlefield.

We have a choice concerning how we react to conflict. As we mature in ministry and life, we will realize that some things are just human nature. The things that bothered us five years ago may no longer affect us the same way today. We must decide to keep-it-moving. Handling ourselves in an ungodly manner will affect our minds if we keep making the same mistakes over again. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God.

If we allow ourselves to remain angry, stressed-out, and overwhelmed, our bodies will begin to show signs of wear and this will hinder us in ministry. Feeling sluggish and burdened will douse our excitement and joy. Dance ministry is not an act or production. It is a live demonstration of the Truth. As a man thinks in his heart (mind), so is he.

**Psalm 73:21**

*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was vexed in my mind*

**Romans 7:23**

*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

**Colossians 3:2**

*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

## Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring

The Lord will give us wisdom concerning the Word we minister as dancers. Our repertoire must have enough variety that we are able to convey a message that is appropriate to the season. This principle does not particularly pertain to the Holidays. When we are sensitive to the voice of the Lord, He will let us know what dances will edify the Body at the time we are appointed to deliver the message through movement.

This may mean extra rehearsal time so that we can learn more than one dance in a few weeks. There are some dances that seem to be in season, no matter what the times dictate. Other songs may have blessed the congregation in times past, but are not a Word in season for today. Sometimes we may learn this lesson by making mistakes, but as we continue to grow in ministry, we will become more accurate if we stay submitted to the Lord.

We must do an honest assessment of the pieces that we have and pray about when to go forth with them. If it is time to retire a piece, we should do so with gladness. Because the Lord is Sovereign, He can decide to use it again in a few months, or even years later. It is not our will that is important. We must do the work of Him Who sent us.

### **Proverbs 15:23**

*A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!*

### **Proverbs 25:11**

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*

### **Isaiah 50:4**

*The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.*

## Foot Patrol

We may allow ourselves to forget that the Lord cares for our bodies as well as our souls. Having bodies that are the Lord's temple means that the Lord uses our bodies for His glory. Even though there may be times that we experience illness or other physical challenges, the Lord watches over us and wants us to prosper, even in health.

Making an effort to care for our feet will allow us longevity in dance. Proper stretching and foot care will prevent injuries and limit pain. It not a requirement to get pedicures, but if our feet are visible to others, it is a good practice to limit the potential for offense. We should at least keep them clean and odor free for the benefit of all. Our feet are the bases on which we stand in the natural. We will be rewarded for walking upright before Him in the spiritual sense.

It would be difficult to dance without our feet, though not impossible. Because the location of our feet are significant Scripturally concerning the choices we make, we must be careful who we follow, where we go, and where we choose to abide. When we walk according to the pathway laid out by the Lord, He Himself will watch over our feet.

### **Joshua 14:9**

*So Moses swore on that day, saying, "Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God."*

### **1 Samuel 2:9**

*He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail."*

### **Proverbs 3:26**

*For the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught.*

## Pros and Cons

There are those who would have us believe that in order to dance for the Lord, we must have trained for several years to do so. It is wonderful to see many professional dancers who have decided to move for the Lord. There are also many inexperienced dancers who are very effective as movement ministers. The beauty of our Lord is that He can use anyone He wants to accomplish His will.

We do not have to have perfect pasts in order to be used by God. He continues to use ex-convicts, reformed sinners, ex-drug dealers, and other past offenders for His Glory. All of us are guilty of falling at one moment or another. The opinions of men should not hinder us from operating according to the Lord's directions for our lives. It is the Lord's voice that we must listen to and follow.

Whether amateur or professional, there are people whose lives will be forever changed by seeing the Gospel in motion. All preachers, teachers, and dancers will not be at the same level at the same time. It is more important that we have a true love for the Lord and knowledge of His Word. After all, it is the Word that does the work, and not our personal accomplishments.

### **Mark 2:15-16**

*Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"*

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

## Going... Going... Gone!

If we are going anywhere in movement ministry, we should not be at a spiritual standstill. Wherever the Lord directs us to go, it should be done with a Kingdom purpose in mind. Making a personal list of goals to accomplish in ministry is not the focus. We should fix our eyes on getting to the place that the Lord is leading us.

Going in circles is also not a place where we want to find ourselves. Many ministries are stuck in a fruitless cycle of repeating the same things year after year. It is wonderful to have success in ministry, but we cannot limit the Lord to working by a formula. If we are not careful, our victories can set us up for failure if we depend on our own methods of doing things over what the Lord is saying now.

Moving without direction is fruitless. Every dance piece should "go" according to the Word. Every rehearsal should allow us to "go" to a place of sincere praise and worship that extends beyond ministry outings. Every dancer connected to the heart of God should "go" into the world with the Gospel message. Our travel schedules do not matter. Busy itineraries can do more harm than good to our spiritual and physical well being. When we are moving according to the way of the Lord, we will prosper in every task He has appointed for us.

### **Judges 19:17**

*And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"*

### **Psalms 121:8**

*The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.*

### **John 12:35**

*Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going."*

## Watch Your Back!

Often we look at Scriptures concerning hands and feet when studying movement in the Word. It takes the whole body functioning together for the dancer to be most effective. One of the most important parts of our bodies used in movement is the back. Without a flexible, painless spine and healthy back muscles, we would be rendered motionless.

It is important that we do all we can to stay in the best physical condition. Caring for the back includes proper stretching and limiting the amount of physical wear and tear put on it from lifting heavy objects and bending improperly. Sometimes we try to place blame on the enemy for physical ailments and injuries, but some of our trauma comes from lack of wisdom in using our bodies.

Spiritually, the back is a sort of "blind spot" in that our rear vision is limited. If we find ourselves in a state of sin as believers, it is known as "backsliding." A modern-day term for someone who cares sincerely about our best interests is known as "having our back." The Lord is our greatest Protector. We must do our part by exercising sound judgment when moving, so that we do not have to "back down" when we need to step up.

### **Psalm 129:3**

*The plowers plowed on my back; they made their furrows long.*

### **Proverbs 10:13**

*Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, but a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding.*

### **Jeremiah 32:33**

*And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction.*

### **Romans 11:10**

*Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, and down their back always.*

## Narrow-Minded

The popular way is not always the best choice for us. Only selecting songs that are in heavy rotation on the radio may not be the message that the Lord wants to deliver through us. If we are called to minister through movement in a way that is unconventional, we must remember that the Bible is full of peculiar people used mightily by God.

Our garments may not be what everyone else is wearing. Our movements may not be ballet or modern. If the Lord has decreed a thing to us, let us run without hesitation. It's time to throw out the dance ministry "rulebook" and pick up the right Book. When we continue to feast on the Word of the Lord, we will obtain more liberty than ever on the narrow path.

The way that we are led may indeed be the road less traveled. We should not seek out the narrow way just to do something different. When we are truly anointed, we have no choice but to stand out from the crowd. Our human efforts will not sustain the pressures to be popular. When we are faithful to follow Him, even when many may not agree with how we do this thing called "dance ministry," we are guaranteed to succeed.

### **Job 8:7**

*Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.*

### **Matthew 7:13**

*[The Narrow Way] Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

### **Luke 13:24**

*Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.*

## TLC

Rivalry and competition brewing from the inside of a dance ministry can be more detrimental than any attack that the enemy could launch against us. Because people have various reasons for joining the dance ministry, too often the focus is an individual need, rather than a true concern for the souls of others. Some dance out of pain. Some people want to tell a personal testimony through dance. Others are simply convinced that they are truly talented and want to showcase their gift for the world to see.

If we spend just as much time cultivating the ministry as we do on dance routines, we may see less bitterness, heartache, and wounded servants in the movement ministry sector. We must never forget that we are dealing with people who have feelings, and many times, emotional scars. This does not mean that we tolerate every kind of behavior from people. It just means that we need to exhibit more spiritual fruit than ever before.

It does not matter if we are ministry leader or a passive supporter of the dance. What counts is when the Lord can say "well done" concerning how we conduct ourselves and care for His people. If we make a practice of exhibiting tender, loving care, we will fulfill one of the greatest mandates on our lives: To love one another.

### **1 Corinthians 12:25-27**

*That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

### **Colossians 3:12-14**

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

## Create in Me...

If we are bored in the dance ministry, we must pray for fresh vision. The pulpit may become all-too-familiar to us once we have been dancing for years. Special programs, services, and dance concerts often are no longer innovative as copycat events seem to be the order of the day. Attending conferences and patronizing dance ministry vendors may grow old after we have purchased several garments, flags, billows, banners, crowns, tambourines, oils, DVDs, books, manuals...

We must allow the Lord to endow us with Divine creativity! When He shows us a revelation from His Spirit to ours, we will begin to see movement in a whole new way. The insides of churches, stages, and theaters no longer limit us. Parks, beaches, malls, parking lots, and sidewalks are full of people who may never venture inside of what may be viewed as religious "Country Clubs," also known as church buildings and organizations.

Although Jesus spent some time in the synagogue, He also preached and performed many miracles with the people in the streets. The church needs us. A dying world needs a Savior. Let us not let the conventions of familiarity hinder us from delivering the Good News. Let us walk by faith and trust that the Lord will show us His will for a fresh move of God to take place in us... step by step.

**Isaiah 41:20**

*That they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.*

**Ephesians 2:10**

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

**Colossians 1:16**

*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

## Somebody Bigger Than You and Me

The vastness of God cannot be comprehended by mankind. There is no one church, denomination, organization, or culture that can provide the sole definition of Who God is. This should allow us to be more open to different expressions of movement. Though the Lord advocates creative diversity, not all movement done to Gospel or Christian music is done with pure intentions. Our dance ministries should continue to reflect the diversity of our knowledge of God.

The Bible gives us guidelines concerning the attributes of the Almighty. When we select songs to use in ministry, we must search to verify that the words of the song agree with the Word. Just as every person who proclaims to be a prophet may not be one, every songwriter is not guaranteed to be inspired by God. We also should not rely too heavily on one artist or music style. This may limit our ability to see the bigger picture in the long run.

Many ministries have a sincere desire to dance, but not all dancers can attest to having had a personal experience with Him. Sharing our testimonies through dance will be most effective to someone who can relate. There is also the invitation for those watching us to experience transformation when we embody the Word. We can never be locked into thinking that we know how the Lord will reveal Himself to someone else. We may have encountered Him in a church setting, but our neighbor may have a different testimony. This should encourage us to know that there will never be too many dance ministries. There is enough of God to go around for everyone.

### **2 Chronicles 6:18**

*But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!*

### **John 21:25**

*And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*

## Scare Tactics

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Often we are taught that there is spiritual warfare in movement ministry. The movement presented is often sharp, powerful, and forceful. We are taught to pray and to wear garments that symbolize war or victory. We often feel strong and confident after doing such pieces.

We must remember that we are not causing the enemy to be in fear of us. The Word tells us that every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus. Just as a soldier does not go to battle in his own name, we do not wage warfare on our own merits. All movement, thoughts, and directives should be about proclaiming the name of the Lord as our Victorious Conqueror.

Prayer and study of God's Word will sharpen our ability to represent the Kingdom in truth. Whether our dances reflect joy, praise, worship, or warfare, we should minister the right Word, in the right season, at the right place, at the right time. We all may not be ready for warfare dance right now. If we practice techniques we are not ready for, injury may result. Ask the Sons of Sceva...

### **Exodus 23:27**

*I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.*

### **Luke 10:20**

*Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*

### **Acts 19:13-15**

*Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"*

## Parts of a Whole

Though the Lord uses us all individually, it is truly a blessing to see the Body come together. Movement ministry in a congregational worship setting should not be a spectator experience. In the church setting, dance ministry done in excellence takes much more than a radio and a CD. As ministers of movement, we should pray and rejoice to see how various departments in the church come together for a united goal: To magnify the Lord and exalt His name together!

This may mean praying and meeting with the Pastor, sound technicians, worship leader, minister of music, lighting director, prop masters, seamstresses, and more. We can incorporate much more of the congregation and ministry gifts when we think and operate like one unit instead of many. Building and strengthening healthy relationships between different ministries in the churches will cause us to remember that we are one.

Difficulty will arise without the cooperation of leadership. We will find that liberty and worship will be more plentiful when observers become participants in the time set aside for worship. Excellence will be the order of the day when the gifts in the Body are fully utilized. How good it is when we worship His name together!

### **2 Chronicles 5:13-14**

*Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*

### **Romans 12:5-8**

*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness*

## Amazing Grace

We have a reason to be graceful. Dance with an understanding makes a difference between movement as a ministry and merely dancing to music. Not every dance that we minister will be classified as graceful, but when we move we must understand the function of grace in the lives of humanity.

This grace must extend beyond movement and permeate our speech and behavior as well. Dancers for the Lord should never be known as divas or "drama kings." Maintaining humility through our actions is an integral part of ministry. Movement ministry does not begin and end with music and choreography. The message that we deliver carries far beyond the few minutes that we are up moving before people. Our lives should serve as a testament to the grace of God.

We must be as genuine concerning the things of God in person as we are on the platform or stage. When people encounter us in public places, there should be no contradiction as to whether we are His people. Love and care for others should always be a saving grace. We must know that the Lord's grace is sufficient and abounding. His grace is truly amazing!

### **Job 41:12**

*I will not conceal his limbs, His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.*

### **Acts 20:24**

*But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.*

### **2 Corinthians 1:12**

*For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

## The Other Side

Division in the dance ministry cannot be allowed to permeate our minds. Where talented people gather, there seems to be a natural inclination to strive for the best, most anointed people to be celebrated or revered. Of course, if we are not moving beyond the four walls and stepping out on faith, we may hardly realize that these issues exist. When the focus is on self-promotion instead of Christ, we will see these spirits manifest.

Organizations, dance groups, and circles of influence may seem great at first, but the key is to seek God concerning each alliance that we make. We should not make decisions based on charisma, popularity, or to increase our chances for ministry invitations. What we do to advance ourselves will eventually wear us out. What we do to advance the Kingdom will bring us before great men.

In order to stand for righteousness, we must make sure that we are standing with our feet planted in the right soil. The Scriptures often refer to the "other side" as the dividing line between God's people and the adversary. Dance ministers who are serving with the right heart should stand together. We should not align with the enemy by choosing to stand for separation and fragmentation of movement ministries. When the enemy is at work, there will always be at least two sides to every story. We must know which side we are on.

### **Joshua 24:14-15**

*"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

### **Obadiah 1:11-12**

*In the day that you stood on the other side— In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, when foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem—Even you were as one of them. "But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother in the day of his captivity; Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; Nor should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress."*

## Hearing Aid

Dance is a visual ministry. Before we can show a picture of the Word in motion, we must first hear what the Lord is saying. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. We must not only hear the Word, but also understand and apply it. When we put these principles into practice, anointed and effective movement ministry will result.

Music is produced to be heard. It is important now more than ever before that the "words" that we are sending out with movement foster faith in others. Sound systems, CDs, music players, sufficient volume and amplification assist with getting the Word out. If there is anything that compromises the hearing of the Word, the ministry suffers. Though motion can still go forward with technical difficulties, it is important to remember that the Word does the work and the dance is an aid to help people to remember.

In essence, movement ministry serves as a "hearing aid" so that the Word of the Lord can remain in the hearts of the people. Seeing the Word go forth may help others to recall the message in the song that might not have been as memorable through hearing alone. We paint a picture for the world to see. It is often quoted that "a picture is worth a thousand words." In the Kingdom sense, the Word is far more valuable than pictures will ever be.

### **Isaiah 50:4-5**

*The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away.*

### **Matthew 11:5**

*The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*

## Grin and Bear It

Ministry is work. Serving in the Kingdom is not about lavish vacations and VIP treatment. It is about getting the work accomplished. Sometimes the work can be stressful both mentally and physically. The joy in it is that when we are working with a passion to please the Lord, He provides solutions to each challenge that we face.

We must each take responsibility for our share of the workload. When dealing with a team of dancers, it is essential that everyone have an assignment and assume personal responsibility for the success of the ministry. It is important that leaders provide assignments for each team member, as well as dance ministers to understand and complete each task given.

We are to bear one another's burdens. It is the source of the burden that makes the work difficult or easy. When we see a need, we should be willing to step in and assist with the task. Understanding that we are all in this together will allow others to witness the working of the Lord. God uses people to reach people. Let us make sure to carry the burden with joy, knowing that we have an eternal reward in store for us.

**Numbers 11:14**

*I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.*

**2 Chronicles 2:2**

*Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.*

**Matthew 11:30**

*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

**Galatians 6:2**

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

## ResiSTANCE

Our spiritual immunity must be intact. In order to resist the temptations and attacks that come with ministry, we must be able to stand firm and resist the enticements of the enemy. When we recall that we are being tried for Christ's sake, we know that if we continue to stand still, we will see the salvation of the Lord.

Our stance or position must be sure when we are faced with adversity. Naturally, we should continue to build strength in our legs and midsections so that when we demonstrate standing according to the Word, we are able to convey the concept with truth and accuracy. The ground on which we stand should be a firm foundation. Before we minister, we should check the layout, if possible, to foresee any dangers (holes, loose carpet, uneven platforms, etc.) that may try to trip us up.

Confidence to stand must be rooted in the Word of God. When the spiritual and natural elements unite in dance ministry, the result is truth that cannot be denied. We must continue to maintain the balance in movement ministry so that the Word and our actions line up. When the Lord allows us to receive the revelation of His Word, we should stand in agreement in Spirit and in Truth.

### **Luke 21:14-15**

*Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.*

### **Acts 6:10**

*And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.*

### **Romans 13:2**

*Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

### **James 4:7**

*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

## By Invitation Only

If the Lord has called us to ministry, we do not have to become 'booking managers' to make things happen. What we do is not a talent show or casting call. Movement ministry dates are not to be considered gigs. Invitations addressed to someone else do not transfer to us because we find out about them. Faithfulness in preparation will open doors without human intervention. What the Lord has called us to, He will grant the opportunity to accomplish.

We do not have to call people or send e-mails to ask them if we can dance during a particular program. Often, well-publicized events will result in phone calls from all types of "talent" in search of an opportunity. The Lord sees what we are doing and will place us on someone's heart should He desire for us to move at a particular time or event. Pride and self-importance will cause us to adopt the world's methods for fame and name-recognition. Let that not be said of Kingdom people.

If we have been presumptuous in inviting ourselves to dance at an occasion not assigned to us, it is time to repent. If we feel the least bit of rejection or jealousy when someone that we know and love does not invite us to minister at a particular event, we must come against the works of the flesh. If we fantasize about dancing for large crowds to the sound of thunderous applause, we need to get on our faces and cry out to God. Trusting Him and staying faithful even when phone calls and invitations are scarce, will prepare us for the labor ahead. When we wait on the timing of the Lord, we will experience an overflow of opportunity and many open doors.

### **John 2:2**

*Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.*

### **Revelation 3:8**

*I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

## Hide-and-Go-Seek

When we stand before the congregation to minister, people should see the Lord and not us. We should be so hidden in God that people experience His presence when they come in contact with us. Movement ministry is never about showcasing ourselves.

When we do not take care to get our flesh out of the way, the glory of the Lord cannot be revealed. No flesh shall glory in His presence. Hiding is not about covering up sins, becoming a character on a stage, or faking it until we make it. Being hidden is when only the Lord gets the honor from the ministry that is demonstrated.

We can only hide in Him when we seek Him. If we seek Him, we will find Him. When we find Him, we find everlasting life and the fullness of joy. Having these things will enable us to lead others to Him and receive eternal life. Once we encounter His presence, we must continue to move with Him. We can continue to do that if we hide and seek and remain hidden in Him.

### **Deuteronomy 4:29**

*But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

### **2 Chronicles 12:14**

*And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.*

### **Psalms 27:5**

*For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.*

### **Proverbs 22:3**

*A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.*

## Range of Motion

God is constantly giving new inspiration and vision to His people. Pioneers of new dance styles became noted for the unique and innovative ways in which they mastered movement. Although we study to understand the skeletal and muscular structures of the body to aid in movement mastery, we are not limited to the traditional movement and dances already known.

As witnessed in music videos and stage performances, choreography is ever-evolving and fresh dances are being invented on a daily basis. For those of us who demonstrate the Gospel in motion, what can hinder us from moving as the Spirit leads? Too many ministry groups and soloists exhibit very similar styles, movements, facial expressions, attire, music selection, etc. If we pray and seek the Lord regarding creativity, He will give it to us.

We should not try to be different just for the sake of it. We must always be open to the wide range of motion that exists. When someone experiences limited range of motion, it usually indicates that there is a physical problem in the body. It renders impairment and causes limitations in the limbs. When we experience it in ministry, the problem is a spiritual one. The source of our motion should be Divinely inspired and not just copied from others. If we are currently experiencing limited range of motion choreographically or spiritually, the good news is that we can be healed from it today.

### **Acts 13:16-17**

*Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it."*

### **Acts 19:33**

*And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.*

## Fast Forward

There are many of us who already know what the Lord is telling us to do. As a matter of fact, several of us have spent countless years delaying what we know to be our next move. Dance pieces are made up of a sequence of movements. Whether moving backward or forward, the goal is that we progress in ministry. The reason why many dance ministers have become frustrated is due to disobedience. The Lord may have already given us instructions to move forward, but we have allowed fear and doubt to immobilize us.

Remaining motionless when we are supposed to move forward is like walking in reverse. We will fall behind if we stop moving! If He gave us instructions to open that school or studio, we should at least have a vision written and a sample class schedule. If we are to launch a television program geared toward movement ministry, we should know the names of the appropriate contacts and available broadcast stations. If we are to start a dance company, we should be aware of rehearsal space options and performing arts venues suitable for use.

Prophetic words and inspirational messages may encourage us, but faith without applying works is dead. Economics, emotions, and history are no match for the Lord. Television news reports, internet updates, and newspapers do not determine our future. In order for us to step into the miraculous concerning our lives and ministries, we must believe the report of the Lord. We do not need another year, month, week, or day to get started. The time is now!

### **Exodus 14:15**

*And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward."*

### **Philippians 3:12-14**

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

## Bed and Breakfast

We must take care of our bodies if we are going to use them for His glory. When we are constantly bombarded with activities, rest and nutrition may not be at the forefront of our minds. Even if we do not perform regular care and maintenance for a machine, it will break down. Maintaining our temples should be a daily priority. We should take extra precautions when we are under intense pressure or experience busy seasons.

In the hoopla of exciting conferences and events, we may not give the body the attention it needs to function properly. Lack of sufficient sleep may result in fatigue, puffy eyes, short attention spans, and bad attitudes. Skipping meals may result in fainting, weakened immune systems, and general weariness. Rest and food are important elements for the movement minister. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and healthy snacks help to keep our energy levels where they need to be.

We should not fast for the purpose of losing weight to look good. Vanity in the movement ministry is not difficult to succumb to. We must serve in the ministry with the right heart. When our bodies are crying out for rest, we must exercise good judgment. We place the lives of ourselves and others in danger if we have to drive after a ministry event and are sleepy. The Lord endorses both rest and eating and promises to provide them for us Himself.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:12-13**

*I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.*

### **Matthew 15:32**

*Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. and I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."*

## Flavor of the Month

Our presence should make a difference wherever we go. When we are called to minister through movement, we should "flavor" the gathering as salt. Maintaining an attitude of peace and grace is evidence of the salt that we have within us. Even in our own internal ministry affairs, we should deal with each other righteously. If strife, dissension, and conflict are plaguing us today, it is time for us to use the salt.

Dancers from the nations bring different international "flavors" to the dance. Although dancers may be of different cultures and movement styles, we should all share the same focus when dancing for the Lord. Older dance ministers are often referred to as "seasoned" dance ministers. The truth is that we should all be seasoned in movement ministry if we are believers.

If the places where we dance are not transformed, we may need to check our salt levels. If grace and peace do not follow our reputations, a shaking may need to happen for the salt to be released in our lives. If we are constantly bored and uninspired, it is time for seasoning. We must monitor the results of the "salt" that we spread in our lives and ministries. If we are truly seasoned for ministry, then that which results will bear witness of our ability to change the earth. What is the flavor of the month? For us, it should always include salt.

### **Matthew 5:13**

*You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.*

### **Mark 9:49-50**

*"For everyone will be seasoned with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."*

## "Exes" and "Whys"

Everything that we have experienced in life has been for a purpose. Although we cannot blame the Lord or the enemy for every situation, we know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. Our testimonies can be greatly used to share the transforming power of the Gospel through movement. Even if a song does not capture the exact circumstances surrounding our lives, our ability to convey it in truth will bring deliverance to others.

It is often said that we are all "ex" something. We may not have all committed the same sins or come from the same backgrounds, but we can all relate to struggle, temptation, disappointment, and doubt. We are both natural and spiritual. Jesus Himself knows what it is like to experience the trials of humanity and understands the plight. He came for a reason, as we are here for a reason. We may not understand the "whys" of life immediately, but if we endure, we will see the Word of the Lord manifest.

Whatever our "ex" issues may be, they should not be allowed to hinder us from being free in movement ministry. Whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Using the "whys" as excuses to remain unmotivated, uninspired, and uninvolved will foster a victim mentality in us. As victors, we should pray and ask the Lord to reveal His will to us so that we can help others overcome.

### **Isaiah 1:18**

*"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

### **1 Timothy 1:15-16**

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.*

## Christian-Dumb

It is not acceptable for dance ministers to be ignorant concerning the Word of God. Since it is the very essence of what we do, we are setting ourselves up for failure if we continue to operate in ignorance. There is no minimum age requirement to be a student of the Word. If we are training children to dance in front of congregations, then we can impart the Bible into their spirits as well.

Beyond the general Scriptures that mention dance, we must also have a good grasp of Biblical themes and history. Beyond movement, we should be able to give a verbal overview of dance in the Bible when we are asked about it or discussing it. This takes practice just as much as preparing a piece for ministry. As movement ministers, we should actively become proponents of the Gospel in both Word and deed.

Although we may not speak or move our mouths when we dance, we must be willing and able to do so if needed. The state of being dumb implies that someone is unable to speak. When we are not studying the Word on a regular basis, then we too become unable to speak. Beyond the love for dance and desire to worship the Lord through movement, our first priority should be to be disciples of and witnesses to the wondrous miracle of the Gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.

### **Hosea 4:6**

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

### **Romans 10:2-4**

*For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

## Jesus Be Offense

The Gospel is not accepted all over the world. There are nations that prohibit its citizens from practicing Christianity or proclaiming Christ as Lord and Savior. On a smaller scale, there are churches and public venues that will not receive dance ministry as an acceptable format. When we are disciples of the Gospel, we must also face the rejection that comes along with the territory.

We do not set out to offend anyone with our witness. The fact is that there will be people who are offended by the name of Jesus. We must not yield to the temptation to tone down the message for the sake of opportunity. Those who win souls are wise. When we are sent to a people, it is obedience to the assignment that brings glory to the Lord, whether or not the message (or the messenger) is received.

Acceptance of the miracles and the trials will allow us to weather the storms of ministry. If we operate under false pretenses, we will be easily shaken when we are rejected by men. Knowing that ministry may challenge our friendships, family relationships, and need for acceptance will allow us to tune out the applause of man and receive the Lord's seal of approval.

### **Matthew 13:57**

*So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."*

### **John 6:61**

*When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, does this offend you?*

### **Galatians 1:10**

*For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*

## A Preying Spirit

With each advance in an area or arena comes the onslaught of opportunism. The Lord wants us to prosper and be in good health, but He is also very concerned about our motives and the driving force behind our actions. If we have spent time honing our skills in movement ministry, our expertise may be in demand as a conference speaker or invited guest. It is wonderful to see the knowledge and training of worship arts grow and become effective.

Receiving invitations to events as a facilitator or dancer can be great, but if we are always expecting to be asked to lead, demand top billing as featured artists, or are looking for opportunities to showcase our skills, we can cross over into dangerous territory. If movement ministers and the church Body at large are viewed as dollar signs, potential additions to advertisement databases, corridors to wealth or a way to profit without spiritual accountability, we can become prey for those whose motives are to profit from the Gospel. In turn, if we are only seeking relationships with prominent people in the Kingdom to gain an advantage, we are preying on them as well.

Honest concern and a penchant for discovering the needs of the movement ministry community do not denote being a victimizer. Ministry entrepreneurship is great if the initial motivation is to provide the people with useful tools to advance the Kingdom. When we seek the Kingdom first, things will be added unto us. If we are employing the methods of capitalism to gain for ourselves only, we too will become victims in the vicious cycle of greed. As we continue to patronize events and purchase products, we must continue to pray so that we do not become prey for the masses.

### **Jeremiah 30:16-17**

*“Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall become plunder, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey. For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds,” says the LORD, ‘Because they called you an outcast saying: “This is Zion; No one seeks her.”’*

## Dancing the Night Away...

How much is too much? As movement ministers, there is a thin line between flowing with the song and going overboard. Just because the original version of a song is 17 minutes long does not mean that we are able to use the entire song length. With technological advancements and inexpensive editing software, we can adjust tracks to suit the needs of the ministry. This is particularly helpful for songs that are repetitive.

There are several reasons why soloists and groups choose songs that seem to last forever. Many dancers select songs that are very personal to them and want the congregation to feel the same emotion. This is not always the case. Some think that they are so anointed or talented that everyone should experience the movement presentation without limitations. Others select songs based on popularity only, yet have no real revelation through movement to carry the entire message. We need both grace and mercy.

On the other hand, the abridged version of a song may not be adequate enough. If a move of the Lord is truly taking place, those who have discernment will know that obedience is the order of the day. If we are given time limits for an event or program, we should ask for permission before we present songs that are not in line with the initial request. As movement ministers, we must be humble enough to realize that time is valuable. What can be said in a thousands words may only need one picture to convey. Let us become so adept at demonstrating the Word, that our actions are able to speak for themselves.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:7**

*For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.*

### **Acts 24:4**

*Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us.*

### **Ephesians 5:15-17**

*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

## Taken to the Cleaners

As we continue to get use out of our garments, we must continue to care for them appropriately. As dancers often sweat and our bodies come in contact with our garments, delayed care for them may have some undesirable results. Washing our bodies is important, but garments can carry odors as well.

All garments may not need to go to the cleaners, but it is important that fabric care be followed for the best results. Some items may respond well to a gentle wash and hang dry. Garments that have elaborate beading, sequins, or other intricate details may become damaged during dry cleaning. These may require hand-washing. Other dance ministers may "scent" ministry garments with fragrances. Caution must be used here as well when using oils or substances that may stain the garments.

Another great practice for garment care is to wash or clean them as soon as possible after using them. This aids in the prevention of any deterioration or malodorous remnants left in our clothing. If we are selecting fabrics that cannot "take the heat," we may need to seek wise counsel concerning breathable alternatives. We must never take the seemingly small details for granted. Anything that causes a distraction will foster difficulty in getting the Message out. Let us make sure that the offering we give is a sweet-smelling savor.

### **Numbers 8:7**

*Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and let them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.*

### **Zechariah 3:4**

*Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."*

### **Revelation 19:8**

*And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

## 5... 4... 3... 2... 1

It seems as though we never have enough time to do all the things that we need to do. In most cases, it is that we have taken on more tasks and responsibilities than we can handle. We must do an honest assessment of the many things jockeying for position on our calendars. When we submit our schedules to the Lord, we may find out that there are many things that we may be doing out of a sense of obligation, guilt, peer pressure, ego, and tradition. In the growing world of communication, there are several "time bandits" competing for our attention. As we continue to manage movement ministry, work, business, family, health, finances, etc, we must ask ourselves the following questions:

**Am I spending more time talking on my cell phone than focusing on my priorities?**

**Are constant e-mails, text-messages, and instant messages constantly distracting me when I should be working on an important task?**

**Is social networking taking up time that I should be spending with the Lord or in dance rehearsal?**

**Are conference calls and online meetings taking up more time in my schedule than they should?**

**With multiple commitments between church, family, and ministry, do I really spend enough time asking the Lord what He wants me to do in this season?**

**Am I constantly staying up late and waking up early only to continue the cycle of exhaustion and weariness?**

If we discover that we are being robbed of precious time that can be better spent, we must learn how to say "no" with grace. There may be some committees, groups, activities, gatherings, and events that we may have to release and move forward to productivity. We may compromise our health and the success of our ministries and personal lives if we continue to spread ourselves too thin. We must truly trust the Lord to guide our every step. When we do so, he reminds us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

**Ecclesiastes 3:17**

*I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."*

## An Inside Job

It is a disservice to dance ministers when the outward appearance is emphasized more than what is within. Immaculately pressed garments, fragranced skin, perfect form, and an eternal smile seem to be more performance-driven than reality conscious. There is no harm in making sure that we are presentable before the people, but when this becomes a false front, we are no longer worshipping in truth.

This does not mean that every problem and experience that we have should be laid out in the open for the entire congregation to see. This may mean that we may have to confront some of the tough issues facing our ministries today. If we are aware of sexual misconduct, rude behavior, drug abuse, falsehood, backbiting, rivalry, or other unresolved issues in our ministries, we should address these problems in a loving manner and pray for deliverance. Immediately ejecting offenders from the ministry may not be the solution, but we should definitely have a corrective action plan in place.

Unrepentant sin will have a drastic effect on our ministries. If we are wondering why ministries have no power, we must take a look on the inside. If we are constantly dealing with setbacks and repeated problems, we must pray for the Lord to clean house. If our focus becomes more about movement than on the Word of God, we must become disciples again. If we are not leading lives as followers of Christ, we are merely dancing for our own enjoyment.

### **Matthew 23:25-26, 28**

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

*Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

*Day 260*

## Picture Perfect

Although dancers may study David and Miriam, we have a more perfect example to follow. Many study the significance of dance in the Bible, but neglect to realize that that we are to preach the Gospel to all nations. Movement may be the vehicle we use, but it is not the destination. David's testimony can encourage us, but he cannot save us. Miriam may be an inspiration for many to dance, but she is not our justification for movement. We are justified through Christ.

Too many are teaching the virtues of choreography, garment requirements, church protocol, and decorum without relating it back to the Lord. Getting an understanding of what we do is imperative, but it should all lead us back to Christ. Doing things just for the sake of the "rules" cancels out the guidance of the Spirit. Jesus did not promise us that we would be like David or other Biblical "Hall of Famers." We can be confident that we were created just the way that we should be.

We are being transformed into His image and shall be like Him. Our imperfections do not diminish His perfection. We do not have to become the Savior- He is! Deliverance is not of us- it is because of Jesus! Our goal for dancing is not to "tell a story," but to share THE story, which is the Gospel truth. Let us not think that every dance that we minister has to be confined to songs about Jesus, but let us make sure that we paint the perfect picture, and that is one that leads to salvation in Christ.

### **Genesis 5:1**

*[The Family of Adam] This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.*

### **Psalms 17:15**

*As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.*

### **Ezekiel 1:28**

*Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.*

## What Shall I Render?

We cannot expect to invest little in the Kingdom of God and get a great return. Much time is spent talking about financial abundance, but wealth extends far beyond material possessions. We must lay up treasures in heaven. The reason that we must examine our motives in ministry is so that we are not discouraged when we do not see an immediate earthly reward.

If we truly serve the Lord, He will indeed reward us. If we expect people to encourage us, give money to the ministry, and invite us to the most coveted events, then we will be sorely disappointed. Although these things may happen, we learn that true ministry includes suffering for the sake of the Gospel.

If we find ourselves lacking in any area, we must begin to give where we are running low. Are there any ministries that we can send a word of encouragement to? Is there someone doing a mighty work that the Lord is prompting us to send a love gift to? Are we bypassing an opportunity to serve someone else and support the vision that the Lord has given them?

If we are in need of any of these things in our ministries today, we must make it a point to give in these areas, not for the sake of getting, but for the blessing of giving. We should not expect the return to always come from the same people we give to. The Lord is a Rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.

### **Proverbs 12:14**

*A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, and the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him.*

### **Luke 6:38**

*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*

## Busy Bodies

Just because we dance to the Word does not necessarily mean that our movements must accentuate each and every syllable. It is almost painful to watch some dancers attempt to over-work a verse, trying to capture every word in movement, losing the deeper meaning of the message. When we allow the Lord to be the Divine Choreographer, His creativity will not limit us to elementary interpretation. Sometimes we must keep it simple. At other times we must dance before the Lord with all our might.

A movement class may not necessarily solve the problem, though it may help. We must continually pray to the Lord for insight. There are some well-trained dancers who are about as exciting to watch as a brick wall. Some choreography set to Gospel music has nothing to do with the meaning of the song. This should not occur with us. We must not be more consumed with getting the movement right and neglect to receive the correct interpretation of the Word. When we allow movement to be the deciding factor, we are no longer ministering the Word in dance. We are simply doing "busy work."

Common words used in Gospel songs like heart, love, peace, Jesus, cross, pray, and so forth too often look the same on many dancers. Does everyone love the same way? Is Jesus only one-dimensional? Is the cross only two long pieces of wood connecting to form a symbol? Does everyone pray the same way? Does peace have the same meaning for everyone? If not, then our movement should reflect the diversity of the human experience and accurately portray the attributes of God. If we are merely moving without revelation, we are only being "busy bodies," and nothing more.

### **2 Timothy 2:14-15**

*Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

## Please Keep Me Posted...

We have probably all heard the comment "stay in your place." In the ministry of movement, it is important to know where our position (or post) is, and how we are to guard against unrighteousness in our ministries. Each one of us has a specific task to accomplish. Too often, everyday distractions can move us from a firm stance into wavering, doubting, and lack of confidence.

If we give our word to someone as dance ministers, are we doing everything we can to honor it? When we stand at our spiritual posts and watch for one another, we are guaranteed to see some things that will disappoint us. The flaws of leaders will be exposed. Weaknesses of fellow dance ministers will be revealed. We will also discover some things about ourselves that may make us feel unworthy. Allowing ourselves to dwell on the negatives will pull us off of our watchtowers.

The solution for us to stay in a watchful posture is to build up our prayer lives on a daily basis. There is no magic formula for prayer; however, we must pray in agreement with the Word of God. Praying regularly will help us to stand guard against the enemy's attempts to infiltrate the dance ministry. If we have already experienced a breach, prayer will give us the wisdom and strategy to get the adversary out of the camp. Whatever we know the Lord has assigned to us, we must make sure to keep watch upon our posts, and stand in the gap as ministers for Him.

### **Proverbs 8:34**

*Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*

### **Ecclesiastes 10:4**

*If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your post; for conciliation pacifies great offenses.*

## Home Wreckers

We must not use dance ministry involvement as an excuse to neglect our personal responsibilities. Though believers should be disciples, truthfully speaking, we are not required to dance to share the Gospel with mankind. It is a wonderful blessing to be talented enough to dance with creativity, passion, and conviction. It is a travesty if those who dwell in our own households refer to us as hypocrites.

Spending unreasonable amounts of time in dance rehearsals and travelling for months at a time may need to be reconsidered. If there is friction in our homes, we must pray to the Lord for direction. We should be good stewards over our relationships and invest in the salvation of our own families. Talking about dance ministry constantly, while shortchanging our loved ones in time, attention, and training can damage our credibility as movement ministers.

The influences on a single dancer vs. a married one may differ greatly. Being a parent of a child or teenager may require someone to balance his or her timesheet between home and ministry. It is often said that ministry begins at home. We need not stray from maintaining the house of the Lord for the benefit of the Body. There are many of us that need to take the time to evaluate and then re-evaluate what factors may be contributing to the demise of our own homes. Walking upright before the Lord starts with each of us individually. If the truth of our lives were put on display today in a dance ministry presentation, what would the message say about us?

### **Proverbs 3:33**

*The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the home of the just.*

### **1 Timothy 5:8**

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

### **Hebrews 11:7**

*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with Godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

## Beauty School

Reading the Word of God daily will instruct us concerning how we are to portray Him to the world. Some people are considered natural beauties, but learning the basics of hair, make-up, and wardrobe serve to accentuate what is already there. We can apply some of these natural principles to enhance our concepts of spiritual beauty. Many of us know that walking with the Lord is a beautiful journey, but we can more fully share the experience visually if we learn how to worship Him in a beautiful manner.

Even when we beautify ourselves for ministry, it is not for our own glory. We are to serve as wonderful reflections of His creation and care for us. There is no limit to the splendor that we can offer in worship; however, to present the revelation of His beauty we must prepare effectively. Flags and banners with frayed ends are not only unsightly, but can be dangerous for the dancer if caught in the fingers or between the toes. Poorly constructed garments will distract the observer if they begin to tear at the seams during movement. The Lord will provide every type of skilled person that we need to make the vision a reality if we seek Him.

The Bible is full of majesty that includes ornate descriptions of tabernacles, bridal preparation, glorious garments, holy artifacts, and the beauty of His creation. We will never reach the point where we have obtained all there is know about Divine creativity and the beauty of worship. Devotion to continued study will unveil to us how we are to portray beauty in a Spirit-led fashion. Glamour of itself is vanity. The Lord is concerned with our internal beauty. As we continue to learn His Divine beauty secrets, we will be able to more effectively show the wonders of His love in fresh and innovative ways.

### **Psalm 27:4**

*One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.*

### **Psalm 90:17**

*And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.*

## Junk in the Trunk

It is important to stay organized and orderly. If we do not have systems in place for ministry engagements, distribution of paperwork, storage of worship instruments, care for garments, music organization, and so on, we may find ourselves buried in a sea of confusion both mentally and physically. We must discover what works for us, and strive to keep things flowing as smoothly as possible. Having a clear mindset allows us not to be distracted when it is time to minister.

If we have ever found ourselves unable to find that specific flag or prop because of a disorganized environment, it is time to remove the excess from around us. If the dance ministry needs help collecting and arranging things to be found for future use, it may be time to assign a person to govern as "keeper of the wardrobe." If the trunks of our vehicles are strewn with dance garments, shoes, CDs, streamers, rehearsal schedules, etc., we need to get organized! With busy schedules, clutter can develop before we realize it. When we are working with large groups of people, we must be even more diligent to work together to keep the pathways clear.

Whenever we are invited to minister, it is a good principle to train ourselves and those who go with us to leave things neat and clean. We should not leave plastic bags, tissue, make-up powder, or any other mess behind for someone else to deal with. Representing the ministry well not only entails how we enter a place, but how we leave it. After the dance has gone forth and the praises have been heard, have we left things in disarray, or has the place been made better by our presence?

### **2 Chronicles 29:4-5**

*Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place."*

### **Nehemiah 4:10**

*Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."*

## The Sound of Music

There are some that argue that music is not powerful in itself. Some also believe that music has no place in the worship service. It is pertinent that the words that are written for Gospel songs are accurate and Biblically sound. We must not mistake the function of music that comes by the inspiration of the Lord. The role of music in the dance ministry must also not be taken for granted.

We can discern the spirit behind the music by observation of the people. When we are in a worship setting, music should not inspire people to emulate seductive movements upon hearing it played. Just as dance ministers are admonished to have a relationship with the Lord, musicians must know Him as well. If the church service transitions from praise and worship into a club-like atmosphere, we must explore what it is about the music that causes people to divert. Opinions of men do not matter. When we study the Word of God, we will be more careful to offer music that brings glory to Him and does not move the flesh.

Music can be used in a prophetic manner. Music can accompany healing. Music is used in conjunction with dancing. Music is offered as praise unto the Lord. Music is used to aid people in remembering the Word of the Lord. Music is not to be worshipped. It is to be used in the manner for which it is created. When we take care to select or create music that honors God, the ministry of movement will flow with ease and effectiveness on an even greater level.

### **1 Samuel 10:5**

*After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying.*

### **1 Chronicles 23:5**

*Four thousand were gatekeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with musical instruments, "which I made," said David, "for giving praise."*

## Payday is Coming

People will disappoint us. We will not always be appreciated for our labor. We may dance on many occasions and not receive so much as a "thank you" for our service. There may be times that we have invested money, time, and long hours into the ministry and seem to not reap the rewards of the sacrifice. We take confidence in knowing that when we endure, the Lord will reward our work.

No one can bless us like He can! We must be willing to work for the Kingdom even when there is no guaranteed pay. Many dancers have adopted the practice of setting a price per event type to minister the Gospel. Some demand lists of accommodations for comfort. While we must each seek the Lord as how to conduct ministry in righteousness, we must know that ministry is not glamorous. Jesus rode on a donkey and not in a chariot.

The temptation to quit when faced with hardship in ministry must be overcome with the Word of God. When we are motivated by love, our hearts will continue to be in the right place. Although we should not dance merely for the prospect that we will be rewarded, we continue doing the work of the Lord knowing that He keeps His promises.

### **Job 34:11**

*For He repays man according to his work, and makes man to find a reward according to his way.*

### **Isaiah 49:4**

*Then I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, and my work with my God."*

### **Matthew 16:27**

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

## We Interrupt This Program...

We must be better time managers regarding ministry events. There is nothing more exhausting than having to dance after 20 other ministries have gone forth. If the program is scheduled to start at 5:00pm and does not begin until 6:00pm, this is often a sign of trouble. We should not have to invite more people on program than reasonable just to fill seats with bodies.

Waiting for long periods of time to dance can cause fatigue in the body and compromise cheerful attitudes. In ministry, quality over quantity should be desired. Marathon programs without reason should be avoided, if possible. Time may be better managed with trimming the number of participants on program, or reducing the number of songs that invited ministries offer. Although it is exciting to see a variety of ministries in movement, it can be grueling to see the same 5-7 groups dance three songs apiece. If we are planning an all-night worship session, this should be made known in advance.

Those who have the task of developing programs for special ministry should be prayerful when scheduling the line-up. It might not be a great idea to have a children's ministry toward the latter end of the program. Ministries that travel from far distances may need to be given consideration when setting the order of service. On the other hand, a dance ministry program may not necessarily call for spoken word, a choir, drama presentation, or other addition unless the Lord says so.

Dance ministry has often been used as "filler" for other types of programs and was not taken seriously as a ministry. Now that more dance ministries are developing programs for dance, are we guilty of using other ministries as filler as well? Regardless of how we fit the pieces together, we must consider all involved and exercise wisdom and good judgment coupled with prayer.

### **1 Chronicles 28:19**

*"All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans."*

## A Touchy Subject

The significance of our hands cannot be underestimated. The reason that we should not follow a set of concrete "rules" for dance ministry is that it restricts the working of the Holy Spirit in us. General wisdom can be applied, but obedience to the Lord is a must. We cannot copy a particular movement simply because we saw someone else do it. All of our choreography and direction must be led of the Lord.

Some dance ministers remain aloof from the congregation, while others make lots of eye contact and engage people through touch. While it is important to connect with the people we minister to, we must know that the Word does the work. We cannot haphazardly lay hands on people, pull them from their seats, run them around the church, and expect it to be powerful just because we assume that it will be.

When we place our hands on people without the Lord's leading, we may offend or embarrass someone unintentionally. The use of discernment will let us know if someone is feeling uncomfortable or does not want to be an "honorary dancer" at a particular moment. Maintaining a righteous lifestyle allows the Spirit to flow freely, removing "us" out of the way and allowing the Lord to touch His people in a way that only He can.

### **1 Timothy 5:22**

*Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.*

### **Isaiah 52:11**

*Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.*

### **2 Corinthians 6:17**

*Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."*

## Put Your Foot in It

We must be careful what we say concerning one another. When we have influence, the words that we say carry weight with those around us. Leaders must be especially careful concerning revelations made in the presence of impressionable people. Personal disagreements, dislikes, and preferences can grow into a larger offense if we are careless about how we conduct ourselves. What may begin as a disagreement between two people, can quickly grow into a war of epic proportions.

Dance ministers are often in front of the congregation and assume influential positions in the church whether we accept it or not. We are recognized often, even when it is not brought to our attention. We are constantly being watched. Children and teenagers are especially vulnerable to the desire to want to be accepted and affiliated with people that are popular. When we engage in casual conversation, we may forget that what we say may be overheard by someone else. We can avoid this by limiting casual talk or by maintaining appropriate conversation at all times. Regardless of who is listening, the Lord hears every single word we say.

This does not mean that we are robots and actors that cannot share our hurts, pains, and struggles. We should not turn offenses into a personal crusade to tarnish the character of others who we may no longer be in fellowship with. Setting a guard over our mouths will also keep the door open for reconciliation to take place. When we are careless and operate out of our feelings instead of the Word, we will end up "putting a foot in our mouths."

### **Proverbs 21:23**

*Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.*

### **Luke 6:45**

*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

## Station Identification

Dancing for the benefit of the Kingdom can be a wonderful experience. If we are blessed to transition from dancing for the sheer joy of it into becoming ministers of movement, we must realize that ministry is not all fun and games. We must be watchful and prayerful about the things that we allow to happen in the ministry. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves in a divided house.

Everyone that joins a ministry is not necessarily a member of the household of faith, even though they may try to claim belief. Any powerful ministry will be faced with infiltrators whose assignment is to damage the foundation on which it stands. Each of us must make it a priority to secure the best interests of the ministry for the Lord's work to be done. We cannot police others if we have not brought ourselves under submission to the Holy Spirit.

It is the responsibility of each of us to be watchmen. We must also be on guard to discern anything that can potentially destroy the unity of the ministry. The ministry that we are referring to does not only concern one dance ministry or church. We need to watch for the Body as a whole, and rally around the success of other ministries as well. If the dance ministry up the street fails, we have failed them as co-laborers.

What affects one part of the Body affects the whole. Leaders have a great responsibility to care for the ministry, but leaders cannot do it alone. Each of us must make sure that we are not allowing the enemy to bring in division, discord, disunity, or dysfunction. The adversary only needs a small opening to wreak havoc. As ministers of movement, let us take our rightful positions and give no place to the devil.

### **2 Kings 11:5-7**

*Then he commanded them, saying, "This is what you shall do: One-third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house, one-third shall be at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD for the king."*

### **Matthew 24:43**

*But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*

## Wings and Things

Hollywood would have us believe that all angels wear glowing white garments and have enormous feathered wings. Some paintings depict angel children and men and women with flowing hair, halos, and cheerful faces. Many dance and movement ministries have adopted this same ideology and some have included the word "angel" in the ministry name. We must always be careful to properly apply the Word of God, especially in the visual sense.

Many of the Lord's creations have wings, including birds and cherubim. Even the Lord Himself is described at times as having wings. When we continually present the image of angels in white with fluttering wings, we have not conferred with the Bible on the matter. Actually, angels in the Scriptures are not described as winged, although cherubim and seraphim are. Some angels wore white, some were accompanied by bright light, some appeared in dreams, and some appeared as mortal men. The Biblical description of angels is specific and many times invoked fear in the hearts of those they encountered. What a sight it must have been to behold such a creation! There were also times that people were not aware until later that an angel had been among them.

Angels serve as messengers of God. Movement ministers also serve as messengers of the Gospel through the use of Scripture, visual imagery, and relative motion. We cannot be ignorant or inaccurate when portraying the living Word. Angels are not to be revered as more holy and sacred than our Lord. When we pray and seek the Lord in order to bring glory to His name, He will open our eyes and reveal His truth to us.

### **1 Chronicles 21:30**

*But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.*

### **Hebrews 13:2**

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.*

## Return to Sender

We cannot assume that just because someone shares the same interests that we do that we have permission to solicit them. In the growing age of technology and social networking, there are many who are marketing themselves to the masses. Many in the dance ministry have taken the reins as self-promoters in cyberspace. While at first it may have seemed a minor inconvenience to receive "junk mail" in an electronic-mail format, the influx of free internet marketing is beginning to take its toll.

Many dance and movement ministries are filling e-mail inboxes and social networking bulletin boards with announcements about the next not-to-be-missed event, conference, or highly-anointed service. It seems as though everyone is promoting a "destiny-driven, life-altering, never to be done again" type of gathering. Cyber bulletin boards allow the reader an opportunity to select which messages they desire to read. Saturating bulletin boards with the same event over and over reeks of self-promotion. Sending unsolicited items via e-mail daily can land us in the SPAM category indefinitely.

How do we avoid being bothersome or labeled as self-promoters among our fellow peers? People should want to keep in contact with us and vice versa. This is primarily based on relationship. We should ask permission to add people to our mailing lists or allow them the opportunity to unsubscribe without fault. We should not just gather every dance-related e-mail that we see and commence to spreading the Word. Getting the news out about events can be done properly, but if we spend our time reaching out to people without the proper boundaries in place, our reputations will end up in the junk mail category and our messages in the recycle bin.

### **Philippians 2:3**

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

### **2 Corinthians 12:6**

*For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.*

## Tools for Success

The Lord will continue to give us what we need to succeed in ministry. We must constantly obtain the right tools that we need to advance His Kingdom. Our primary source of material comes from the Word of God. Through the Word we build our faith, establish a solid foundation, and take refuge. The work of our hands will not stand if the Lord has not commissioned the work.

Dance ministry resources continue to grow daily. Many proclaim to have divine knowledge of the mysteries of dance ministry and are eager to deliver that extra special book, DVD, or CD into our hands. True tools for ministry come from the leading of the Holy Spirit, and many times will be referred by word-of-mouth. We must be ever-cautious of those who are over-anxious to unload some precious resource at our doorstep. As we continue to build an arsenal of tools for Kingdom-building, the Lord will expose the validity of each of our works.

Our goal for building is not for ourselves. We must not use the Gospel as a means to build our own houses (natural or spiritual), or lay up earthly treasures for our benefit. When we assemble a spiritual "toolbox," we must make sure that every part contained in it is useful for edifying others. If we are not careful when building, we will end up erecting monuments that only serve our own purposes.

### **Isaiah 22:22-24**

*The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open. I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house. They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers.*

### **Jeremiah 23:29**

*"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"*

### **Ecclesiastes 12:11**

*The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*

## Unfinished Business

It is very exciting to embark upon new beginnings, but the real challenge is to finish what we have started. Often we may be inspired to dance to a certain song, have an idea for a new garment design, or desire to host a special event in the near future. All of these concepts can be great, but if we are not careful, we can end up dreaming more often than we accomplish the goal. If we continue to advertise without delivering on the promise, we will appear foolish and be perceived as untrustworthy to our peers and fellow co-laborers.

Much of our unfinished projects can be tied to lack of prayer, insufficient planning, and over-ambition. We cannot second-guess everything that we do; however, with the Lord's direction and clear guidelines, we will be able to finish the work that we start. If we find ourselves starting choreography that never seems to end, we need clarity. When the workshop that we planned, advertised, and collected money for has to be cancelled due to lack of response, we need direction from the Lord. If we continue to have meetings about future activities and events and the key staff members and leaders are regularly missing from conversation, we need to wait upon the Lord.

Whatever the Lord has instructed us to finish, we must not faint. If we have procrastinated or lingered beyond the time that we were appointed to complete an assignment, it is time to repent and get back to work! If we continue to repeat the same cycles, we will end up dizzy. When we walk according to the path that the Lord has directed for us, we will keep moving forward as we walk in obedience.

### **Joshua 11:15**

*As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.*

### **2 Chronicles 8:16**

*Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.*

## He's Counting on Me

We must continue to be accountable concerning all that the Lord has placed in our hands (and feet!). If He has given us talents, He is concerned about how we multiply what He has given. When we are assigned a task to complete, He observes how we get the work done, including our motives and treatment of others along the way. If we have assumed a position of leadership over His people, we are responsible for how we care for them when they are with us. Righteousness counts with the Lord.

Even in the process of choreographing a piece, every step we include should count. We may try to make the count fit the words of a song instead of aligning the count to the Word. That dance move that we have been aching to do may not work right now. There is great power in simple movement. What the Lord has to say is more important than any beat, rhythm, or instrument. We cannot obsess over physical perfection. Our hearts must remain pure toward the Lord for us to deliver movement with a Word that renews minds and heals the brokenhearted.

The days of taking the dance ministry for granted for us have come to an end. More than ever before, we must study, strengthen, and stretch both spiritually and physically. The cares of this world should not affect the fervor with which we dance for our Lord. It is time to make each day count in our lives and ministries. No more time to waste. No more procrastination. No more excuses. It's time to stand up and be counted!

### **Job 31:4**

*Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?*

### **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12**

*Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## Just Wait a Minute!

Many beginning dance ministries make the mistake of wanting to hurry up and assemble a group of dancers to get moving as quickly as possible. The concept of studying the Word of the Lord regarding dance and movement and praying for direction seems foreign as the next big event approaches for the big debut. Dance uniforms are selected, songs are chosen, and the rehearsals begin without regard to what the Lord has to say concerning the matter.

Some people who desire to "praise dance" do so because of the feeling that it gives them when witnessing someone else minister. Possibly, someone on the special programs committee suggested that a special dance number be put together in two weeks for the fast-approaching Pastor's Appreciation Service. An upset dance team member may decide to leave the church dance ministry and form a "community" dance ministry that includes several dancers from the former group. We must not make a move without first waiting on the Lord.

When the Lord directs a thing, it will prosper. Though we may go through seasons of trial and face challenges, when we wait on Him, we will not be ashamed. If He leads us to begin a movement ministry, we must seek His instruction and obey Him at His Word. Our gift will make room for us. When we are ready to minister in motion, He will open up the door and create the right platform for us. We need not call and ask anyone to dance. When we allow Him to do the work, He will open doors for us and give us favor beyond what we could imagine.

### **Psalm 25:3**

*Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.*

### **Psalm 37:34**

*Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.*

### **Psalm 52:9**

*I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good.*

## An Open and Shut Case

Although we dance for the Lord and are faithful to the ministry He has entrusted us with, we must realize that we must keep the doors closed to temptation. Many dance groups today are comprised of men and women who work closely together on a regular basis. It may seem as though there are seasons that we spend more time with our dance ministry members than our own families. As a result, we can become very close-knit. This can also present a dangerous open door if not monitored on a regular basis.

When working with a group of people consistently, we experience each others joys, disappointments, triumphs, and tragedies. Often what can become a moment of compassion can evolve into misplaced passion if we do not exercise self-control. Waiting on the Lord before leaping into relationships will give us time to understand the true purpose for our connection with one another.

Groups that contain both genders must be careful when traveling to ministry events. We must also exercise good judgment when selecting attire to wear to rehearsals, considering one another's natural inclinations. Changing into ministry garments must be planned wisely when sufficient dressing room space is not available. Although the Lord may bring people together to His glory through meeting in a ministry, we must have the proper boundaries in place to protect ourselves and the ministry from falling into sin.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:3-6**

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.*

## Miss Understanding

We each have a responsibility to gain knowledge concerning our functions as parts of the Body. In the structure of a dance ministry, each member must also have a strong sense of placement and be a vital part of the whole. We can do this by having communication and training systems in place for incoming ministry members, and ongoing instruction for the ministry as a whole. Although we may not all agree on the minor details, we must make sure that we are all speaking the same things concerning our commission as dance ministers.

Every ministry should have a vision or reason for being. Leaders and team members should each be able to state the goal of the ministry on a local, national, or international level, depending upon our Kingdom assignment. Ministry participants should also know the order of leadership and the appropriate steps to follow for dealing with personal matters, ministry concerns, and larger circumstances. When we miss the opportunity to gain understanding, we are on our way to oblivion.

If we lack understanding of focus, Biblical knowledge, or technical ability, we must pray and seek the Lord's voice concerning what steps to take. When we do not agree, we will not be in step with one another, and confusion will result. Much of the ineffectiveness that is witnessed among dance and movement ministries today is due to limited understanding personally, spiritually, and corporately. We do not want to miss anything that has been prepared for us due to our own ignorance. If anyone lacks wisdom, now is the time to ask for it from the Lord.

### **Proverbs 3:13-14**

*Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold.*

### **James 1:5**

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

## Armed and Dangerous

The Lord works wonders through weakness. He is the source of our strength. When we are weak, the supernatural power of God steps in and carries us across the finish line. In the ministry of dance, we can work hard to build strong bodies, but we cannot rely on our own strength to sustain us. There will be times when we are physically exhausted, drained, and weak. In these moments we must rely on the Lord to strengthen our arms to complete the work.

When the Bible speaks of arms, it is often representative of strength, power, and victory, especially in battle. The Word ascribes wonder to the awesome power and strength of the arms and hands of God. In movement ministry, the use of our arms may be the most significant movement that people are able to see. Depending upon the setting in which we dance much of the viewing audience may miss what we do from the waist down, unless stadium or sloped seating is available. This in no way implies that we are not to make full use of our legs.

When we understand the meaning of movement from a Scriptural perspective, our choreography will begin to "preach" as we marry the meaning of the words with the movement. We must always allow the Holy Spirit to direct us as we approach choreography. Trying to make all movement have a literal meaning will open the door for us to rely on ourselves. If the Lord gives us an unconventional way to minister a particular section of a song, poem, prayer, or passage of Scripture, we will take confidence knowing that it is He Who gives us strength.

### **2 Chronicles 32:8**

*"With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*

## Time and Place

We must be good stewards concerning our time. When first starting out in movement ministry, it may be a challenge getting a platform to share the message. Many try to suggest or outright ask for the opportunity to dance at an event. Others start out at the local church and are asked to dance based on being seen there. Waiting on the Lord to send us forth is the greatest way to spread the Word. It is much better to be asked to dance than to impose on others. There is plenty of opportunity to dance in the public instead of seeking platforms in church circles that may lead to fame and celebration of our works.

The opposite spectrum of lack of opportunity is making a choice between multiple invitations. Some ministries opt to accept multiple invites even if they are on the same day or during the same timeframe. This approach will often have the invited group to ask the host to dance early on one program and late on another so that they are able to dance at both events. The problem is that to the observer, the ministry is seen leaving early at the first location and arriving late at the next. Beyond the dance, our reputations are also an important reflection of the motives of the ministry.

There is also the temptation to accept every event presented to us. As we have become experts at multi-tasking, we will discover that key areas in our lives will go lacking if we spend every weekend dancing and none with family, friends, and most importantly, the Lord. We must ask Him whether or not He has a reason for us to dance at a particular place and time. If we are not discerning regarding where we are sent or invited, we may find ourselves frustrated and exhausted, suffering through programs that are more about dance and competition than the love of Christ.

### **Galatians 5:13**

*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

## Critically Speaking

Trailblazers often face the harshest criticism. When we are confident concerning our obedience to the Lord, we cannot listen to verbal assaults from people who disagree with dance as a ministry based merely on opinion and not the Word of God. We can learn a lot from those who accuse us of engaging in fleshly activity and inciting lust among the people. Critics should challenge us to know the Lord on a greater level. Our greatest defense will always be the Lord Himself.

We cannot be so stiff-necked that we do not hear what detractors have to say. Controversy should incite us to know which areas we need to be more versed in Biblically. If we receive negative reactions concerning our garments, we should examine if there is any truth to it and compare it with Scripture. If our movement is offensive to most of the congregation, we must ask ourselves if the message that we are delivering is right for those particular people. We cannot seek to please people, but we can verify to make sure that we are not causing others to stumble.

Those who accuse us without merit will be dealt with. We must resist the urge to argue with every opponent to prove that the ministry of movement is legitimate. In many cases, the power of God manifested through us when we dance will be enough to bring people to repentance. There will always be those with hard hearts who will not receive us. In those instances, we must shake the dust from our feet and keep moving.

### **Psalm 109:3-4**

*They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer.*

### **Mark 14:4-6**

*But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me."*

## Rock & Roll

We will have occasions when we experience tumultuous times. Ministries of all types experience growth, decline, prosperity, and lack. What we must realize is that the cycle of abundance and need is an essential part of life. Dance and movement ministries are not immune to these seasonal challenges. This is why we must pray for wisdom and direction from the Lord so that we move by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

The only One that we can rely on to never fail is the Lord our Rock. As long as we stay connected to Him, we will be able to survive every attack, shaking, transition, and setback. Dance ministries that overcome adversity together and strive to obey the Lord are often very effective and powerful dance ministers. We must never allow the enemy to bring division among us. He will deal with whatever comes against us and roll it away (remove it from us and bring relief), while leading us to the higher rock (place of safety).

We must walk closer with God more than ever before. When we keep our hearts, souls, and minds stayed on Him, our Foundation is firm and we can endure. Struggle should not hinder our ability to dance about joy, peace, and love. Spiritual movement includes both natural and supernatural involvement. When the world around us is shaken, we can declare with certainty that we shall not be moved!

**Deuteronomy 32:4**

*He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

**Psalm 61:2**

*From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

**Psalm 94:22**

*But the LORD has been my defense, and my God the rock of my refuge.*

## Funny Money, Strange Change

Good stewardship is a requirement for ministry. Many dance and movement ministries need money for several ministry needs including garments, travel, conference attendance, music purchases, reading materials, instructional DVDs, and other resources. It is common for church dance ministries to have very little or no money at all to operate. This results in the majority of purchases being paid for by dance ministry members or parents of younger dancers. With prayer and wise counsel, we can do better.

Because many struggle in the area of finances, this unfortunately determines the quality of items purchased for ministry use. We must become more resourceful, ask for wisdom, and glean from the experience of others in this area. There may be seamstresses and tailors willing to sow into the ministry of dance by volunteering services, donating remnant fabric, or providing consultation as to how we can save money by buying materials at wholesale prices. Often we have not because we ask not.

In the ever-growing field of dance and worship arts conferences, there are also ways to practice sound money management in a pinch. This may mean hosting smaller events, inviting fewer speakers, using local resources, and getting more volunteer contributions (food donations, travel, discount facilities, decor, etc). We can never let the economy compromise our ability to minister the Word effectively. Excellence does not have to be compromised when cost-cutting. When we are faithful over little, we will rule over much.

### **John 12:5-6**

*"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.*

## Question and Answer

It is amazing how many praise dancers cannot provide an answer to any Biblical references of dance other than David. We should know the basic Scriptures that pertain to dance, but we cannot stop there. Regular study of the Word of God will fuel us with choreographic creativity that reflects His heart concerning the people. We must each become accountable for what we know, or seek to discover what we are supposed to know.

The Bible is saturated with movement imagery from Genesis to Revelation. We cannot depend on popular dance ministers or televangelists to give us some new revelation concerning movement. Although teaching is helpful, it should not be our sole source of information. Every book, DVD, and newsletter is not necessarily an authority on dance ministry. Laziness in study and co-dependence on others to feed us spiritually will result in a malnourished, dysfunctional ministry.

As we study and gain understanding of the Word, our grasp of the Scriptures must not provide an occasion for us to feel superior over others that lack knowledge. Many Biblical scholars can fall into the temptation of pride when spouting Scriptures in an attempt to showcase authority. At some point we were all ignorant of the ways of God. True knowledge is demonstrated and not always verbalized. What is inside of us will come out. Though many may criticize and condemn the ministry of movement, when we live by the Word of God, our ministry will stand without question.

### **1 Kings 10:1,3**

*Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her.*

### **Matthew 13:11**

*He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."*

## Credit Check

Many dance ministers revel in perceived success. Ministry invitations, first class travel, 5-Star hotel accommodations, and large honorariums can become the trappings of success. Although it is a blessing to be cared for during ministry engagements, lack of humility and pride will trick us into expecting ministry to be comfortable at all times. True ministry requires knowing how to abase and abound. It is easy to assume that a ministry that appears to be prosperous, internationally known, and booked solid year-round indicates God's favor. The truth is found in who we are away from the platform.

Everyone will not agree with our choices or what we do, but it is important to have good "credit" in ministry. We can learn from our mistakes, but when our missteps become chronic habits, our personal reputations suffer and the ministry is also blamed. We do not have to concern ourselves with false accusations; however, if there is any truth to a bad report that is being given about us, we must deal with it quickly. Ministry business and offenses that are not handled will often grow into gossip, rumors, and speculation that reach far beyond our control.

We must accept that our personal lives testify to the validity of our ministries. If we continue to dance week after week while our marriages and families lack attention, owe money to creditors while taking lavish ministry trips, treat ministry members like slaves instead of Kingdom citizens, or generally have a bad reputation regarding our behavior, we lower our ministry credit rating. If we hear negative reports about ourselves, before we get defensive, we must ask the Lord if there is any truth to it. If we find through revelation that we need to repent, we must make amends and adjust our ways immediately. When our ways please the Lord, even our enemies will be at peace with us.

**1 Samuel 2:24**

*No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress.*

## Renewal Notice

Even when things do not turn out according to our plans, we can always trust the Lord's ability to turn them around for good. Dance ministries that have been on the brink of disbanding have been able to pick up the pieces and rebuild with the Lord's intervention. There may be times in ministry when we feel like giving up, or that the sacrifice is too great to continue. We thank the Lord for these times because this is when He can get the glory.

Feeling burned out and overwhelmed by conducting ministry-as-usual is when we must recognize that it is time to be renewed. Our minds, spirits, and bodies must have a time to recuperate and be revived. The body needs fuel for it to operate at maximum capacity. Our spirit man needs spiritual sustenance to function as well. It is permissible to take a few moments to refresh, revive, renew, and be restored. When we do not allow for times of refreshing regularly, we may stop dancing when we should be moving even more.

Although we do not make a practice of complaining about the challenges we face, it is important to express when we experience symptoms of burnout. Jesus Himself had to take some much needed personal time in the midst of intense ministry. Placing the needs of dance ministry members, church leadership, families, and jobs before our own can result in resentment if we run empty. If we are to serve others, we must do so in a way that will allow us to consistently give our best.

### **Romans 7:6**

*But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

### **2 Corinthians 3:5-6**

*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

## Speechless

Our message through movement should be crystal clear. People should not leave "scratching their heads" when we are finished. God is not the author of confusion. Granted, there may be those who lack a foundational understanding of the Word, and may miss some key things. Our ministry presentations should not appear extremely chaotic. There should not be mass confusion in the atmosphere after we dance.

In order to be most effective in movement ministry, we need to employ techniques that work to bring the Message to life. Using mirrors during rehearsals will help us to see what the audience sees. Observing ourselves will help us to adjust any facial expressions or reconfigure movement that is not in agreement with the spirit of the piece. Using props or flags and banners with written words can also help us share the Gospel visually. If we take the necessary steps, even children will be able to receive the intended message with clarity.

We must also consider that everyone we may come in contact with may not speak the same language as we do. Strong facial expressions and meaningful motion can be understood without words beyond language barriers. Sharpening our skills as movement ministers will help us to be effective even when we are speechless.

### **Daniel 10:14-15**

*"Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come." When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless.*

### **Matthew 10:20**

*For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*

### **Luke 1:22**

*But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*

## The Cutoff Point

We cannot flirt with ungodliness and expect to flourish. In the arts ministries, temptation abounds as gifts and perceived anointing become very attractive to people. Because of pride of association, many people will flock to popular dance ministers and worshippers for the wrong reasons. We aim daily to walk closely with the Lord and obey His Word. There may also be times when sin will try to overtake us. We must resist evil and continue to walk in the Light.

If there are friends that we fellowship with regularly who practice sinful lifestyles, we are foolish if we think that we will not be influenced by them. This does not mean that we will do the same things that others do, but it can open the pathway for us to relax our standards of holy living. Spending time talking on the phone with people who are constantly gossiping or spreading divisive information can also lead us away from the path of righteousness. We must review all of our close associations frequently and make any cuts that are necessary to remain standing.

We do not have to be unloving or insensitive when we have to sever relationships that are no longer lining up with the call of God on our lives. Maintaining co-dependent relationships that are detrimental to our lives and ministries must not be allowed to continue unchecked. When the Lord reveals to us that it is time to move on, we must ask for the wisdom and timing to make the necessary alterations without regrets.

### **Psalm 37:9**

*For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*

### **2 Corinthians 6:14**

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

## I'd Like to Take This Opportunity...

The enemy would like to gain a foothold in our ministries and lives. In our efforts to banish evil influences from around us, we may not realize that the adversary is also disguised as an angel of light. When we have true burden for ministry, we are filled with grace, love, and compassion, which may cause us to open the pathway for opportunists and hustlers.

When we sense a pattern of people who always want to tell us about what the Lord is doing through them in ministry and would love the opportunity to share it with us or be a guest teacher... beware! If the only time that we receive e-mails from individuals is to promote an event, concert, book, or conference... pray. If someone constantly asks for a dance solo or spreads discord about the dance ministry leader... take note of it and seek the Lord for direction. We can more fully keep watch when we realize the subtle tactics of opportunists who seek to build themselves up more than the Kingdom.

If we notice any of these traits in ourselves, we must discontinue these worldly practices and allow the Lord to open doors for us. Humility and excellence are two traits that will lead to success. We may be guilty of trying to make something happen for ourselves before the appropriate time. Ambition will cause us to launch out and start things that we cannot complete. Thoughts of grandeur will allow us to justify selfish behavior if we do not strive to keep the flesh under subjection. Before we take the opportunity to be out in front, let us wait for an invitation to approach.

### **2 Corinthians 11:12**

*But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.*

### **Galatians 5:13**

*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

## Best Friends Forever?

Friendship is a very important component in ministry. David and Jonathan are examples of friends on Divine assignment. We must be careful to select friendships that glorify God. Relationship is a core factor in the lives of Biblical people as well as our lives today. How we handle our relationships is a reflection of our character, integrity, and trust. There are seasons in our lives when we must transition from old relationships into new ones. This also applies to dance ministers.

As we travel and minister together with various dancers and groups, friendships and associations are formed that can last for years. We may form even closer friendships with those in our own dance group. As we grow and develop over time, people get married, go to college, have children, or just grow apart. We may even experience the death of a fellow dance ministry member. When we accept this as reality, we will not take the transition personally, but be able to rejoice as life opens new doors in the lives of others. We must resist the urge to hold on to people to the point that we hinder them (and ourselves) from moving forward.

Some key things to remember when relationships end is to love without fail. When we place the Lord's will above our personal feelings, we will be confident knowing that He is a Repairer. Even in the unfortunate circumstances that may end relationships negatively, we must continue to show spiritual maturity and remain pure in word, thought, and deed. When relationships change, we must not force them to last beyond the intended season. If our reason for dancing is rooted on Christ the Solid Rock, we will continue to flourish in ministry in spite of the changes that may come.

**Proverbs 12:26**

*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

**Proverbs 22:24-25**

*Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.*

## Left, Left, Left, Right, Left...

What do we do with the church members or interested people who want to join the movement ministry, but have "two left feet?" It is a challenge to dance ministry leadership when the standard policy of the church or organization is to open the ministry to all people willing to participate. On the other hand, some groups choose to have ministry "auditions" and select or reject people based on various factors.

Wisdom will help us to find balance between the two extremes. A type of "Ministry Open House" can be held at specific times during the year when people can come to learn more about the ministry, and the ministry shares testimonies and experiences of dancing for the Lord. The pressure for an "audition" can be diminished, and dance pieces presented for the ministry leadership can be more of an evaluation to determine where the person may be best effective in the ministry.

If the local church attendance is large enough, there can be multiple components of movement ministry. Some people enjoy the flag and banner ministry. Others would like to employ sign language or mime. Some are very talented artistically, and may be able to help design garments, props, flags, and more. Instead of dancing separately, each component can work together to display beautiful and glorious group pieces that include the various talents of many members.

We should prayerfully handle those who may not seem to fit in or be a little more challenged with retaining choreography. If the person truly does not have a knack for dance and movement, he or she may realize this and move on. We can always develop those that have potential and need a little refinement. Frustration and impatience will lead to elitist attitudes. When we remember the Lord's mercy toward us, we can take the time to develop a passion for seeing others move forward.

### **Psalm 85:13**

*Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps our pathway.*

## Sound Advice

Dance ministers understand the importance of having a good sound system in place. Dancing to a handheld radio in a large congregation without amplification can be downright frustrating. As it is important to get the Gospel message across, struggling to hear the words of a song can be exhausting for the observers as well. Even if a sound system is in place, the music may not be loud enough. On the other hand, there are occasions when the volume may be so loud that people have to cover their ears to prevent hearing loss. In either case, these conditions will be distracting to all involved.

In order to prevent these episodes from occurring, we should ask the necessary questions in advance so that the ministry of movement can go forth in excellence. We should know if a sound system will be in place, and find out if someone will be assigned to run the sound. A sound check can be conducted in advance to agree on an appropriate sound level (we must arrive early to do this). It is also not a bad idea to invest in a portable sound system that has great volume as a back-up in case we arrive at a location and the sound is not exactly what we expected.

For the best results, our music should be clearly labeled and cued. It is a good idea for the ministry leader or delegated representative to greet the sound technician and offer thanks in advance for assisting the ministry. This is also an opportunity to discuss cues or any special directions that may be needed for successful ministry. Even if all of our preparation still results in muted music, missed signals, or the wrong song being played, we should still show grace and thanks so that the sound department and ministry of dance can work together hand-in-hand.

### **Psalm 89:15**

*Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.*

## Putting on the Hits

The growth of Christian and Gospel music in popularity and exposure is great for reaching out to new audiences. Mainstream media continues to embrace inspirational music outside of the Holiday Season, and radio stations may put a Gospel song into rotation alongside what is deemed secular music. Record companies often select the most popular Gospel hits from a selected year or style of music to package and sell to the masses. While it is wonderful to have such a variety available in one place, if we are not careful, we can miss some hidden jewels.

Concert after concert and program after program reveal a common trend. Many dance and movement ministries are dancing to the same songs, with similar movements and interpretations of the songs. This occurs so often that dancers are asked to provide song selections in advance to avoid duplication on the same program. We must have an ear to hear what the Spirit of the Lord is saying to the church. If we only listen to what everyone else deems "popular," we may fail to hear the song that the Lord wants us to use to minister to His people.

Purchasing every Christian or Gospel CD or downloading random songs online may not be the best way to hear new music. When we spend time with the Lord in prayer and tune our ears into the Spirit, the Lord will "send" us a song that speaks a Word for right now. Dance ministers must stop looking for the "hits" and allow the Lord to provide us with songs of deliverance. Let us no longer allow ourselves to only choose the songs that people are familiar with and are emotionally moved by. When we allow the Lord to select the songs for us, we will see people moved by His power, and not by our performances.

### **Job 35:10-11**

*But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night, Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?'*

## The Elements of Dance

God is a creative God that made creative beings. When we become students of His Word, we are exposed to rich symbolism and multiple instances of visual expression. Dance ministry will be boring if we present every movement and story in a literal manner. If every person that expresses the word "heart" points to the chest, then movement ministry will begin to matter little as it will all appear to be the same. All flowers do not look the same, and neither should all dance ministries.

We can express words by the emotion or way that one feels when experiencing love, instead of pointing to our hearts or making the heart symbol with our hands. Just as many point to a cross when expressing the name of Jesus, we can show Who He is by the many miracles and works that He has done. When we allow the Lord to direct creative choreography during our rehearsals, our ministries will take on new life and have a lasting impact beyond the limits of our own interpretation.

Many options are available to us when dealing with fire, rain, wind, sunshine, etc. Beyond flags and banners, we can use fabrics, artwork, dance garments, stage lighting, projection screens, and more to get the message across. When we only do what has been done, we find ourselves in danger of copying others instead of relying on the Lord. Though dance ministers share many things in common, we do not have to move according to the rhythm of the dancers next door. When we feast on the Word of the Lord, He gives us visions and dreams that become reality when His Divine creativity is set in motion.

### **Hosea 12:10**

*I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.*

### **Colossians 1:16**

*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

## Been There, Done That

Learning from our past experiences will be a great help to us as we move forward. We would be foolish to think that dance ministry does not come with pitfalls. It would be tragic for us to encounter a challenge designed to immobilize us and not learn the intended lesson. If we take conflict personally, we will miss the key points of it all: wisdom, love, and humility.

No matter how much we claim to be humble, we will experience feelings of hurt and internalize disagreements when we look at it from a fleshly standpoint. Not everyone is out to attack us. We will not be favored by some of those we co-labor with in movement ministry. Agreements may not always be reached without bruised egos. This is good for us. We will continue to allow ourselves to be instructed and chastened by the Lord when we learn from what we've already experienced.

Usually the same challenges arise time and again. When we do not learn how to respond, react, and relate, we may find ourselves in an endless cycle of similar scenarios. Always have a conflict with leadership? Seem to keep committing ourselves to projects that overwhelm us? Need to purchase new garments because the appetite is not yet under control? Regularly discovering an empty bank account before the next pay period arrives? All of these things directly affect our ministries. When we have "been there, done that," we should arrive with solutions that bring healing, wholeness, and progress so that we do not end up stalling or falling.

### **Hebrews 10:35-37**

*Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry."*

### **James 3:13**

*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

## Buy One, Get One Free

There is the unfortunate perception in many ministries that everything related to ministry should be free or deeply discounted. If our treasure and our hearts are in the same place, it may be a sad realization that many who claim to be dance ministers have hearts that are far from God. Our motives should not be based on a paycheck. We should aim to serve the Lord with all we have, even if it costs us money, time, and talent.

In the age of technology, there is an abundance of information that can be obtained relatively freely. Reading a few snippets of a book will not have the same value as reading the entire text. Surfing the internet and copying and pasting a few key concepts and ideas does not make one a student of the ministry of movement. Attending a conference and using the notes to teach others without studying it on our own is folly. We cannot shortcut our way into anointed dance ministry. The investment that we make will come to fruition. If we are to offer the Lord anything, it should be our very best.

If we have to purchase multiple Bibles, enroll in paid dance classes, buy dance garments, finance educational ministry trips, invest in gym memberships, or pay for knowledge, we should do so with fervor. Merely buying resources and not utilizing them makes us wasteful and foolish. We must be strategic as we spend. Wisdom must be exercised as we make decisions in regards to investing in ministry enrichment. Although it is a blessing to get a free book, DVD, flag, or other goods, it is definitely more blessed to give than to receive.

### **2 Samuel 24:24**

*Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*

### **Proverbs 23:23**

*Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding.*

## The Approval Process

Hosting dance concerts and conferences is not the apex of movement ministry. Many are under the impression that notoriety in the praise dance realm equals keynote speaker engagements, mega-conference hosting, and a full itinerary. Flashy websites and exaggerated accomplishments abound as many would desire to pay top-dollar to be listed in the "Movement Ministry Hall of Fame."

Instead of waiting for the Lord to open doors in His timing, many people solicit platforms and invitations. Some strategies including calling prospective conference hosts and asking for a slot to teach a subject, emailing ministry resumes and bios to impress and gain a potential invite, asking for a chance to dance on a concert or other event, and so on. While some may welcome the interest, many other event hosts express surprise (and disappointment) at the outright request to participate without an established relationship or familiarity with the ministry.

We do not have to worry that time will pass us by. The Lord's timing is perfect. When He calls us to an assignment, we will be blessed and make a great impact where we are sent. It may not be our moment or opportunity in the spotlight. The Lord has not forgotten about us and will reward those who diligently seek Him. We must continue to let Him work on our hearts and give us His desires for our lives. When we learn to wait on the Lord, we will gain the wisdom, favor, and integrity to endure when the doors of opportunity are opened for us.

### **John 5:43-44**

*I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?*

### **2 Corinthians 10:18**

*For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.*

## A Love/Hate Relationship

There are some relationships (past and present) in our lives that many of us feel that we could do without. We may feel that it would be easier to be out of the company of those with whom we disagree. If we find ourselves rejoicing when that "problem dancer" is unable to make a rehearsal or engagement, we must submit to a spiritual heart examination. Many hurts in ministry are borne from loving relationships that ended in an unloving manner. It is in these times that we learn to trust only in the Lord, but in doing so, we are not to make our hearts hard toward others.

Torn relationships in the church setting can hinder our ability to minister wholeheartedly. If we are led to dance in a certain section of the congregation and the person that we are having an issue with is near, we may disobey the Lord's direction if we try to avoid the encounter. On the other hand, we may find ourselves trying to prove our righteousness by dancing and shouting fervently in their presence. Even if our feelings of hurt are justified in our eyes, we must continue to love those that may outright hate us or be unsupportive. Saying "I love him or her" is not enough. Love is an action word.

We should expect to be hated or disliked when we are truly advancing the Kingdom. Having detractors should not be used as an opportunity for boasting about our "haters." It is natural to want to retaliate when people oppose us or our ministries. It is supernatural to love our enemies and trust the Lord to handle it every step of the way.

### **1 John 3:11-13**

*For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*

### **1 John 4:20**

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

## Skills Assessment

Although we may admire the talents of some of our fellow dancers, we must be realistic about our own abilities. There are some things that we can develop over time that include flexibility, balance, stamina, and technique. Some people are naturally gifted and can excel in dance rapidly. Does this mean that if we cannot move as well as our contemporaries that we are to sit down? Some start dancing at an early age and have developed technique over the years. Many "seasoned saints" are beginning to enter movement ministry in the latter years. There is a time, place, and space for variety in movement ministry if we will enlarge our borders.

When we begin to compare ourselves with others, we will focus on the flesh and not the Spirit. If we realize that we truly have very limited movement ability, we may want to serve the ministry in another capacity. No one should have to inform us concerning whether or not we can dance. If we are truthful, we will know when to excuse ourselves from an area in which we are not graced to move. Merely having a desire to participate in something does not mean that we will be able to accomplish it with success. Demonstrating faith in action is wonderful, but we also must walk in truth.

Shape, size, gender, or experience should not hinder us from dancing for Him. To mature in dance ministry, we must make it our goal not to remain in the state that we started. When we dedicate ourselves to serve in the ministry of movement, we must adopt healthy nutritional habits, maintain fitness, grow in knowledge of both movement and the Word, and begin to minister more effectively. Unlike the professional dance arena, the purpose of movement ministry is not to showcase our talents for world recognition. Our aim is to get the world to recognize Christ in us.

### **1 Chronicles 25:7**

*So the number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight.*

### **Hebrews 5:13**

*For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.*

## Cash, Check, or Charge?

Some things must be said. While many dance ministers are wonderful stewards with finances, many need to be reminded that business is business. It is a common scene for dance ministry vendors to set up booths at conferences or offer products online for purchase. Having a wide variety of options available is wonderful; however, we must not mistake our obligations to those who labor for the Kingdom.

As we are developing our movement ministries, we often desire to purchase garments, flags, banners, music, etc., that will enhance our ministries. There is a lesson in this for both the seller and the buyer. Ministry vendors often release products before complete payment is received. A promise to pay may be made, or an invoice may be sent. Some dancers receive products, and for whatever reason, go for long periods of time without submitting the funds, or neglect to pay at all. We must be good stewards.

Vendors not extending credit to individuals must be willing to hold the product until complete payment is received. If this is not done, in essence, sellers are "lending" something that very well may not be returned. When dancers receive products without payment, time will reveal whether the items in question were purchased or stolen. If the vendor cannot afford to give products away as gifts, arrangements to receive cash payments or certified funds may be a necessary option. Unfortunately, some dancers may write checks that bounce (GASP!). Dancers who cannot afford an item may opt to make payments and receive the goods when the purchase is complete. At this point, the vendor should not delay to send the goods purchased. Let us continue to be about our Father's business!

### **Ecclesiastes 5:5**

*Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*

### **Romans 13:7**

*Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

## I Pledge Allegiance...

A Kingdom mindset is what we need. A lot of emphasis is placed on national pride, religious affiliation, and social status. We may be encouraged to "pledge allegiance" to a particular country, group, or people. It is not so in the Kingdom. We are one Body. Dance ministry moves far beyond our own regions and borders. His praise is being made glorious in every nation, language, and background. This is why we cannot follow a dance ministry "rulebook" in which we try to place what may work for us on the shoulders of someone else.

Biblical principles are not Western or Eastern. Every culture, language, and tradition can worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Some adjustments may be made in terms of garments (modesty) and symbolism (dragons, demonic imagery, etc.), but this does not mean that someone has to completely deny his or her heritage to worship the Lord in a cultural context. Learning more about other cultures and dance styles may help us to expand our own concept of international ministry. This does not mean that we have to adopt every style that we are exposed to. Worship in truth for one person may not be accurate for another. We must still rely on the Lord for direction.

When we allow the Lord to open up our hearts to see people from a heavenly perspective, we will rejoice to know that the Gospel is travelling the world. Journeying to other countries for dance events will give us hands-on experience with international dance. If this is not in the budget, the internet provides a wonderful portal through which to discover dances of the nations. Dance is often described as a universal language. Whether we have the ability to understand the language or context of a praise or worship dance, we shall know the work of the Lord by the Spirit.

### **Psalm 86:9**

*All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.*

## A Sure Election

When the Lord elects us to fulfill a certain purpose, there is nothing that anyone can do to stop it. On the other hand, when we realize that we have been selected to minister through dance, preaching, teaching, or living our lives as a witness of His transforming power, we must not be in denial of His work in us. Many movement ministers deal with low self-esteem and insecurity. As a result, whenever someone offers commentary on the ministry, there is a sense of doubt on the part of the dancer. Although we may not be secure in our own abilities, our confidence must be in the Lord.

Perfect posture is not to be relied on. Hours of classes may make us a better dancer, but will not help us to grow in Holy Ghost power. Shiny, pressed dance garments may help us to look good, but will not mask a terrible attitude or hidden hurts. We can stand in confidence when we know that it is in Him that we live, move, and have our being. In Jesus, we are new creatures. In Christ we can do all things that strengthen us.

If we continue to experience moments of insecurity, we must take our concerns to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to reveal the source to us. It may be criticism from others, fear, lack of knowledge, abuse, church tradition, past sins, self-consciousness, etc, that is the root of our problem. As we continue to move in Him, we will rejoice in the fact that He has personally elected us to the position that we have in the Kingdom. It is our job to accept it and operate in it to the fullest.

### **1 Thessalonians 1:3-5**

*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

### **2 Peter 1:10-11**

*Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

## Know Before You Go!

We cannot be ignorant of the enemy's devices. What may work in our local church or geographic area may not be appropriate in others. Dancing in pants for women or wearing skirts that flare during movement may be offensive in other cultures. Even wearing camouflage, often used as a symbol of warfare in dance ministry in the United States, is considered illegal in some countries when worn by non-military personnel. We should know these details in advance. As we prepare to go and preach the Gospel, we must also study where we are going before we arrive so as to operate in wisdom when we get there.

When engaging other cultures or traditions, we must be aware of the strongholds or traditional cultural practices in order to be effective. This does not mean that we are to honor the ungodly traditions of the region that we are visiting. If we cannot discern idol worship, anti-Christ expressions, or other spiritual symbolism, we are walking into a snare. When travelling to distant lands, we should know what is lawful or acceptable before we go. Gender limitations, clothing restrictions, and behavioral practices are to be noted so that we may continue to operate in freedom.

When addressing diverse cultures, we must also be aware of what type of language is acceptable in a public setting. What is a freedom in one location may be unlawful in another. We cannot make any assumptions. We can do research via the internet, call ahead to ask questions, or get advice from experienced travelers. If we are ignorant in ministry, we may find ourselves a prisoner of the cause.

### **Exodus 34:12**

*Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.*

### **Deuteronomy 18:9**

*When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.*

## Reality Show

Dance ministry viewed from the outside can appear to be glamorous. Beautiful garments, positive crowd reaction, and making an impact on the lives of others is often viewed as desirable to someone who is drawn to the worship arts. There are many things that are unseen on the surface that could deter those whose primary purpose is to be celebrated. As we mature in movement ministry, endurance will be accomplished through trials, setbacks, financial sacrifice, and life situations.

The reality is that ministry comes with a price. Beyond monetary commitment, relationships will be tested, friendships may change, cherished dancers may leave, church leadership may be unsupportive, economics may impact ministry funds, injuries may sideline us for a season, or we may have to dance through depression and many other scenarios. We can expect these challenges to grow when we are effective in ministry and increase in skill and understanding.

Truth is what is exposed when the audience leaves and the lights and cameras are turned off. Ministers of movement face very real situations that the typical church sermon and cheerful testimony may not reveal. Often when prominent artists share testimonies, we hear about the victories. Rarely do we hear about the defeats, hard lessons, missteps, unwise choices, and outright failures. It is not that we need to hear these things to discourage us; we need to have wisdom to survive. We cannot hide behind make-up, face paint, glorious garments, or marvelous music. We know how to be spiritual. We must also understand how to handle the natural side of life.

### **1 Peter 1:6-8**

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.*

## Every Little Step...

We must pray for balance between precision choreography and rightly dividing the Word. It is futile to put together a movement masterpiece that has absolutely no relevance to the words being uttered. Dancing to the beat is not the point of dance as ministry. When we leave an indelible portrait of the Gospel in the minds of the people, the Word comes alive and can be more easily recalled through memory. If our movement does not connect with the words, the motions will be remembered more than the message.

The steps that we include in our pieces are significant. As we continue to be students of the Scriptures, we will be more able to convey movement that captures the heart of God toward His people. From a Biblical standpoint, our steps are symbolic of the lifestyles that we lead. We can choose to walk in the way of the Lord, or to become wayward by straying from the path. In the ministry of dance, we must carefully consider our steps.

Spiritual choreography can be obtained in many ways. Some receive movement through dreams and visions. Other dance steps are inspired by Divine revelation and personal testimony. As long as our motion is rooted in righteousness, our dances will correctly convey the meaning of the Word through movement. If we select movement based on what we see others do, we are not relying on the Lord to direct our steps. Though the movement that we incorporate may not be unique in itself, each and every dance ministry ordained by God has a unique rendition expressly orchestrated by Him.

### **Job 34:21**

*For His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps.*

### **Psalms 119:133**

*Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.*

## Doing the Wave

When we have longevity in movement ministry, creativity must be utilized to keep from becoming predictable. Some dance ministries are very formulaic and this is highlighted as similarities or recurring themes are seen by the same groups over the years. The Lord has blessed us with many options to remain relevant and creative. Greater understanding of the Word will allow us to receive increased creativity.

The beauty of movement ministry is that we do not have to be literal in order to convey a thought. Using flags, banners, and billows is great when we want to show a message or establish a spiritual atmosphere. One creative way to use flags and billows can be used to show the symbolism of waves. Waves can be understood as something that is overwhelming (storms and winds) as well as something that can be conquered (calming of the sea).

We do not have to be limited to the use of blue hues to represent the waves. Using billow cloths of various colors can be used to highlight peace and beauty, but there is a time when they can also represent storms, trials, and triumphs. In order to be effective with using flags or fabrics, we must practice with them. There are some wonderful resources that will educate us on some patterns and shapes that we can make with flags and billows, including instruction as to popular lengths, styles, and the type of material that yields the desired results.

The key for us is to always remember that the Lord is in control of the waves, and can also reveal to us ways to use flags and billows that may not have been shown to us by someone else. Incorporated along with dance, we can set wonderful backdrops as we minister. Billows or large flags may not be as effective in outdoor environments (due to wind, rain, etc), or in indoor settings with a powerful air conditioner. In these instances, we may opt to make another selection, or plan in advance in case adjustments need to be made.

### **Psalm 42:7**

*Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me.*

## Basket Case

Transporting instruments for worship can be a challenge. Many dance ministry vendors today provide unique flag bags for carrying a variety of large and small flags. When ministering in another location, these can be useful to conserve space and maintain the element of surprise. When stored correctly, flags transported in this manner can be used with ease and properly returned to the bag for later use.

A different approach may be used when transporting billow cloths and other worship fabrics. Delicate fabrics usually end up with creases or wrinkles that may be visible to the viewer when removed for use. There are a couple of options that we can try to ease the common challenges associated with these items. Fabrics should be prepared beforehand by using a fabric steamer or an iron on a very low setting with a barrier or protectant between the fabric and the iron. It is not a great idea to use irons on painted or heavily decorated fabrics. If we must, we can carry a small hand steamer with us if we need to do any last minute maintenance on site.

After smoothing fabrics out, we can gently fold them and place them over a hanger or inside a wide basket if travelling by automobile. Fabrics placed on a triangular hanger can be hung with minimal disturbance during the journey, whereas a large wicker basket can perform double duty and be used as a prop in the piece. A combination of the two elements can be used. A basket will also allow for a quick transition for placing the collected billows and flags inside after use.

Baskets can also be used as symbolic worship elements in other ways. Wicker baskets come in many sizes and shapes and can be easily spray painted as needed. They are relatively light, and can serve in a multitude of ways. Baskets used in movement can convey giving, receiving, protection (Moses), provision, overflow, abundance, harvest (gathering), and so much more. When we explore the options to include dance, props, fabrics, flags, banners, and pageantry, we can continue to move with unlimited possibilities.

### **Deuteronomy 28:5**

*Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.*

## Name Recognition

In the business networking arena, it is often said, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." In Kingdom business, it is about what we know and Who we know. The unfortunate practice of boasting about personal associations, affiliations, network connections, and social groups is that many dance ministries have become dependent on prominent people to look for self-validation. If we are found diligent in our work for the Lord, He will raise us up without man's appointment.

Building accountability and righteous relationships is great. If we find ourselves connected to effective ministers of the Gospel, we can receive very valuable wisdom and instruction. When we use the names of others to promote endorsement of ourselves, we are relying on the world's way of progress. If we make a habit of telling others about our popular influences by name-dropping, when scandal or setback befalls that person, we will also be attached to the resulting controversy.

The only name that we should boast about is the name of Jesus. Jesus came in the name of the Father, and not man. This does not mean that we do not give honor to those who are worthy of it. We must not aim to gain fame by our affiliations. The Bible records many times in which selected leaders were propelled into prominence because of dedication and faithfulness to the Lord. If we count on our earthly connections to get us to a place of success, we will realize that man's intervention is temporary, while God's is eternal.

### **1 Chronicles 29:25**

*So the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.*

### **Job 36:7**

*He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but they are on the throne with kings, for He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.*

## Give Me a Break!

It seems that we have become more immersed in church events than in ministry. While ministry activities are nice and provide fellowship, if we are becoming weary and overwhelmed with impossible itineraries, we must stop and review the Kingdom commission. Dancers used to complain about serving as "Christmas, Mother's Day, and Easter" additions to the program. Now the complaint is that dancers are expected to dance for every worship service, anniversary, prayer breakfast, church outing, birthday celebration, special auxiliary event, and so on.

Leaders should be especially cautious of overworking dance ministry members to the breaking point. Different dancers have different life situations. Single dancers may have more availability than married ones. Those with children may have less extracurricular time than dancers without dependents. A balance should be reached so that good stewardship is maintained both at home and in the church. If there is a need for additional help, dance ministry supporters may be needed to fill in the gap during crunch times.

As dancers, it is also our responsibility to know when to accept an assignment and when to say no. Zeal often entices us to agree to more tasks than we can effectively accomplish. When we falter or miss a deadline, we may be perceived as undependable and untrustworthy, even though our motive may have been to help. If we do not exercise wisdom regarding our commitments, we may find ourselves suffering mentally, physically, and spiritually. In order to maintain peace and ministry health, we must all do our part to wholly dedicate ourselves to the Lord.

**Matthew 9:36**

*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.*

## Stop and Stair

Safety is an important factor in movement ministry. Not all locations are ideal for dancers, but we seem to manage nonetheless. We must know the protocol for each place that we are invited to minister. Some locations offer plenty of floor space, while others may have seating located very close to the pulpit. Dances choreographed to include motion in the aisles may get complicated in a facility that does not have a sufficient number of them. In other cases, there may be one or several steps leading up to the platform to navigate.

Because of these many possibilities, we must be prepared to dance on whatever terrain is presented. Elevated platforms with stairs call for modesty and would be best addressed with garments that offer sufficient leg coverage (loose fitting pants underneath skirts), as well as garments that have hems of the appropriate length. Skirts and pants that are too long may cause a dancer to trip and fall, while skirts and pants that are too large may fall off during dancing and cause sheer embarrassment.

Carpeted floors are common in many sanctuaries and may cause injury to bare feet depending on the choreography used and thickness of the carpeting. In these cases, it may be a good idea to always carry dance shoes with us. It is better to have options to address any unexpected challenges by being prepared. Best case scenario would allow us to set pieces in the location beforehand. This may only require a few moments before an event, without the audience present, to get an idea of what to expect. Even if we are unable to place ourselves in advance, experience and practical application will allow us to go forth undaunted.

### **Exodus 20:26**

*Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.*

### **Nehemiah 12:37**

*By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.*

## Heads or Tails?

The way that we handle our ministries and make decisions will determine our position. Many dancers have the mistaken concept that forging friendships with the "who's who" in the church realm will bring esteemed promotion and success and grant them a "head" position. Some leaders even assert that being in "covenant connection" with them will open more doors than can be imagined. The implication is that we will miss our destiny if we do not choose to connect with a particular person. The truth is that God exalts the humble. Serving Him faithfully will bring promotion and excellence will garner respect. The Lord's purposes prevail!

Observers of movement ministry can usually determine our passion and sincerity by looking at our faces. The head is usually clearly visible and open for all to see. We are encouraged to cover our "tails" with garments that conceal anything of a provocative nature. This would represent the areas that are inappropriate for public display or must be carefully presented.

Exercising wisdom in ministry calls for trained leadership and informed members. Dance ministry advocates should also be reminded about the need to exercise appropriate actions (public), guard their speech (public and private), as well as examine inter-personal relationships (private). We each determine if we will function as "heads" or "tails" by our own actions. Righteousness brings favor and promotion from the Lord. Self-righteousness is destructive and divisive. The final result will be determined by our own selection.

### **Isaiah 9:15**

*The elder and honorable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail.*

## The "Eyes" Have It

Dance ministers can get consumed with thinking about personal appearance and become engrossed in the opinions of others. There are many dancers who appear to be unconcerned by grooming, hygiene, and overall presentation. At the opposite end of the spectrum are those who are obsessed with getting every single detail exactly right. Picture-perfect hair, flawless nails, makeup or face paint, and flawless garments are encouraged more than a true relationship with God in the circles of the self-conscious. This is often based on what is seen on the outside and the things that may impress or repulse people.

God does not see as man sees. His Divine sight is unlike any x-ray or digital imaging known to man. When He looks at us, our total being is revealed. He observes personal character, lifestyle, faithfulness, and the true condition of our hearts. Making His examination of us a primary concern will remove any pressure that we face from men. This should not cause us to be terrified, but to be purified. When the Lord finds us walking in righteousness, we will be granted the wisdom, grace, and favor that we need.

We are truly dancing for an audience of one. The Lord is not looking at our technical abilities and marking our perceived disabilities on a scorecard. Ministry is a momentous thing that holds the doors of eternity open for the lost to access. Realizing that He sees us with His eyes should provoke us to walk reverently concerning the things of God. Dance is not the focus or the cause to which we commit. It is the vehicle through which the Gospel may be shared to forever unchain the lives of those who are bound.

### **Proverbs 15:3**

*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.*

### **1 Peter 3:12**

*For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.*

## Keep a Record of It

Those inspired to write the Holy Scriptures would have been disobedient not to perform the scribal mandate. Dancers are very visual, and use aural means to accompany movement to get the message out. What is spoken would not have as much credence if not for the written record. Many times, the Lord Jesus would make the statement, "It is written." With this assertion, He was able to refute every deceptive argument presented to Him by the enemy.

Movement ministry involves much more than dancing and ministering. The administration of ministry will allow us to flow according to guidelines and assist with preventing confusion. This does not mean that we have to police dance members with a strict set of rules to follow. Clearly written guidelines concerning the vision of the ministry, expectations, commitment, and standard operating procedures will allow us to treat one another with respect and walk in agreement.

Disorganization in ministry can lead to claims of unfair treatment and favoritism. Neglecting to establish procedures for dealing with dancers that miss rehearsals, exhibit chronic lateness, engage in unacceptable behavior, and rebel against leadership can result in a rift throughout the ministry team, as well as the larger organization. Having the spiritual and technical elements of dance ministry is important, but laying a solid foundation to govern the ministry will promote the ability to endure the challenges that arise.

We should make an effort to keep an updated record of movement ministry standards. A person gifted with administrative skills can serve as a recordkeeper and make note of important developments and changes. This person can also keep copies of the agreed directives with them so that incoming and established dance ministers may have the ability to review during times of gathering. These are just a few examples, but when we make a practice of writing the vision, we will be able to maintain focus and understand our mandate plainly.

### **1 Timothy 3:14-15**

*These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

# IOU

We know how to take care of the things that matter the most to us. Often the things that are most important to us garner our time, attention, and affection. Our hearts and treasures are deeply intertwined. If we are not sensitive concerning the people of ministry, we are doing a disservice to them and misrepresenting the Lord. How we govern our personal lives directly impacts our ministries.

We cannot give the adversary any ammunition to use against us. Dancing with maxed-out credit cards, unpaid bills, and broken promises that we have not honored must be rectified. Not only are we misrepresenting stewardship, we can place unnecessary stress on ourselves and be consumed with financial worries. The Word instructs us to owe no man. Ignoring personal obligations, while preaching righteousness to others, promotes hypocrisy. It is time to settle our accounts.

If we owe creditors, we must begin to make amends. Payments or pledges to others that have not been rectified must be revisited. We need to get in contact with the businesses and people that we may owe and make arrangements. Even if we owe someone an apology or a phone call, operating in complete integrity will assist us in being a true representation of Kingdom ministry.

## **2 Kings 4:7**

*Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest."*

## **Proverbs 22:26-27**

*Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge, one of those who is surety for debts; if you have nothing with which to pay, why should he take away your bed from under you?*

## **Romans 13:8**

*Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

## Tripping Out

An important part of learning is to incorporate practical application. Before we venture out to dance in a new place, wisdom should lead us to know as much as we can about the location in advance. With the internet and on-demand information systems, we can experience a "virtual reality" before we arrive. It is possible to experience movement ministry via computer or television, but there is nothing like the real thing.

Many Biblical leaders, prophets, and teachers could be found travelling to various cities to minister. Both Jesus and Paul journeyed to several locations to minister to people. As dancers, we should make it a priority to travel regularly for several reasons. Our commission is to go into the world and preach the Gospel. As we go forth, we will witness the vastness of God when we encounter different people, places and cultures. We will also gain an understanding of how to minister with a Kingdom mindset.

If we make plans in advance, finances should not prevent us from taking trips for ministerial purposes. Proper planning will allow us to represent in greater numbers and prepare for the unexpected. When deciding to attend conferences or embark upon a Missions trip, if we maintain excellence and sincerity, we should have no shortage of people willing to contribute to the cause.

### **Nehemiah 9:12**

*Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, and by night with a pillar of fire, to give them light on the road which they should travel.*

### **2 Corinthians 8:18-20**

*And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches, and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind, avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us*

## All for One

What is most important to us may not mean much to someone else. Understanding this, we must know where we fit into the big picture. Dance is still a hotly contested activity in many religious circles. Even when it is accepted, comparisons between dance ministries are frequently made regarding who is "anointed" or not. Contrary to the opinions of some, dance ministry alone will not be the key factor in restoring worship. Although we can dance effectively, there can be an even greater impact when we function as part of a whole.

In the Old Testament, singers, dancers, and musicians formed one large caravan. Some churches include all of the worship arts for special services (Christmas and Resurrection Sunday), and a growing segment are beginning to embrace the concept of the entire worship arts unit operating together as one during worship gatherings. Musicians are able to play without singers and singers can function without an instrument. Although dancers are able to use the spoken Word, illustrative sermons, and prayers to accompany movement, most often we use musicians and singers through pre-recorded music or in person. We already embrace the corporate worship model in this sense, but there is still work to do to bring greater unity.

The challenge for dance ministries during praise and worship is to keep the focus on worship. When dancers perform complicated turns and combinations, the congregation may find it difficult to participate. If the entire worship arts conglomerate does not understand how to function as a unit, competition can arise between the singers and the dancers for attention. If the musicians are playing louder than the singers, this will also bring disunity. If we are to worship together as one Body, we should seek the Lord for wisdom so that we can begin to truly worship as one.

### **2 Chronicles 5:13-14**

*Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.*

## Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right

We cannot blame leadership when we make wrong decisions. The Lord is holding each one of us responsible for our own actions. If dance ministry leadership shows up late to rehearsals or exhibits poor dedication to the ministry, this is not an excuse for ministry members to adopt the same behavior. We cannot treat people disrespectfully or display "diva" attitudes based on the actions or influence of someone else. God did not accept Adam's excuse when he blamed Eve for disobeying His instructions.

Difficult choices are necessary to discover what really lies within our hearts. It is true that obedience is better than sacrifice, but it is also true that we must work out our own salvation. If the dance ministry decides to wear inappropriate attire, will we? If the group decides to have a night out at a local bar for drinks, should we attend? If the dance team decides to openly challenge Pastoral authority or instructions, will we join in the effort? If ministry members decide to oust the current dance ministry leader by planning a surprise meeting and impromptu "trial," will we testify as a witness for the prosecution?

It is a daily decision to make choices that would glorify the Lord. When we stand for righteousness, we may encourage someone else to walk upright. Taking a stand does not mean acting as the resident critic or passionately discussing our disagreements with whomever may lend us an ear. Often, we can make the most impact by interceding for the situation and not participating in any behavior that would lead to destruction and division.

### **1 Samuel 24:17**

*Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil."*

### **1 Peter 3:13**

*[Suffering for Right and Wrong] And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*

## The Secret is Out!

Even people with the best intentions can find themselves in the middle of controversy. In creative arts ministries, many participants are passionate and expressive. This passion can often move beyond choreography and lead to very active conversation. One of the most destructive forces in relationships and ministries are idle words. Our most trusted friends can become our most vehement accusers. This does not mean that we must walk in fear when sharing our concerns with others, but we must exercise wisdom when we speak.

Wisdom teaches us when to speak and when to be quiet. We do not have to offer commentary for every subject that arises. In dance ministry rehearsals, one complaint or remark can be stopped if no one offers an affirming response. As soon as someone starts spouting negative commentary about garments, choreography, schedules, and fellow team members, we can quell the voice of division when we choose to take the high road.

Disagreements with fellow dancers may make us curious to hear about what has befallen them. Instead of praying for others, it may be tempting to think that the Lord is taking revenge on our behalf. We each have our own share of repenting to do. Instead of spreading the word about the latest news concerning "them," we should be even more diligent to watch and pray for each other. When we govern ourselves and our mouths according to righteousness, we will discover that we are peacemakers and thus blessed.

**Psalm 101:5**

*Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; the one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him I will not endure.*

**Proverbs 11:13**

*A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.*

**Proverbs 25:9**

*Debate your case with your neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another*

## Favor Ain't Fare!

The Lord is a Rewarder and repays us on all of our Kingdom investments. When we serve in the ministry of movement, there are times that it will require finances to participate. These may come in the manner of transportation, garments, conference and workshop registrations, educational materials, or even food when we are travelling for an event. More likely than not, there will be at least one ministry member in the group that is facing financial difficulty and may not be able to afford these activities.

Often, a local church or ministry leader will provide some assistance to aid dancers to the goal, and other times fundraising efforts are put in place for the group. At the same time, we must encourage movement ministers to invest in the ministry by putting both treasures and hearts in the same place. We should not have to keep bailing out dancers who do not see the need to prepare for what is claimed to be a passion. When we promote handouts over preparation, these individuals may become "freeloaders" who are always in need, but have little to offer in return.

We should not insinuate future indebtedness for providing funding or brag about assisting anyone financially. If we feel as though we are owed some type of favor for the help, we should immediately cease holding people in bondage. When we give or share resources, our intentions must be just. Sowing into the life and ministry of someone else comes with the knowledge that the return may not come from the same source. Alternately, we should never base our inner circle of friends and associates on how much money they can contribute to our personal ministries. If we are charging a "fare" to carry someone with us based on what we perceive to be favor, we will soon discover that we have to pay the piper to keep dancing.

### **Deuteronomy 15:10**

*You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand.*

### **Psalms 112:5**

*A good man deals graciously and lends; he will guide his affairs with discretion.*

## The Need for Speed

Procrastination will cause us to operate without excellence and miss potential opportunities. Waiting until the last minute to begin rehearsals for an important date can cause anxiety and stress and result in a poor display of a last-minute dance piece. Delaying to make payments on garments or ministry trips can put the whole group in jeopardy. It has been said that "failure to plan is planning to fail." There is a time to wait on the Lord, and there also is a time to move speedily.

When we know that we have directions from the Lord that we are to complete, we must be obedient. This extends beyond dance-related subjects into our personal lives. If we are not taking care of our personal bills in a timely manner, this will impact our ministries. Improper handling of responsibilities speaks to our character and stewardship. We should not feel condemned if we realize where we have fallen and repent. This adjustment will include action steps to rectify anything through which we have shown slothfulness.

Some last-minute things are beyond our control, but we know in our hearts when the problem is "us." Moving in the timing of the Lord will bring us great victory. When we stay prepared, we can quickly accomplish the things that He tells us. Many delays are rooted in fear. Since the Lord did not give us the spirit of fear, we must face whatever is causing us to remain motionless. If we need more education, we can obtain it. Financial literacy is abundant through bookstores and online. When we are prepared, we will find ourselves ready to spring into action in an instant.

### **2 Chronicles 24:5**

*Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly." However the Levites did not do it quickly.*

### **Ecclesiastes 8:11**

*Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

## Care Taker

In ministry, our focus is often on attending to the needs of others. Dedication to the ministry of movement may mean missed meals with family and friends, delayed hair or barber appointments, and limited hours of sleep. As we grow in wisdom, we realize the need for balance. If we neglect to care for ourselves and relegate our loved ones to the outskirts of our priorities, we will find ourselves resented and compromised.

Jesus understood the need to get away to pray and refresh. A dance ministry schedule that does not include time for intercession and study of the Word will weaken our defenses. Insufficient sleep, limited rest, and neglected personal care will eventually affect our ministries. This can often result in missed deadlines, event cancellations, and general fatigue.

When we dance and minister before people, we do not want to be so exhausted that we cannot operate at full strength if needed. Lack of sleep can cause irritability or sluggishness that may cause us to appear unfriendly or unapproachable. We are not to champion vanity, but our efforts to care for ourselves are essential to ministry. When we are of sound mind and health, we can reflect this blessing in the presence of others.

### **Exodus 31:17**

*It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.*

### **Psalms 4:8**

*I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*

### **Psalms 127:2**

*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep.*

## Holly Daze

Along with the "Holiday Season" comes the pressure to deliver a stellar visual piece. Selecting the right song, attire, and choreography can get downright overwhelming. For some dancers, the music is already pre-selected by a music director that the dancers must use in accordance with the singers and drama department. If all elements of the group are not on one accord many may end up dazed and confused.

When we focus on the occasion more than the reason for ministry, we will find ourselves concentrating on trivial matters and completely miss the mark. Our celebration and remembrance should last more than a season. We should devote a lifetime to lifting up the name of Jesus, regardless of the method by which we minister.

When we remain prayerful and full of the Word, the Lord will give us the solution for times when we are expected to "put on a show." It does not matter what people may think, our objective must be to bring glory to God. It should not take a nationally recognized occasion to bring out the best in us. Regardless of the day of the week or season, we should always be able to bring glory to God in the highest!

**Psalm 34:1**

*I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

**Psalm 71:6**

*By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.*

**John 4:23**

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

**Hebrews 13:15**

*Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.*

## I Do A New Thing

We should always aim to expand our familiarity with dance technique and the Word. There may be some areas of talent that lie undiscovered simply because we have not tried them yet. How do we know that we are not blessed with the ability to mime if we have never tried? For the untrained, taking a dance class may seem intimidating at first, but how will we gain skill unless we are up for the challenge? Trying something once and not being able to master it is not a reason to quit. If we are not drawn to a certain discipline or passion, we may not fare well in it, but walking by faith will help us to discover something new.

It is not necessary to be a "Jack (or Jill) of all trades" in dance ministry, but it is a good idea to discover uncharted territory in our own ministries. When we attend conferences, it may stretch us just a bit to take classes that are not on our list of favorites. Choosing the same options over and over again can lead to stagnation. If we already take regular ballet or modern dance classes, why not try our hand at prophetic dance or flags? Sticking to defined stereotypes of praise dance may hinder us if we neglect to move forward.

Launching out and learning about cultural dance and history is a wonderful way to expand. Even if we do not incorporate all movement types into our repertoire, understanding different dances and cultures may help us minister to people unlike us. We cannot be so "deep" to believe that ballet is the only way, or that all musical selections must be slow worship songs. As we continue to enlarge our borders concerning dance ministry, the Lord continues to be the ultimate Director of our steps.

### **Isaiah 43:19**

*Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

## Loose Change

We can never underestimate the small things. As movement ministers, we must learn to cherish our experiences and realize that we can learn just as much from the "little people" as we can from the professionals. Just as loose change can add up to a large sum when combined, we each are more valuable as a whole than we are apart. If we allow ourselves to get enthralled by fame and fortune touted by many television personalities and best-selling authors, we will miss the joy of serving from a place of purity. Pursuing ministerial degrees, licenses, and further education is great, but does not define who we are in God's eyes.

Dance ministry continues to grow in popularity and continues to experience change as the years go by. What was once standard a decade ago has progressed to include various movement genres and music types. This would not have come about if a few brave people were not willing to allow change to take place. All change is not necessarily for the better. Change does not mean that we relinquish the standard for holy living. Change does not equal the opportunity to dishonor the sanctuary of the Lord. Change does not mean that we adopt radical standards under the guise of being different. Change should mean that we grow, and as we do, we witness more of the Lord's work in action and less of our own.

When we minister through movement, the lives of people should be forever changed. If the Son of the Living God dwells within us, as we move we should witness miracles, signs and wonders along the way. If we are at a place where we are stagnant and thirsty for a move of God, it is time to submit to change that only God can create. Only after we have allowed Him to perform change in us can we loose it in the lives of others.

### **Matthew 16:19**

*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

## Thought Provoking

Music selection controversies aside, some choreography is a bit too provocative to be used in a Christian context. There is no inherent sin in movement itself, but the activities associated with bending over in front of people or showing lots of leg can cause discomfort for many. We should not have the attitude that everyone is old-fashioned or just needs to "get over it." Although each message that we bring may not please everyone, it should definitely be relative to the people to which we are sent to give a Word.

The over-use of movement that involves the hips, rear and chest can be construed as lustful. This does not mean that we cannot utilize our total bodies in motion, we just need to be aware of the affect that certain moves may have on others. The appropriateness of garments is often contested when it comes to how revealing they are on females, but males must also be careful when wearing shirts that expose muscular arms or pants that may slip down without a belt. In some instances, boxer shorts have become an all-too-common sight in movement ministry.

When we allow the Lord to direct us, we will not have to worry about offensive movement. Our bodies are an instrument to be used for His glory. Dance that comes by supernatural revelation will magnify the Lord above all else. If we truly live, move, and have our being in Him, people will only see the Lord when we dance and not us.

**Proverbs 12:5**

*The thoughts of the righteous are right, but the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.*

**Acts 24:16**

*This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.*

## A Time to Dance

Being invited to dance can be exciting. Many dancers lament the inability to dance as often as they would like. Other leaders may allow the dancers to go forth relatively unhindered. Keeping both scenarios in mind, it may not always be the time to break forth in dance. Although the ministry of movement has made great strides, we must still exercise wisdom when visiting other locations, or even in familiar territory. We would like for the doors to continue to open for those who are willing to take the steps needed to present the ministry in excellence and with knowledge.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We must not take this liberty to mean that we can do anything we want, whenever we want. There are several occasions when dancing is appropriate, especially when we are invited for that purpose. Although we can exercise liberty at our seats, dancing in the aisles or in the pulpit may not be welcome in some places. If we are not certain concerning the appropriateness of our actions, it may be a good idea to ask about our options in advance. If we cannot inquire before we arrive, we should definitely find out before we cause offense.

If we are indeed in an atmosphere where spontaneous praise and worship is welcomed, we must still observe some basic principles of safety. When using ribbons and streamers, we must always be aware of where we are in relation to the congregation. A wayward flag used carelessly can make quite an impact! When dancing, we should be mindful of our hands and feet so as not to make unnecessary contact with our neighbor. We would not want to cause unexpected injury that can be avoided. Having the freedom to dance can be wonderful and exciting, but we must keep in mind that it may not always be the time or place.

**Ecclesiastes 3:4, 17**

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance*

*I said in my heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."*

## Those Are Fighting Words!

We have many resources at our disposal for study purposes. Making sure that our songs are supported by the Bible is a necessary step. We can also use Hebrew and Greek study lexicons to gain an even greater understanding of words so that we may move with accuracy and understanding. It is important to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

When presenting songs that can be classified as "warfare," we will be able to obtain a greater command of authority when we demonstrate what it is to strike, contend, battle, have dominion, possess, bind, loose, surround, engage, stand, survey, watch, wield, overthrow, overcome, subdue, etc. Expanding our knowledge of the Scriptures will present us an even greater ability to move according to the Word.

Keeping things in perspective, we should not engage in subjects that we have not prepared for. The spirit realm is very real. Before we run to conferences to learn the latest "warfare moves" or teach dances that involve such movement, we must prepare by being honest concerning our relationships with Christ. It is our responsibility to know that we have been redeemed, confess and repent of our sins, and have an honest desire to see others set free. We should not "war" for selfish gain or self-centered victory, but for the advancement of the Kingdom.

### **1 Chronicles 12:33**

*Of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks.*

### **Jeremiah 51:20**

*You are My battle-ax and weapons of war: for with you I will break the nation in pieces; with you I will destroy kingdoms.*

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*

## Instant Replay

We must not get to the point where movement ministry becomes routine. There are times that we dance a certain piece that seems to resonate with many groups of people. These types of dances are usually the most requested and garner a significant crowd reaction. The feeling of triumph and victory is often experienced when we are made aware of the power of a piece. We must train ourselves not to be addicted to the approval of men to determine our success in movement ministry. If we merely select pieces based on what we feel will move the people, we may begin to be led by the flesh instead of the Spirit.

Even when we minister the same dance in different locations, we cannot assume that it will have the same results. Maintaining constant prayer and having an open ear to hear what the Lord is saying will allow us to take the same piece and minister it afresh each and every time. As we continue to dance, we will also discover that the Lord may direct us to change a small portion or sections of the dance for a particular occasion or reason. The Word is living and powerful, and when we minister it through movement, it will take on life as well. If we dance while taking anything for granted, we become a hindrance to the people we are sent to impact.

Even if we have danced a particular selection a hundred times, it should always be genuine and sincere for each and every rendering. Dance ministers are not actors on a stage. We are not assuming a character when we step in front of an audience. We are messengers with a Word to deliver. Regardless of how many times we must deliver the message, we must do so with accuracy, conviction, and obedience.

### **Colossians 2:8**

*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

## Random Acts of Kindness

We must be careful how we treat people, because we never know who we may come into contact with. We should exercise even greater care with strangers. In dance ministry, we should not have to know someone on a first-name basis to treat them with respect. Taking a few extra moments to say hello or smile will show the true character of our ministries. Although we can be physically exhausted after a dance ministry piece has gone forth, we must be ever mindful that ministry does not start or stop with the music. Whatever we do should be to the glory of God.

The kindness that we show to others includes children as well. Many young people look up to those involved in the worship arts. Because the younger generation can be very impressionable, how we respond may leave an indelible memory with them for years to come. We should not have to muster up a fake smile or empty words of appreciation. When we truly have a love for people, it shows.

A handshake, hug, nod, or smile can mean so much to those who have felt rejected or hurt, especially in the church setting. We must also be aware that there may be times when our best efforts to be cordial are not met with a warm reception. We should never take these moments personally. Our behavior before, during, and after ministry is as much a part of our presentation as the song itself. If we demonstrate powerful technique, glorious garments, and flawless grooming, but neglect to show the love of Gods toward others, we are nothing. When the music stops and the body can no longer take a step, what we have done for Christ will continue to remain.

### **1 Corinthians 13: 1-2, 13**

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

## No Explanation Necessary

Although the Bible has been contested and open to many interpretations, there should be no dissention on the basics of the Gospel. If we allow ourselves to do whatever we want "in the name of Jesus," we can also unknowingly promote a false Gospel through movement. Just because someone decides to call something "Gospel" or "Holy" does not make it so. Labeling something "praise dance" also does not validate it as such.

If we are left wondering if we heard "God" or "Jesus" or anything remotely connected to the Scriptures after a dance piece, we have to wonder what type of dance it was. Many styles of dance can be used to glorify God. When approaching "radical" movement styles, we must be sure that the Lord is leading us, and not a rebellious attitude. What God ordains, He maintains. Inspirational songs may be encouraging, but if the words of the song are not supported by the Bible, it does not qualify as dance ministry. Our message must continue to be clear and without compromise.

Beyond the overt message we are trying to convey, we must also be careful to watch for any subliminal messages that we may send. Some things may not be labeled "sin," but are nevertheless very distracting and self-centered (which leads to sin). If our garments reveal more of us than they should, people may pay attention to what we are wearing and miss the message. Artistic hairstyles may be trendy, but if we get more inquiries about our tresses than the ministry, we may want to reconsider self-expression during ministry times. We all do not have to fit into the same mold and embody the dance ministry stereotype. As long as all that we do can be supported Biblically and is Spirit-led, we are free to move in Him.

### **2 Corinthians 11:3-4**

*But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different Gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!*

## Say, "It Ain't So!"

There is a sense of embarrassment to the Body when there is an apparent sin that has taken place in the church. Whether we realize it or not, when we fall, we take others with us in the form of disappointment and diminished hope. Many that are striving to walk upright must be assured that holy living is a matter of choice. Although we are aware that we are not perfect, we should never get comfortable living lives contrary to God's plan for us. When dance ministers get caught up in scandal, the impact reaches beyond the person and affects many.

For members of a group, the resulting effects of exposed sin can cause division, spark gossip, and attempt to discredit the work that has been done. It should not be said among us that we are practicing sinful lifestyles while professing the Gospel in front of others. Movement ministers should not be known as the crowd that likes to smoke and drink, or a group that promotes lust internally or externally. Although no one should throw stones, the truth is that when we serve in ministries that are in visible positions (dancers, choir, worship & praise team, musicians, preachers, etc.) there is a bigger "spotlight" on our lives than someone who may remain in the pews. Nothing is hidden from the eyes of God.

We must daily commit to living the lives that we dance about. If we dance songs of freedom, we should be free. If we encourage others to denounce lives of sin and receive the Lord as Savior, we should lead by example. Worship in spirit and truth is not something that happens for a few moments in front of an audience. As proponents of movement as a ministry, our actions must speak louder than our words.

### **2 Corinthians 12:20-21**

*For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.*

## Rings and Things

The reasons we choose to do something or not in movement ministry has to be based on the Word of God. When we begin to preach against wearing make-up, jewelry, or certain garments, we must verify that we are not teaching our own biases and preferences as the Gospel. There is nothing inherently "wrong" in having an opinion, but when we judge others by our individual standards, we can become legalistic.

Some dance ministry leaders believe that no jewelry should be worn at all during ministry. Others will allow a wedding or engagement ring and small earrings for women during ministry. For many, a wedding ring is symbolic of the God-ordained covenant of marriage, and is not removed during ministry. Necklaces are often removed so that garments or fingers are not a danger to the dancer if caught. Whatever the option, safety is a genuine concern. Others put restrictions or wearing large earrings or specify that none should be worn at all due to potential injury risk.

The key to such debates is the application of the Scriptures and unity. We should not batter people with rules and standards that are based on assumption and tradition. At the same time, we must obey the Lord when He instructs us to wear specific things for the piece to be ministered truthfully. If leadership decides that we are to wear no jewelry or the same jewelry, we should walk in agreement and on one accord. Even if it means leaving our own desires unmet, it is better for all involved to walk in unity.

### **Isaiah 61:10**

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

### **Haggai 2:23**

*'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts.*

## Better Done Than Said

What we say matters little if we are not faithful to do it. Standing before a congregation as a testimony to the delivering power of God is hypocrisy when we knowingly "test-a-lie" instead of testify. Making a mistake does not mean that we immediately submit a formal resignation from the ministry of dance. Discipleship means that we do what we say according to His will.

If we know that we are walking in a way that is contrary to the word of God, we should excuse ourselves for a season. Pride may try to prevent us from admitting our struggles, but it is better to practice self-discipline than to be forced to obey. Sitting down from a ministry does not mean that we allow sin to take over and indulge in it. Stepping back may simply mean that we do not take the platform during times of ministry, but still actively support it by our presence during rehearsals and engagements and remaining committed. Doing this will most likely put us right back on the path of righteousness. Just because we were once lost does not mean that we need to be lost again.

Movement ministers must be careful when dealing with sin in the ministry. Continuing to seek the Lord and maintaining avoidance of such temptations is evidence of redemption. We should not cause fellow dance ministers to be "castaways" because of struggles with sin. We all have fallen short. It is our duty to hold each other accountable as believers. Sin is not to reign in us, and we should not allow ourselves to make accommodations for it either.

### **Numbers 30:2**

*If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.*

### **Ezekiel 33:31**

*So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.*

## Eminent Domain

In the age of technology, ministry presence entails more than having a church address. As the worship arts grow, we are witnessing more liturgical dance studios, performance companies, garment manufacturers, websites, social networking pages, and more. The tools of technology can be used to reach a wider audience than ever before. Though word-of-mouth is still the best form of advertisement, reaching out to others can be accomplished with just a few clicks.

Relying on flashy websites and stunning graphics does not make us any more anointed or qualified than the next dance minister. The reality is that people will judge us based on our appearance, and that includes printed materials and online presence. If we have a website or social networking page, there should be no conflicting images or messages posted. It is quite surprising, yet common, to see "praise dancers" post images of themselves in both dance garments and swimwear. No one should have to correct us as to the appropriateness of how we represent the Kingdom. As most social networking sites require little more than an e-mail address to sign up, we are really without excuse for not being accessible.

Having a ministry website can be the equivalent of purchasing "cyber real estate." We can use our websites as territory claimed for God to get the glory. Most common dance ministry phrases have already been chosen for domain names. Tweaking a few words can still result in a page that accurately captures the ministry. It is difficult to locate websites via search engines that have domain names that are too lengthy or are difficult to remember. Having an online presence today is relatively affordable. It can also be very costly, but the results are typically professional and provide interactive features. We can always do it ourselves if we learn the basics of design and frequently spell-check. Using these resources can allow us to reach people far beyond our own borders and cultures, and in essence, go into the world with the Gospel.

### **Proverbs 22:29**

*Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.*

## Clock Watching

We must be aware of God's timing. If we are not sensitive to His leading, we will find ourselves moving behind schedule, or stepping out before our time. When we receive vision from the Lord, we must pray about bringing it to pass as well as the right time to get it done. When movement ministers are in sync with the Lord's timing, we will always bring a rhema (right now) Word through dance.

There may be times when we hear a song that we are to dance to, but the time to minister it may come months, or even years later. There are also seasons during which a particular song may speak to people, but if we continue to dance a piece after its relevance has passed, it will not be as effective. There is nothing spooky or strange about hearing the voice of the Lord. Because we are each unique, there is no formula for discerning the time except for obedience. When we are prompted by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to operate in Divine timing.

The same thing applies to ministry-related activities. If we are impressed to organize a dance concert or conference, we must pray about dates and times. Wisdom would lead us to avoid duplicating similar events or competing with dates of other dance ministries in our geographic areas. Staying connected to fellow dancers and being aware of other events will help us to be supportive and remain united. Keeping in line with the leading of the Lord, we cannot let the dates of others hinder us either. Finding the time to keep watch will help us to move in the timing of the Lord.

### **Leviticus 16:2**

*And the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat."*

### **2 Chronicles 30:5**

*So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.*

*Day 338*

## Name That Tune

We must give honor when it is due. When we select songs to minister to through movement, we should be able to correctly identify the artist, song title, and album. If the ministry piece is effective, there are many times that people will approach us and ask for this information. Just as we must be sure that our dances agree with the Word of God, we must know how to continue to share the ministry with others.

Often when a person has seen a piece with a particular song, every time it is heard thereafter, they will remember parts of the dance. It is as though the brain will act as a digital video recorder, playing the image in the mind as soon as the memory of the song returns. Sharing artist information allows the viewer to support the ministry of song and recall what movements personally ministered to them. This is also a way to give back to the artist. We reap by the same measure we sow.

If possible, we should also research the artists that we select to know more about his or her lifestyle and personal beliefs. Some songs that may sound "uplifting" may not necessarily be in line with the Bible. Artists may often choose to do inspirational music, but have careers that in no way give honor to God. It is not that we cannot use these selections if the Lord leads. Ignorance is not bliss. When we operate in wisdom, obedience, and knowledge, we can more effectively spread the Word.

### **2 Samuel 1:18**

*And he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher*

### **Romans 13:7**

*Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

*See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.*

## Watch and Prey

When we are doing effective work for the Lord, we become targets of the enemy. In the ministry of dance, there are various pitfalls that we have to be aware of so that we may remain planted with the least disruption. Those that have the ability to impact us the most are usually the closest to us. Attacks can come by way of family, friends, dance ministry members, and associates. This is why we have to be careful to guard against division within the ministry, as well as maintain balance at home.

Movement ministry itself can be used as a tool against us. If we obsess over dancing and devote more time to rehearsals, choreography and activities than we should allow, we can open the door for dance ministry to become a "god" in our lives. This may cause our loved ones to resent both us and the ministry if the complaint is legitimate. It is easy to point the finger when a sin is committed, but it is a little more challenging when the good work that we are doing leads to our demise.

Opportunists will also try to use the dance ministry for gain. It is not uncommon for dancers to be invited as a "draw" on a special event, and not so much as receive gas money for the trip. It's not that we should be mercenaries for ministry, but we must be wise. We should continually watch for wolves that would like to misuse or abuse the ministry of dance. If we neglect to watch, then we can become prey for the adversary.

### **Ezekiel 22:27**

*Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy people, and to get dishonest gain.*

### **Psalms 124:6**

*Blessed be the LORD, Who has not given us as prey to their teeth.*

### **Philippians 1:27**

*Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel*

## Don't Drink the Juice!

The story of Jonestown is infamous in that many followers drank a poisoned beverage as a result of brainwashing cloaked under the guise of religion. With the explosion of information, knowledge, and teaching today, we have to be more studious than ever regarding the Word. Popularity in dance ministry is often sought through affiliations, networks, institutions, ordinations, licenses, and titles. Although it is wonderful to desire to know more about what we do, it is not good to drink from every cup.

We need deliverance from preying teachers, desiring to build a brood for fame and fortune. Dancers need to be freed from thinking that we cannot make one step without the approval or sanctioning of others. Clean hands and pure hearts will reign and rule. We need to pray to be connected with whomever the Lord desires to pour into our lives along the way. Movement ministers and worship leaders can be great models to glean from, but we cannot allow idolatry to enter into our hearts as a result of these relationships.

Cynicism cannot be allowed to make us paranoid, questioning the motives of everyone. If we maintain a lifestyle of prayer and submission to the Lord, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to warn us of impending or certain danger. We can also pray for wisdom concerning how to be released from toxic ministry relationships. We must be careful who we allow to "curse" or "bless" us with swelling words. If we are seeking approval of men over the approval of God, we may find ourselves left with a bitter taste in our mouths.

### **Psalm 140:1-4**

*Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men; preserve me from violent men, who plan evil things in their hearts; they continually gather together for war. They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; the poison of asps is under their lips. Selah. Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from violent men, who have purposed to make my steps stumble.*

## Re-Belly-Us

A key technical element for dancers is often building a strong "core" of the body. Being centered allows the freedom of movement and minimizes injury from falls or muscle strain due to imbalance. It takes more than abdominal work to have strong bodies for movement. Excess weight can be a hindrance physically and affect our health. We can keep our instruments tuned by adopting great eating habits and educating ourselves about nutrition. We perish for lack of knowledge.

Although it is wonderful to hear testimonies from those who are dancing in spite of health problems, we need to take the necessary steps to stay as healthy as we can. Eating properly may come more easily to some than others. Many struggle with food addictions and eating disorders in the ministry of movement. It is easier to determine those who struggle to keep eating under control by observation. On the other hand, dancers that may look fit and disciplined may be bulimic, anorexic, or starve themselves.

When we allow righteousness to govern us, we will not obsess over body image and concern ourselves with the opinions of others. Spiritual balance will help bring our flesh under subjection. The Lord can deliver us from our struggles with food and win the battle-of-the-bulge once and for all. Learning about calories, fiber, carbohydrates, fats, sugars, starches, and liquid consumption for healthy living will assist us in obtaining the wisdom we need to make proper dietary choices. When the Spirit dwells in us, we will realize the importance of treating our bodies as His temple.

### **Proverbs 23:1-3**

*When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.*

### **Romans 14:16-18**

*Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

## Minimum Wage

When we are invited to minister outside of the four walls, we should be very diligent to follow accepted standards and practices where we venture. Travel to conferences and large events may require airline tickets, ground transportation, hotel accommodations, and more. Visiting foreign countries may call for adjusted behavior and cultural awareness. Governing ourselves according to standard etiquette and expectations goes hand-in-hand with ministry. How we are perceived in movement ministry is not merely in our ability to dance, but is also related to how we treat others.

Our conduct with baggage handlers, airline personnel, bus and cab drivers, bellmen, and service staff should never be an issue of contention. Whether dance ministers act as hosts or arrive as guests, harsh words and "forgotten" tips should not be a part of our *modus operandi*. If we allow others to assist us in a service fashion, not only should we be aware of suggested gratuity, we should also express our thanks for services rendered. Even if we receive poor service in a dining facility or hotel, this does not give us the right to berate the staff or vehemently express our outrage. Our character may seem to be the most challenged at times when we are in a ministerial capacity.

We can use kind words to demonstrate love in action. This can open the door of invitation for people to witness the Word in motion, or to simply know that dance ministers truly practice what we preach. Paying our hotel bills in full, calculating our share of food service bills, tipping as appropriate, and saying "thank you" speak as much to our ministry as dancing. Imagine if mistreated persons surprisingly showed up to our dance concerts and conferences. Would they recognize us as hypocrites, or as humble servants of the Lord?

### **Leviticus 19:13**

*You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning.*

## Weak at the Knees

We must be careful what we bow our knees to. We must condition our "spiritual knees" to be strong enough to resist the temptations that come along with ministry. Movement artists are often plagued by struggles with food, fidelity, finances, faithfulness, and the like. When we allow anything to overtake us beyond our power to control it, we end up bowing our knees to serve creation more than the Creator. Only the Lord can give us the power to resist bowing down to ungodly things. Our choices will determine if we are submitted to Him more than the cares of this world.

When we incorporate choreography into our movement pieces, we should not take the act of bowing lightly. Beyond the physical challenges kneeling can bring to those who have difficulty getting up and down with ease, the motion of kneeling on hard surfaces can cause bruising and discomfort. In order to promote physical well-being, we must know how to execute this properly. Incorporating this into choreography should also take into consideration the garments that we are wearing so as not to be obscene.

It can be a life-changing experience to bow in humble adoration in the company of others. It is in these moments that self-awareness must cease, and the honor of God becomes the ultimate goal. Gaining an understanding of the various movements that we employ when we dance will make us stronger and overwhelmingly effective doers of the Word. Bowing and kneeling in worship or sorrow should be done with understanding. We should absolutely know for which cause we are willing to bow our knees.

### **Daniel 10:10-11**

*Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.*

*Day 344*

## Planes, Trains, and Automobiles

The journey to our ministry destinations should be with as little distraction as possible. When we are aware of the mental and physical pitfalls that plague dance ministers, we can do our best to circumvent them. We may not always be able to intercept every negative occurrence, but can minimize them as best we can.

When we travel to local events by car, it may not be a good idea not to wear our ministry garments on the way to the location. This can be crucial when attending events that may not provide dressing areas for changing. Garment wrinkling and the potential for getting stains on them increases as we get in and out of vehicles. A good suggestion would be to wear comfortable "praise garments" that can hide the required undergarments we need to wear with our ministry attire. This also makes changing clothes easier as opposed to removing jeans or buttoned shirts. If we wear a unitard or modest underclothes, we can often change our garments even in settings that provide little privacy. We can also be prepared to have a "makeshift" dressing room by bringing dark flat sheets with us in case of emergency.

Air travel can be fatiguing when attending national dance conferences or other special gatherings. It would be optimal to arrive the day before we have to dance, or early in the morning the day of so that we can be rested and prepared to minister without being exhausted. Planning to arrive early will also minimize anxiety in case of a missed or delayed flight. In order to avoid the inconvenience of having dance garments lost with our luggage, we should carry our must-have garments and related ministry items with us on the aircraft if possible. Travel by train or bus often takes longer. Packing food and beverages to refresh us along the way will make us less irritable and allow us to remain focused. Drinking lots of liquids before ministry should be avoided, as well as eating right before we dance. If we practice good habits when journeying to share the Gospel through movement, we will find that after we have ministered to our own needs sufficiently, we can more effectively serve others.

### **Genesis 42:25**

*Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.*

## Save the Date!

Scheduling and attending dance ministry events can be a challenge for soloists and groups. In order to minimize competitive mindsets, it would be best for us to avoid scheduling major events at the same time as the dancers that we fellowship with. These events may not all be dance-related as many have weddings, baby showers, and other once-in-a-lifetime moments that may cause hurt feelings if they are missed. Since we are all one body, we should work to support one another as a whole.

Whether we keep a handwritten calendar or an electronic one, it may be a good idea to record our ministry dates and refer to them when we are asked to dance for a particular occasion. It is better to follow up with a phone call to confirm than to say yes and have to cancel later due to overbooking. We can also review our calendars to ensure that we have sufficient time to take care of personal appointments and business meetings. If we have an activity at 11:00am and are scheduled to dance at 1:00pm, we may place undue stress on ourselves to try to make it in time for the dance event. Because delays cannot always be anticipated, we should always plan to keep our word.

In addition, planning elaborate activities around national and religious holidays should be done with care. We should not feel disappointed if the event that we have planned near a holiday does not have maximum attendance. Though some may feel that it is impressive to have a calendar full of activities, we must exercise wisdom and schedule necessary downtime. There is no rule that states that we cannot indicate this as a reminder on our calendars as well. Each and every month, if not every week, we should take a look at our schedules to see if we are neglecting important areas of our lives. Most importantly, we should not be so busy that we forget to make time for the One that we dance for in the first place.

### **2 Corinthians 1:17**

*Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?*

## Zero Balance

It's a good thing for a credit card to have a zero balance, because that would mean that it is paid off, and we are free of the debt. Having a zero balance on a savings or checking account would not be good because that would mean that we have no funds to cover purchases or expenses. When in ministry, we must evaluate whether our personal or ministry relationships are draining us, costing more that we can afford, or keeping us in the place where we are unable to contribute.

Not understanding how balance works will usually have us carrying more than we can bear. Knowing when to say no and setting boundaries will help us to keep things in perspective. It is not selfish to make good decisions that will provide us with health, financial awareness, and spiritual longevity. We cannot fear that others are out to take advantage of us, but when we see that we are always giving and seldom receiving, the relationship is not operating according to the principles of sowing and reaping. When we give, it shall be given unto us.

It is easy to get carried away with the fame that movement ministry can bring. When we are not prayerful about each decision we make, we can find ourselves wondering how we got into a bind in the first place. Relationships can be for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Ministry is no exception. If we wait too long to close an account, we can end up in deeper debt or have the account closed without our permission. We do not want to be in a position where relationships end on negative terms. If we sense that the Lord is leading us into a new season, connecting us with new relationships, or helping us to grow as we move into a new place, proper planning will allow for a smooth transition as we step out on faith.

### **Acts 15:37-40**

*Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.*

## Coulda... Woulda... Shoulda...

The time for making excuses has long passed. If there have been things that we've delayed due to our own choices, we cannot blame anyone else for the areas in our lives and ministries that have gone lacking. If we are still talking about losing 20 pounds an entire year after we first realized the need, we have impeded our own progress. If we sense the urgency but neglect to take additional dance classes to increase our vocabulary and sharpen our technical skills, when we find ourselves doing the "same old dances the same old way," we cannot point fingers elsewhere. Failing to study the Word of God will render us powerless. Time is too precious to waste.

Allowing many years to pass and regretting missed ministry travel opportunities, potential friendships, and fellowship is only woeful when we know that we have allowed fear to prevent us from enlarging our borders. We cannot simply sit by the sidelines and wait for someone to offer us the opportunity of a lifetime. When we are found faithful over a few things, He will make us ruler over much. If we are not ruling over an area of our lives, this is an indication that we have not been faithful in that area.

With God, nothing is impossible. Faith pleases Him as well as our obedience. If we have been guilty of self-sabotage, we can walk upright today. Growing in movement ministry has little to do with us individually. Although we can grow concerning the things of God, the goal is for us to preach the Gospel to every creature by going out and spreading the Word. When we lift up Jesus, He will do the drawing. If we delay in going where He is sending us, we may miss the opportunity to bring glory and honor to His name. When He asks us for an account of what we have done, we want His response to be "Well done."

### **Genesis 4:7**

*If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*

### **Mark 14:8-9**

*She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.*

## Tell-a-Vision

Dance ministry can be used as a visual aid to highlight what the Lord has said and is saying. Using movement to share what the Lord is saying for today or tomorrow can be used prophetically to edify the church. In order for words and movement to mesh together and come to life, we have to pray for a keen understanding of both the Word and the nature of God so as not to minister under false pretenses. Whatever He reveals, we can also write down so that we can retain the message that He wants to show through us and demonstrate it accurately.

Whether or not we have technical training, the basis of true movement ministry requires that there be a clear agreement between the movement and the message. Beyond the dance itself, every element of our presentation should be aligned with what we are trying to convey. This includes music, lyrics, garments, worship tools, and the use of color. Bringing all of these components together will make the vision plain and understandable even to those who have not read the Word for themselves.

Although we do not seek the approval of men when we dance, it may be a good idea to survey some of our advisors to discover if what was witnessed by the audience coincides with what we are trying to get across as ministers in motion. A great opportunity for feedback arises when people approach us after ministry to encourage us or confirm that they have been blessed in some way. We can ask them what they think the Lord was speaking to them during the dance or which parts of the piece impacted them the most. We are always free to revise our dances as the Lord leads so that we may show the clearest picture possible.

### **Numbers 24:4**

*The utterance of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, with eyes wide open.*

### **Daniel 8:16**

*And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."*

## Beggars Can't Be Choosers

It is a wonderful thing to express passion and be excited about dance ministry. If we are honest, there are times that we may wonder why someone has not invited us to dance for a certain occasion. Initially, this may not be rooted in arrogance but a genuine desire to serve in the ministry of dance. Many new dance ministries trying to share their passion will ask to dance to gain additional platforms. Problems arise when there is a pattern of asking many people to "invite us" to be a part of something when the Lord may not have chosen us for that particular time or place.

A great character-building exercise takes place when we have to wait on the Lord to open doors for us. As long as we make efforts to train in the areas of dance and ministry and bear fruit, invitations will come. If we are truly flourishing in movement ministry, there will come a time when we may have to turn down requests for wisdom's sake. This puts us in a position where we can choose to go through the doors opened by the Lord. If we have to repetitively ask someone to allow us to dance for something, we are essentially begging. It is better to be invited.

When the Lord extends an invitation, the setting is richly prepared and we are gracefully received by Him. If we demand an invite, we can make the event host or organizers uncomfortable. Even if we get a "yes," we may never be invited again, or even worse, may be talked about due to our imposing behavior. Let us be faithful over the areas that the Lord has given us. If we are found prepared and ready when the bridegroom arrives, we will not have the doors shut in our faces.

### **1 Samuel 16:10**

*Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."*

### **Psalms 37:25**

*I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.*

*Day 350*

## Party Time!

As movement ministry has grown in popularity, it is common to see dance ministries at birthday parties, weddings, receptions, corporate events, and more. While protocol is commonly stressed when attending church-related functions, a little wisdom and some common sense must be exercised when we are representing ministry outside of the four walls. Understanding how to respond at all times and planning for common occurrences is crucial.

If we are invited as a ministry, we should maintain the mission throughout the event. Remaining friendly and approachable should always be our attitude. If we are at an event where alcoholic beverages are being served, it would not suit the best interests of ministry to partake in the festivities. It may not be wise to preach to the partygoers the ills of beers and cocktails either. Likewise, if there will be dancing to non-Christian music on the dance floor, we may be sending mixed signals if we take center stage and shake it with the best of them. We should lead by example.

We must continue to stay focused and not take anything for granted when we minister in non-traditional arenas. As ministers of dance, we must accept the reality that we are being watched. Our good should not be evil spoken of. Men who see our good works will be able to glorify our Father in heaven. When representing Christ to a perishing world, we have to remember that we are in the world but not of it.

### **Psalm 50:23**

*Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God*

### **Luke 21:34**

*But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.*

### **1 Timothy 4:12**

*[Take Heed to Your Ministry] Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

## Mother, May I?

As dancers, we are often made aware of how we are to govern ourselves. Beyond the dancer, there are other elements that can affect the ministry. Whether it is intentional or not, there may be people of influence in our lives that may try to use movement ministry for selfish purposes. We must not let our relationships get in the way of obedience to the Lord.

In the Bible with Herodias, she manipulated her daughter into having John the Baptist killed after her daughter's dance pleased Herod. Herodias' daughter was offered up to half of Herod's kingdom. Instead of answering for herself, she chose to please her mother instead. There are some parents of younger dancers that may pressure young men or women into dancing against their will. Even if they are not forced to dance, a parent or guardian may be so critical that a dancer is anxious to perform a piece perfectly more than making ministry the mission.

Outside of friends and family, a religious figure may also exert power or control over us. In these cases, dancers are often made to feel as though outside of a particular "covering," there will be no ministerial effectiveness. Feelings of guilt may also come upon us if we feel like saying no will disappoint our leaders or seem to be rebellious behavior. God establishes proper authority on the earth, but not everyone assuming leadership is selected by God. Although it is good to respect the roles of people in our lives, we must know that it is better to obey God.

### **1 Thessalonians 2:4**

*But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.*

### **2 Timothy 2:15**

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

## A Clean Getaway

The little things matter. When we are invited to minister at any location, we should leave the place in a better state than when we arrived. If we carry our garments in bags, we should not leave hangers or plastic wrap behind for anyone to have to clean up after us. If we use tissue or water bottles, we should make an effort to leave no trash behind. Wrappers from candies or mints should not be deposited in the back of a pew. How we treat our surroundings is a direct reflection on us as dance ministers.

It should not have to be said, but it is very important to make sure that our garments are clean before we put them on to minister. This includes any tights, leggings, unitards, or undergarments worn under them. Just because we think that they will not be seen does not mean they will remain hidden. When we are changing our clothes in a dressing area, it is respectful not to leave our clothing strewn about the room, even if we know that we are free to utilize the space for our entire visit. If the room must be used for another purpose, it will still be presentable if we keep things nice and neat.

Another area to consider is our method of transportation. If we are on our way to dance and need help unloading our vehicle, it may be embarrassing to have papers and snack wrappers in the front and back seat. Although many of us lead very busy lifestyles, we must make preparation an essential part of our “pre-ministry to-do list.” If we let things get too out of hand, we may find ourselves stressed at the prospect of a missing dance shoe, prop, sign, or garment. When we keep things decent and orderly, we will always be able to find the items that we need.

### **2 Corinthians 7:1**

*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

### **Revelation 19:8**

*And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*

## Climb Every Mountain

When striving to correctly interpret a concept in movement ministry, we can reach a point of challenge. Although it may be simple to show concepts through written words and literal symbols, it becomes a little more difficult to portray abstract ideas. It is in these instances that color, texture, and Divine inspiration can go a long way.

When we want to show the oceans or bodies of water, different shades of blue billows or flags can be used to show waves and fluid motion. The same ideas can be applied to the demonstration of fire. If we would like to be a little more diverse, we can also incorporate these visuals into our garments, or even by using multimedia including video projection or slides and graphics. Larger concepts like mountains, valleys, flying, and the passage of time can be shown with large props, fabrics, clocks, and other creative imaginings. The creativity of God is unlimited!

If we are unable to create these concepts ourselves, consulting with a Spirit-filled master craftsman may provide the exact enhancement we need. Dance ministry does not have to solely rely on fabrics, props, choreography, or creative tailoring. When we yield to the Lord's direction, He will show us Divine creativity like never before. Breaking out of the mold of doing what we have seen will allow us to walk by faith, not by sight.

### **Isaiah 40:5**

*The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

### **1 Corinthians 2:9-11**

*But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

## Sank-tified

Let our testimonies not bring glory to the enemy. We should not be terrified or ignorant concerning his methods. We should demonstrate the overwhelming power of God to defeat the enemy. In the ministry of movement, we may minister pieces that depict the defeat of the adversary. Whenever we show this through dance, we must be very careful to highlight that it is the Lord Who tramples down the enemy. There are times when God will use us as instruments to rout the enemy, but it is only at His direction that we triumph.

If our choreography depicts us as "super humans" whose own powers and strength rule, we have missed the truth. When David slew Goliath, he used what may have seemed to be an ineffectual weapon in the form of stones. When the Lord sent people to war, it would often be done with few people to show the Sovereign Power of God at work. Our praise and worship may seem small to some who would like to ridicule our obedience, but is very effective at disarming the devices of the enemy.

We must be prayerful even as we use other dancers to impersonate the forces of darkness. We are not to fear the enemy, but if we exhibit through song and movement that we can easily push over, beat, and stomp on the opponent, we could be making a mockery of a very serious situation. It is not by might, nor power, but by His Spirit that we must operate. Evil is nothing to play with. Let us make sure to live sanctified lives so that the Lord may use us in His arsenal of weapons against darkness to bring others into the Light.

### **Exodus 15:9-11**

*The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my desire shall be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.' You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. "Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"*

### **Psalms 69:14**

*Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from those who hate me, and out of the deep waters.*

## All Talk and No Action

Good stewardship mandates that we make the best use of our time. When we allow ourselves to get too comfortable, we may find that we have lost valuable opportunities to get things done. This is often an area that can be improved during dance ministry rehearsals. Getting carried away with extraneous conversations can shave valuable minutes off of our allotted rehearsal time. It is common to greet one another as we come together for rehearsals, but we should focus on the task at hand once the designated time to start has arrived. Five minutes of conversation at the beginning of rehearsal are five less minutes of learning, improvement, and worshipping.

If the ministry leader has to struggle to regain the attention of everyone during a rehearsal to give instructions, we have also wasted much-needed time. It is not that we cannot enjoy any moments of fun and small talk, but if we notice that we can count lost time in increments of a few hours per month, we must admit that some of our rehearsal time has been unfruitful.

Beyond rehearsals, we should be careful to exercise discretion when we are out at ministry events. It may be perceived as rude to have personal conversations amongst ourselves while a service or event is taking place. Remaining focused will help us to discern the spiritual climate of a place, or discern when someone is in need of prayer or encouragement. We each have a voice that is important enough to be heard, but we must remember that no topic should be more important than sharing the Good News, regardless of where we are.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:2**

*Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.*

### **Colossians 3:17**

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

## City of Lights

Our presence should impact the regions in which we live. The Gospel is to be shared globally and preached to every creature. Before we venture into unknown territories, we should gain experience at home first. Many dance ministers have a burning desire to travel to the Nations and minister through movement. We must realize that ministry travel is not about lengthening our resumes, but about going where we are sent to spread the Word.

If we serve as "lights" in our respective communities, we will be more prepared to spread the Good News throughout the world. This does not mean that the people to whom we are closest will always receive us. Even when we are rejected, we are prepared to deal with the ups and downs of ministry from the local to the international level. We must first be faithful over a few things before we are made to rule over much.

Both Jesus and Paul realized the importance of uniting with others. As dance ministries, we should also reach out to other like-minded ministries to come together to make a difference in our cities, countries, nations, and the world. Continued study of the Word and awareness of how the Body functions as one will allow us to join together for the work of the ministry. Competition is a hindrance to the Message. Unity is indicative of brotherhood. It takes more than one light to illuminate a city. Let's come in line to complete our portion of the work.

**Matthew 5:14, 16**

*You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

**Romans 13:12**

*The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

**Ephesians 5:8**

*[Walk in Light] For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*

## Microphone Check

When we are introducing a new dance concept, sometimes it may be helpful to give some Scriptural references or a short background before we dance. Depending upon the location that we visit, we should ask in advance if any speaking will be permitted. In some sectors, liturgical movement is not yet acknowledged as a legitimate expression. There are also certain religious groups that may not permit women to speak in public based on gender. Obedience to God is our mandate. We must continue to walk according to wisdom.

If we are given the opportunity to speak on a microphone, we must not get carried away. Grabbing a microphone is not the moment to preach an entire sermon or deal with personal issues in public. If we use a platform as an opportunity to get on a soapbox, we will do more harm than good. Even if we feel the need to provide a brief introduction, the piece should still speak for itself.

If we have to search really hard to find Biblical support for our dances, we may need to ask the Lord if that particular piece will be appropriate for a church setting. Depending on where we dance, exhortation or speaking may not be allowed at all. This instance may apply to public spaces or business settings. We should never make assumptions that we can do whatever we please without offense. We must walk in the liberty of the Spirit, while not causing others to stumble in the process.

### **Psalm 49:3**

*My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall give understanding.*

### **Ecclesiastes 3:7**

*A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak*

### **John 7:18**

*He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*

## Eye Can See Clearly Now...

As worship arts advocates, we battle against competition, comparison, pressure, criticism, and a host of other challenges. Although we should always walk according to the Spirit, we often experience moments of personal battles with being critical of others. Sitting on the sidelines, it can be easy to determine the areas in which our fellow dance ministers may have fallen short. We must learn to recognize the instances when we may verbally or unknowingly tear down our fellow servants by our actions.

If we can always find something wrong with everyone, we must question the lenses through which we look. If “that” dance ministry wears garments that we would not, have we prayed for revelation? If “they” select songs and movements that seem to offend the crowd, have we interceded on their behalf to be led by the Spirit? If we show ourselves friendly to our fellow movement ministers and “they” seem to be unresponsive, do we continue to stand on the Word of God? We must first remove the beam from our own eye before we can begin to correct the vision of someone else.

If we are called to teach and instruct in the area of worship arts, we must not impose our belief system forcefully on others. If we are faithful to study and prayer, the Lord will provide an audience to hear the Word He has given us in due time. Unwelcome sermons on the elements of movement ministry at a concert, service, or event can cause more division than solidarity. Whatever issues arise or seem to bother us repetitively concerning movement ministry is the area we should study the most. Instead of continually diagnosing the problem, we should be ready to offer a solution to the perceived plagues concerning the ministry of movement.

### **1 Corinthians 12:23-26**

*And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

## The Blame Game

Our initial reaction to a ministry mishap may be to blame it on the devil or conclude that the Lord is making a public example of someone for wrongdoing. It is rarely expected that a dancer will get injured during ministry or that the backdrop on a stage will come crashing down while dancing. In life, things happen. We must remain prayerful and remember that wisdom is many times displayed by what we do not say.

If we have ever been in a situation where we have witnessed a dancer slip or fall, we understand that it can be embarrassing and bruise the ego. If we have found ourselves in a slippery situation, we may also wonder what it is that we might have done wrong or why the Lord did not shield us from a public faux pas. On the other hand, when the CD skips, lights malfunction, garments get caught, props fail to function properly or any other distraction occurs, we may want to "blame it on the devil." While some of instances of spiritual involvement may be accurate, we must always remember that when human hands get involved with the things of God, there are bound to be some mistakes.

A tendency to be over-spiritual about everything is to be unrealistic. At the same time, we know that God is not mocked and that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. As an integral part of our ministry preparation time, we should seek the Lord in prayer and ask Him to protect all of the elements involved in the dance. While we can prevent many natural distractions by using clean CDs, performing safety checks, or scheduling sufficient practice time for proper movement execution, in the end we can only pray that God's will be done.

### **1 Peter 2:19-21**

*For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.*

### **Jude 1:24-25**

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.*

## Collection Agency

Ministry costs. There are no set rules as to how the ministry of movement is financed, but we must be good stewards over every penny we receive. We must let the Lord lead us as to how we raise funds for travel, garments, registration costs, and dance ministry education. Whether we dance alone or have an entire company to run, we must understand the spiritual and natural guidelines when it comes to money.

There is often a struggle for many church-based dance ministries. Some churches may afford the ministry an annual budget, while others may provide little to no funds for the ministry to function. Dance ministries that are community-based or evangelical in nature often garner funds from donations or by collecting funds from ministry participants. Dance studios often charge a set fee for classes and require additional finances for special events or activities. An ongoing debate exists concerning whether ministries should charge for the Gospel. We must seek the Kingdom of God first.

Financial accountability is a must. If possible, there should be a treasurer that gives an account of all monies received as well as expenses. Larger ministries may need to employ a bookkeeper or accountant. When we track what we have received vs. what has been spent on ministry in one year, we will be better able to determine a budget and financial goals for the following year. Leadership should take the economic environment of participants into consideration when planning garment purchases, travel dates, and activities. We should not be limited due to lack of finances. The Lord is a Provider. As good stewards, let us continue to count the cost as we build from year to year.

### **1 Corinthians 16:1-3**

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.*

## Judgment Day

Recently, I was asked to serve as a judge for a Praise Dance Competition. This was the second time in a week that I was made aware of this type of event happening nearby. While this is nothing new, it is still disturbing to me nevertheless. One advertisement for a similar gathering proclaimed that the dancers were competing to defeat the devil. I could only shake my head in astonishment at the state of many dance ministries today.

If we are one Body, can we truly compete against ourselves? If one of our arms is significantly bigger than the other through weightlifting more on one side of our body, will we not be looked upon as deformed? This is the equivalent of competition in ministry. No matter how "friendly" we aim to be while competing, it is human nature to try to be the best at what we do. As a result, we may exhibit ungodly behavior as the intensity of competition arises. In order to win, that may mean that our opponent may suffer some sort of setback (falling during ministry, flags and props that are not functional, etc.), be ill-prepared (unpolished choreography, less-than-spectacular garments, etc.), have less of a "fan base" (which makes it a popularity contest), or a multitude of other disqualifiers.

Would I judge the ministry of dance based on who is the most "anointed?" Is the winner determined by who has the most complicated choreography? Should I give an honorable mention to the group that has the best garment design? As I have previously written, not every invitation is to be accepted. While I can only answer for myself due to my personal conviction of advocating for the education and development of ministry through the worship arts, I will have to respectfully decline all such "opportunities."

### **1 Corinthians 4:5**

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

## Pay the Piper!

As dance ministers, we often tout the moral values of being properly treated and respected for the work that we do. While it is great to receive a financial blessing to assist with gas or travel expenses, we must also remember that the door swings both ways. We cannot take advantage of others in the name of "ministry." We should treat others in the same manner we would like to be treated.

The most common thing that we use in the ministry of movement is music. Instead of borrowing and burning CDs for dances, we should make sure to invest in the artist by purchasing the music. If we desire garments for our ministries, we should not expect seamstresses and tailors to render services free of charge. Some movement ministries are fortunate to have people who sew as a token of love. More often than not, we will have to pay for our goods. Why should we be willing to spend top-dollar with merchants who could care less about the Kingdom, while shortchanging those who labor for the sake of the Gospel?

In turn, if we have invited guests to minister on a special program, we should provide some sort of love expression for the effort. Money may not always be a viable option, but thoughtfulness can go a long way. Being a good steward does not mean that we have to be stingy with our funds. It is our obligation to render honor where due.

### **Acts 20:35**

*I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

### **1 Timothy 5:17-18**

*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

## Who Done It?

There always lies the temptation to try to make things happen for ourselves when we feel like our time has come. Launching new endeavors is wonderful when God is the Mastermind behind what we are aiming to accomplish. Everything done in the name of Jesus is not necessarily "Kingdom." Whenever we are building something, it must be commissioned by God, or else we are doing the work in vain.

We should not seek to praise ourselves through bragging or highlighting our own accomplishments in order to deem someone else inferior. There is room for all of us to coexist in the dance ministry realm. If we begin to think that we are more anointed, skilled, powerful, effective, popular, radical, or important than our fellow ministers of dance, we miss the essence of the importance of the Body.

Sometimes dance ministers think that we are the "first" to do this or that. We may be the "first" in our area, but we should not take pioneering to the extreme and become prideful. Promoting our ministries or businesses should never reek of selfish ambition. There is nothing wrong with advertising to get the word out about something, but the words that we choose to use to promote events and businesses will expose what is inside of our hearts. God exalts the humble but resists the proud.

It is my personal belief that it is better to be asked to dance, teach, travel, and share than it is to call people to book ourselves on a worldwide tour. Having business cards ready when someone asks us about our ministries is great preparation, but hunting down potential clients unsolicited will have us labeled as self-ambitious. If we ever allow the thought to enter our minds that other dance ministries are powerless in comparison to us, then we will merit the same unfortunate ending as other prideful characters in the Scriptures.

### **Matthew 23:12**

*And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

*Day 364*

## The End of the Road

Although we may continue in ministry until we leave this earth, many of us may reach the day when we no longer minister through movement. We may choose to serve in a different capacity or to pass the baton. Although not everyone will become a veteran of the worship arts, we should strive to make sure that our journey has not been run in vain. Whether we have served as founders of a movement ministry or inherited one, our participation should have made a difference in the places that we were able to dance. We can take steps now to make sure that our work will endure.

Fully educating ourselves concerning the ministry of movement will open up doors to us beyond what we can imagine. We should be able to take this knowledge and greatly impact the lives of others. Inspiring someone to join the movement ministry is awesome, but serving as an usher into the Eternal Kingdom will result in a great reward. We are not dancing for our own pleasure. What great joy it would be to see many walking in righteousness and proclaiming Jesus as Lord because we were obedient!

It is my prayer that somewhere within these writings contained a blessing, provided revelation, gave a word of encouragement, sent admonition, incited someone to action, or just knowing that there is someone out there who can relate. Over the years, the ministry of dance has been a great blessing in my life, allowing me to travel, teach, and minister in various territories and countries. I have personally heard many testimonies of people whose lives have been changed as a result of this ministry. It has been a humbling experience to see the captives set free both inside and outside of the church. For the detractors, I have no argument. I have seen the hand of God in operation and know that He is a God of action. My hope is that you have experienced this work and as a result, will glorify my Father in Heaven.

His Servant,  
***Rekesha Pittman***

**2 Corinthians 2:9**

*For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.*

*Day 365*