

Training to

Reign

*Training to
Reign*

REIGN DANCE COMPANY

REIGNAISSANCE PUBLICATIONS

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About Reign Dance Company

*And hast made us unto our
God kings and priests:
and we shall reign on the earth.*

- REVELATION 5:10 (KJV)

INTRODUCTION

Dancing in the Reign

God established us because the desert needed Reign. When I arrived in Las Vegas, I was heart-broken by the lack of unity demonstrated between churches and especially absent in the ministry of movement. Although there were several ministries present in the local churches, we were serving our own congregations, while coming together for concerts only to cheer for our favorite groups.

Las Vegas is known for several things, but ministry has not been at the forefront. I knew that beginning a Kingdom work in this region would require much prayer, planning, and patience. After seeking and serving the Lord, He called us to begin what would develop into a miraculous testimony.

Our commitment to rigorous rehearsals, high levels of accountability and standards of excellence serve as the training that will allow us to reign in every area of our lives. Through this book, Reign Dance Company unites as evidence of what the Lord can do when His people operate in the spirit of unity. It is our prayer that ministries worldwide will overcome by the testimonies that we share in this book.

Training to Reign,

Rekesha Pittman

Artistic Director - Reign Dance Company

CHAPTER 1

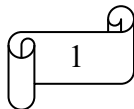
The Forecast Calls for Reign

by **Rekesha Pittman**

Four years. I would get up every morning and get down on my living room floor before the Lord. I called out the name of this company for four years. I wrote down the vision as the Lord gave it to me. I drafted a class schedule and descriptions. I asked God to send dancers from the north, south, east, and west. I asked for Divine favor in Las Vegas. Four years later, He answered.

You would think that I would have been overjoyed when I heard the Lord tell me to open the company, "Now." Although He had previously instructed me to lose weight for the work ahead, I kept putting it off for months... ok, years! At the time He told me to move forward with Reign Dance Company, I was over 200 pounds and feeling underqualified.

Although I had taken dance classes for a few years while praying and waiting, I still felt insufficient for the assignment. I paid good money for ballet, modern, and African dance classes, only to find myself laughing when I was unable to execute the sometimes-complicated movements. Yes, I served as dance leader on a local church level for many years, but leading the community was an entirely different expectation.



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He replied, "I gave you somebody." I then remembered my good friend MarQue Smith, who had been a former Rockette with Radio City Music Hall. As far as I knew, she had never officially praise danced before, even though she had seen me dance several times. I phoned her and asked her to come by my house. To my surprise, she quickly agreed to become the Technical Trainer for Reign Dance Company! I felt strong as a choreographer, but did not have enough vocabulary to teach its technical components.

Overcoming this hurdle was a victory, so why was I nervous? Determined, I told my fear to come with me. After debating where to go, I contacted a friend of mine who had previously held drama rehearsals at Las Vegas Dance Theatre Studios to see what he thought of the facility for dance rehearsals. He informed me that the owners were good people, so I called them. I made an appointment to visit the studio on a Saturday afternoon.

As favor would have it, the exact days and times that I wanted were available! I arranged an agreement with the facility and received keys to the dance studio. It was time to spread the word!

I asked my graphic designer for a logo, purchased a domain name, got a dedicated cell phone and put together an advertising strategy. A local radio station frequently featured faith-based advertising, so I made an appointment to

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purchase some airtime. A mistake on the part of the radio station led to an unexpected benefit! Since they made an error on my first on-air promotions for Sundays only, they fixed it and gave me additional spots during the week! The phone began to ring and the rest is history!

Because the spirit of rejection runs rampant in the lives of many believers, the Lord instructed me to allow the process of elimination to serve as our "informal" audition process. Although many dance companies and church ministries may have formal auditions, I had to take a different approach in Las Vegas.

I set our open house for the month of April in 2009. After conducting several open houses, 11 dancers joined the company! Less than two weeks later, we received our first invitation to minister in dance at a concert featuring Chris Bolton. I took a trip to Los Angeles to purchase red fabric, and we commissioned our first garments! We excitedly danced to "Let the Praise Begin" by Fred Hammond, and the praise has continued ever since.

As the word spread about our company, dancers began joining in droves. We welcomed them all with open arms, encouraging them to stay for the long haul. As I am a serious proponent for worship arts education, I began conducting workshops within our company almost immediately. Each dancer had to complete "7 Steps to a Divine Turnaround," which taught them the fundamentals of dance in the Word, as

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well as general ministry training and practical application tools.

We gained rapid popularity on the community level and were invited to dance for major Gospel events in Las Vegas. By the time our first anniversary arrived, we had several pieces in our arsenal and were happy to welcome a full house of people to celebrate with us! Encouraged to press forward with the vision, we planned our first staged production.

Preparing to dance for "A Night in Shining Armor" (October 2010) was both exhilarating and exhausting! I had to rent a theater at the Clark County Library, hire a Stage Manager, order tickets, pay for graphics, work with lighting and sound technicians, pay for music licensing and insurance, coordinate with a seamstress, and order all of the props for use in our production. Thanks to the grace of God, tickets sold very quickly and we almost sold out our first production! It was a rousing success.

Before we knew it, we were on the road. We traveled to California and Missouri almost immediately. Attending dance conferences near and far allowed us to glean from the diversity of dance styles in different regions and stretch our dance vocabulary. The vision that God gave to Reign Dance Company would soon come into full manifestation.

I was invited to preach at an arts gathering in 2011 and RDC was scheduled to minister. While waiting to dance, the sound person began

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playing our music while another dancer was up to minister. Instead of waiting for the correct track, the dancer decided that she would go ahead and dance to the same music we had prepared. Undaunted, I pulled out another track and appointed specific leaders on our team to flow spontaneously to the music while the rest of the team followed.

Because we make spontaneous corporate worship and free flow dance a regular part of our rehearsals, the ladies were prepared to dance even without choreography or a previous rehearsal of the material. That night was no different.

After ministering, the prophet of the house spoke life-changing words over us. He said, "You are going to South Africa." We responded with glee, thinking about the global impact that the Lord called us to make. Little did we know how soon this would come to pass.

Three weeks later in the month of June, I was scheduled to teach dance workshops in the Atlanta, Georgia area. At the end of the event, a gentleman approached me and introduced himself. "Hello. I am minister Neville from South Africa," he stated. At first, I thought nothing of it until he said, "We would like to invite you and your team to Cape Town to minister."

What made this invitation so remarkable was that I did not take my team with me to the conference. I traveled alone and had to manage with little help. It was a confirmation of what

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was spoken over us prophetically. God was not finished surprising us yet.

We received our official travel date in July. We would be heading to South Africa in October! It would only cost \$3,600.00 per person to go. Wait! What? We had to walk by faith and not by sight. I made a flyer, asked for donations, and prayed! God's Word did not fail us.

I could not have anticipated how transformational this mission would be. Shortly after accepting our invitation to South Africa, I discovered that I was pregnant! By my calculations, I would be a little over two months along during our journey, which included very long flight hours. I received clearance from my doctor and accepted the prophetic appointment to minister to the nations.

We raised enough capital in just 2 months for 7 of us to go to South Africa for a period of 12 days. We were eternally changed. It was during this trip that I realized my calling as a Worship Arts Missionary, working in conjunction with my preaching ministry. We conducted dance workshops, danced during worship services, provided gifts for orphaned children, visited a school to talk about the arts, and toured the historic sites. Since then, we have continued to travel extensively throughout the United States and abroad.

Because I am very entrepreneurial in nature, I often stress the importance of having additional streams of income for our members. "I don't have it," is never an acceptable excuse for

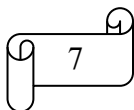
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missing out on opportunities. Over the years, we have held many fundraisers that included banquets, community dance classes, sponsorship drives, catalog sales, bake sales, snack booths, and more! For one of my national dance conferences, several members of the company set up vendor booths to help raise the money needed for South Africa. The Lord has truly provided ways for us that we cannot even begin to comprehend.

Launching a Christian dance company in Las Vegas has not been without its unique challenges. As a leader, I often set the bar very high for our members not only in movement, but in lifestyle. The Lord has allowed us to experience things in just 5 years that some companies have been unable to do in 20. Many have come and gone, but our foundation remains very strong.

We have been privileged to dance for major events hosted by our local radio station, at luxury hotels for family reunions, for birthday celebrations, and for large corporate gatherings. We have ministered twice on the world-famous Las Vegas Strip, evangelizing through dance as part of the conferences that I have hosted. In accordance with these many groundbreaking milestones, we dance every month for Kirk Franklin's Gospel Brunch at the Mandalay Bay Hotel.

The Lord continues to amaze us by allowing us to go into non-traditional arenas to minister. We have danced twice at the famous Las Vegas



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Hotel & Casino in the same room that Elvis performed. As a church dance team, this may not have been possible, but as a united community, there are no limits!

We have also experienced times of joy and seasons of sorrow. Our members have lost loved ones through death, endured divorce, and have suffered through depression. Since the Holy Spirit has free reign in our rehearsals, our members have been able to receive prayer, support, words of encouragement and prophecy to help us through our most trying and discouraging times. We have even invited guests to our rehearsal who had no idea that our purpose was to minister directly to them. The countless testimonies continue to grow as we dance for His glory.

Over the years, my leadership role has expanded. In the past 5 years, I launched online training programs, started a publishing company, developed product lines, and opened a church! I personally believe in empowering others to not only do what I do, but to do it better than I can. Reign Dance Company has several facets of leadership to meet our growing needs. Each leader is required to have an assistant in training at all times, so that in times of transition there is no position or assignment that will be left vacant. These include our Technical Trainer, Chaplain, Choreography Coach, Finance Manager, Keeper of the Wardrobe, Travel Coordinator, Special Events Coordinator,

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Pageantry Coordinator, Member Services, Company Historian, and Musical Director. We encourage everyone to take personal ownership for their area of service and to continue to develop the skills that can be used in real-world application.

Hectic travel schedules have been exciting, and we have to fight the temptation to get out of balance. Our members come from several churches in Southern Nevada, and we encourage them to be accountable to their leadership as well as at home. Many husbands of our married dancers are very supportive and attend our Christmas gatherings and show up for public dance ministry events. I am very grateful for my husband, Pastor Matthew Pittman, for his financial support and personal commitment to the success of Reign Dance Company.

Serving as Artistic Director of Reign Dance Company has been one of the joys of my life. Realizing that God chose to bless me with such a dedicated group of worshipers continues to humble me. We will continue to train, develop and dispatch Kingdom dancers who are equipped to impact the world. I pray that the Lord will continue to grant me the grace to dance in the Reign.

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Rekesha Pittman

Rekesha Pittman serves as Artistic Director for Reign Dance Company. She is blessed to travel internationally, providing instruction to worship arts ministries worldwide. In addition to dance ministry development and consultation, Rekesha has authored several books on the subject of dance ministry including, "Company Keepers: Dance Ministry Daily," "For This Cause I Bow My Knees: A Moving Testament," and "Dance Leaders Advance." She is currently writing her latest book entitled, "Moving Through the Scriptures."



CHAPTER 2

A Touch of Class

by **MarQue Smith**

I joined Reign Dance Company (RDC) as the Technical Trainer when the company first began. I met, at that time, Rekesha Pittman through a mutual associate. She shared the vision of RDC and I was very excited and interested as we both had gifts to exchange. I was already teaching children to dance and desired the biblical training and spiritual knowledge, while Rekesha was seeking the technical dance training and instruction.

I have thoroughly enjoyed watching RDC grow and develop both technically and spiritually. This is very inspiring as a dance teacher. The members have taken huge steps in their dance training, technique and their individual expression that allows God to minister through them. I also see my personal growth and continue to stretch myself as a dancer, dance minister and leader. Having the ability to dance and learn choreography is one thing; having the anointing and allowing the Spirit of God to use you in dance is a totally different call.

Seeing RDC defy all business model traditions for dance companies is also a blessing. RDC started during a very pressing economic time, yet membership continued to increase. We

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surged forward, planning and accomplishing events that others had never done, like ministering openly through dance on the Las Vegas Strip. We also traveled internationally as a company in only 3 years with 7 members on a South African mission, raising over \$27,000 in approximately 3 months! The ultimate highlight was watching God do all of these amazing things with regular people who were available for His call.

My service has not been without serious challenges. Whenever you are involved in something that has the ability to positively change your life, you will face obstacles, trials, frustrations, setbacks—anything that has the potential to stop you. The enemy comes to kill, steal and destroy. The enemy is not concerned for your "good" or for your "benefit," his job is to keep you from what God has purposed for you.

A personal obstacle for me was my marriage. I have been dancing since I was three years old. In 2001, I began a dance company for children. When RDC began it was a perfect fit to train the children prior to them becoming members of RDC. Our mission includes the statement, "Training to Reign." It is very important that a husband and wife are equally yoked, understanding that each of them have been purposed or called by God for something. Although I am serving in my appointed ministry, I encountered friction, animosity, separation and, ultimately,

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divorce. Through much prayer and fasting, RDC saved my life.

Formal dance training provides and establishes a foundation and serves as a great benefit. Basic training fosters a climate for growth in every area of your craft and helps you to identify your natural strengths. A challenge in training is consistency. You must commit yourself to the regime of consistent training. When you incorporate a solid foundation, you diminish errors or mistakes. If there is a misstep, your training kicks in, giving you the ability to recover quickly and move on. Another challenge is time. Setting specific times for training and regular class attendance will work as a barometer to chart and track your growth and improvement. It can also reveal how quickly you can hinder your own advancement by not staying disciplined and dedicated.

Technical training for RDC is vital because when we minister, we do not want to be hindered by the inability to execute. Training gives us the option to be free to move as the Spirit leads and guides us when dancing spontaneously. Training builds our endurance so that we are prepared to minister deliverance, destroy yokes, change lives, encourage others or by moving however the Lord leads.

As Technical Trainer, I teach and instruct ballet dance in a professional dance studio setting. We have been blessed to work with proper dance flooring, mirrored walls, and a large

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enough space to execute dance sequences across the floor. We also learn French terms and the secular language of dance; modified Cecchetti style, and dress in appropriate attire to train and minister to the King. It is important as teachers and ministry leaders that we continue to study, train and perform research so that our gifts stay current and fresh. Refuse to rely on what you learned several years ago.

Because movement ministry has many style variations, not all dance ministers have had formal or technical training. This is a key reason why we must remain current. We must be able to adapt movement for all levels, shapes, disciplines and sizes. This does not mean that we only teach the basics or beginner levels. It means we have to be flexible, creative, detailed and precise in our execution so that students may grow and excel in their dance abilities. This will give them the essential tools needed to respond to God's unique call for them.

Regimented rehearsal time will improve endurance because muscle memory is essential to movement. When your body is trained to move on a regular basis, it will respond when you get up and dance. You will be less likely to experience fatigue, soreness and muscle cramping. Technology and resources are developing rapidly and in order to keep up, we must be disciplined or we will quickly appear dated or be left behind.

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In preparation for ministry and all of my work, I begin with prayer. This was a challenging transition for me as an industry dancer, so I added prayer as a discipline. It has totally been worth the reward of being in God's will. Prayer opens your line of communication to the Lord and you are able to receive instruction. I have witnessed amazing miracles of healing and financial breakthrough by being obedient and faithful to God's Word.

It was prophesied to RDC in June 2011 that the dance company would be going to South Africa. In July, our Artistic Director was on ministry assignment in Georgia and received an invitation from a South African minister who invited her team. Note: the team was not even there! In October, several members of RDC were boarding a plane headed for South Africa. Not only did this happen in less than four months, a year in advance while we were ministering in California, a different pastor prophesied that people would freely give to support our ministry. When we were given the financial requirements for the mission, God opened the floodgates and people gave openly and abundantly. What makes this truly amazing to me is that these were not planned or programmed events. These were the results of prophecies fulfilled. Having traveled with RDC on several occasions, South Africa stands out because Africa was a place I wanted to visit and God opened the door immediately.

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We have also served through prison ministry. The prison visit reminded me about how we often imprison ourselves. The women in the prison had a powerful dance ministry that showed God's incredible ability to get what He wants from anywhere. As His children, we are not limited to our surroundings. We can be bound by our thoughts. As a man thinks, he is! This opened my eyes both spiritually and physically.

Serving as a member in RDC is truly a hands-on education. It has been a constant reinforcement for me personally to continue studying, researching, and being open to learning new things. RDC is grounded in prayer and we continue to pray together as a company for God's leading. Additionally, RDC does fundraisers that teach us entrepreneurial, forecasting, marketing, leadership, budgeting, time management, planning and business skills.

We support each other and rely on one another when we need assistance, teaching us team values. When we have challenges or issues, we utilize accountability partners to help us overcome. We often celebrate and honor each other in our successes and personal accomplishments. There is no competition or competitive spirit. We honor the Word and truth.

RDC is raising the standard for movement ministries and is a model, trailblazer, and innovator for worship arts ministries to embrace the full power and authority that God has

A TOUCH OF CLASS

planned for them. I see each area of RDC and the members facilitating workshop classes, coaching sessions, seminars and conferences that will help other ministries learn and embrace their unique callings along with their own peculiar gifts and talents. In the Word it says, "Behold I do a new thing," so I do not see RDC trying to duplicate itself. I see RDC providing assistance to other ministries that would help them to meet God's design for their ministry. This all begins in prayer.

MarQue Smith

MarQue Smith is a former Radio City Music Hall Rockette (Dancer) and graduated from the United States International University (Alliant Univ.) in San Diego, CA with a Bachelors of Fine Arts (Musical Theatre). Originally from Staten Island, NY, MarQue was sent to Las Vegas to perform with The Rockettes.

She sailed the inaugural Disney Wonder Cruise Ship tour as female lead singer. She headlined the Venus Pacific & Asuka Cruise ships. MarQue is the Director, Instructor and Choreographer for Witness Performing Arts, Inc. a Non-profit Children's Christian performing arts program. MarQue is the Technical Trainer for Reign Dance Company. She founded Thee MarQuee Enterprises, Inc. for her one woman shows "Dream in Color" and "D Divas" – Donna Summer & Diana Ross Impersonations. She has performed and appeared with legends Liza Minelli, Jeffrey Osborne, Rip Taylor, Maurice Hines, Tom Jones, Nell Carter, Susan Anton, Luther Vandross, Chaka Kahn, Lou Rawls, Joshua Redman, Diana Ross, Barry White, Marilyn McCoo, Billy Davis Jr. and others. MarQue toured as a Marvelette, a legendary Motown group, and has performed nationally as well as internationally on television, radio, cable, off-Broadway and film. She has her own

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series of Pilates workout DVDs (Pilates Style Magazine feature), a Contemporary Christian CD entitled, "Partner in Life," and a Christian magazine—CHRISTINEXERCISE. MarQue choreographs and tours with the female tribute group "Radiance," is a cast member of the original musical "When A Woman Loves" and calls her Pop/Jazz Band "No Limit."



CHAPTER 3

The Purpose of Pressure

by **Crystal Daniels**

I joined Reign Dance Company in April of 2009. Praise dance seemed to be unaccepted in Las Vegas for years, especially in traditional church settings; but I knew I was meant to use my gift for the glory of God. Rewind about three years...

A friend said to me, "Crystal, you need to network in the dance community. You need to find other dancers in your area so you know what's going on." I welcomed the pressure and Googled "Praise Dance in Las Vegas" and the first entry read *Rekesha Pittman – Las Vegas Liturgical Dance Network*. I went to a meeting in the fall of 2006 and realized I had so much to learn!

As time passed, I was introduced to aspects of praise dance I did not know existed. In September of 2007, I attended (and danced at) my first dance conference, "24/7 Three Six Five: Eternal Worship." This national dance event was hosted by Minister Rekesha. What an experience! Dancers from around the world came together to worship God in movement with flags and banners; I had never experienced anything like it. It was becoming more and more evident that I needed to stick with this woman of God.

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I wanted (and needed) more of those kind of experiences in my life.

When Minister Rekesha announced that she would be opening a Christian dance company, I got so excited! I would finally get the opportunity to be a part of a consistent organization geared towards worship through movement. I had danced with other teams over the years since 1998, but this was different. As time passed, Monday evenings and Saturday mornings began to be the highlight of my week.

We did not have ordinary dance rehearsals; we had worship experiences. Stifling the Holy Spirit was simply not an option, no matter what ministry event was pending. There have been times when we were unable to do a complete run-through because God's agenda at that time was much more important than an 8-count. Yet, our movements were still effective on the ministry date; it would be as if we had rehearsed for hours. God honors us with His presence as we give Him control of our time.

Joining Reign Dance Company is one of the best decisions I have made to date, but the commitment is not without its challenges. Accountability and honesty are prevalent themes in our organization. Our Chaplain, Alma K. Banks, often recites James 5:16a - "*Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.*" There are times when we have to be honest with our sisters concerning personal struggles and pressing

THE PURPOSE OF PRESSURE

issues. Is it easy to admit your shortcomings in front of those you serve with in ministry? No. Does healing take place? Absolutely! The temporary pressure of admitting our faults does not compare to God's glory manifesting during our worship through movement.

Being a dancer has been a desire of mine since I was a little girl, but I was never allowed to join any dance teams and did not know it was possible in a church setting at that time. In college, I joined the Campus Ministry Liturgical Dance Team. I realized just how much I loved to dance, but at the same time how much of a novice I was. The instructor would shout out "Piqué," but I had no idea what she was talking about. I would just look at the assistant and copy her moves. Receiving technical training through RDC began as a challenge because I had to retrain my body to do moves in the correct manner. No longer could I just turn in circles; I had to concentrate on pointing my toe, hitting second and first positions respectively, and spotting.

I currently serve as the Choreography Coach for Reign Dance Company. It is my responsibility to assist other members with any issues they may be having with the choreography. This means I must have a good understanding of the technical aspects myself in order to teach the moves effectively. Also, I must pay attention to the Artistic Director in case of "spontaneous choreography." I may not be a part of all

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sections of a particular dance, but I am still responsible for knowing the entire piece.

Additionally, I must make myself available for extra practices. I encourage those who may need a little more help to make time to come to my home or meet me early at the dance studio. This is beneficial because they are able to stop me anytime and ask questions in order to get a better understanding of the proper way to execute moves in excellence. I am also responsible for recording choreography and posting it on our private social media page. This allows the members to have a point of reference in their private practice time. It also forces us to watch ourselves and fix anything we may be doing in error, such as improper positioning and arm placement.

I love this job! It warms my heart when I see someone's light bulb come on due to extra coaching. I understand what it feels like to be lost in a class or frustrated because something is just not clicking, so to be able to be that extra help, that extra boost, is very fulfilling. Even though I carry this title, I do not do it alone! I have an assistant, Crystal Myles, who is very good at remembering on-the-spot movement. If I am absent or just need additional assistance, she helps share the load. Reign Dance Company is also full of extremely capable dancers who lend a helping hand in ensuring that everyone is on one accord in movement.

THE PURPOSE OF PRESSURE

I would advise anyone in this position to practice, practice, and practice some more. Although this applies to all dancers, it is slightly different for a coach. A coach must know the choreography well enough to teach it, which means knowing every count, cue, and position. A coach must be able to explain with proper terminology, but also break it down to someone who may have never danced before. A coach must be able to execute choreography well on a consistent basis to serve as a model for the level of excellence the team strives to achieve. Pray for an eye for detail in order to be able to catch when moves are not being carried out quite right. Yes, it is pressure, but it is worth it!

In preparation for ministry, I am particular about my time. If one were to be around me 1-2 hours prior to the engagement, this is what would be seen and heard: Ministry song(s) on repeat, complete run-through of choreography, garments pressed and laid out neatly, dance bag packed and ready to go. I try to clear my schedule during this time and try not to engage in extra conversation. My mind must be focused on what I need to do to be an effective minister of the Word through movement. I usually feel pressure when things do not go as planned, but this is when advanced preparation is important. It is not wise to begin to prepare the day of; the enemy's tactics usually increase right before ministry. I also prepare by being extra careful with my hands and feet. I have seen healing

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and deliverance break forth for the members of Reign Dance Company and for those who have the opportunity to witness our ministry.

In 2011, Reign Dance Company was invited on a mission trip to South Africa. I did not hesitate adding my name to the list of those attending, but I had no idea how I was going to raise \$3,600 in such a short amount of time. I did multiple fundraisers and the church I attended at that time was extremely supportive, but it was not enough. I remember calling my Pastor and saying, "I'm not going. I don't have enough money, and this is too stressful! I'm just going to give what I've raised to someone else to help them go." My faith had dwindled. I had begun to prepare my speech for those who would enquire about what happened. Then, Pastor Rekesha calls me and says, "How much more have you raised?" to which I replied, "I have \$200 more." I was about to share my plan, but she said, "Keep going. I need you there."

Long story short, I made it to South Africa! I was blessed by other team members who had raised much more than they needed. Not only was my trip paid for, but I had enough to eat, bless other ministries, and shop for souvenirs. What a blessing! The pressure of raising a large amount of money within a three-month period seemed minor compared to the experience of traveling to another continent, ministering to those in need, and seeing God's splendor.

THE PURPOSE OF PRESSURE

Pastor Rekesha has not been stingy with her wealth of knowledge concerning the ministry of dance. Through her books, seminars and impromptu workshops during rehearsals, I have gained so much information. I have learned how to dig even deeper in order to get a complete understanding of how dance is incorporated in worship. It is sad to say, but I had no idea how much dance was mentioned in the Bible until I sat under her teaching. Although I still have much to learn, I can truly say that I have been enlightened.

Reign Dance Company will be a catalyst for change concerning the arts in the Las Vegas area. We are invited a lot to minister around the city, but sometimes as an "entertainment group." It is usually not until others see us move through God's anointing and with power that mindsets are shifted from a place of "Entertain me," to "Minister to me!" Some atmospheres are not necessarily conducive for worship, but I love being a part of a body of believers who will worship anywhere at any time. I love RDC!

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Crystal Daniels

Crystal Daniels, a Las Vegas native, has been intrigued by the art of dance since her childhood. She has been a part of dance teams including Xavier University of Louisiana Liturgical Dance Team, Karar, and the Trinity COGIC dance team. She served as the Director of Judah Movement from 2009-2010, and currently serves as the Choreography Coach for Reign Dance Company, a performing company of worship artists that have a passion for the surrounding communities and the nations. God has blessed Crystal with many talents. She enjoys teaching and acting, but she considers the movement ministry to be her "purest form of worship."



CHAPTER 4

Dancing for Prophets

by Alma K. Banks

God told me to do it and I obeyed. Before I joined Reign Dance Company, I was very active in the worship arts ministry at my church. One morning after preaching, my pastor at that time announced that he and his family had already relocated to Texas. "Wait... What? When were they going to tell us?" The news really crushed me and after that I had difficulty maintaining a relationship with God and walking right before Him. Trust had been broken. The shepherd was stricken and sheep surely scattered.

One Sunday afternoon I was at a church service and a friend invited me to check out Reign Dance Company. She danced there and I thought to myself, "Wow, I really miss that." After the service, God provoked me speak to Rekeshia Pittman, their Artistic Director. I asked Rekeshia about her company and she gave me a flyer. I told one of my friends that also attended my former church that we were joining Reign Dance Company and we have been members ever since.

There were several setbacks that I had to overcome, the main one being mistrust of leadership. The experience that I had with my former church affected me so much that it was

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hard for me to think about being that vulnerable ever again. I would watch Pastor Rekesha to see how she responded to things and I would not say anything more than a casual hello and goodbye to her for a while. Fortunately, Reign Dance Company has a rule that everyone must pray! The more Pastor Rekesha pulled on my gift of intercession, the more freedom I experienced. There would be more opportunities for me to intercede and prophesy in the dance studio, and later, internationally.

Physical training was an obstacle for me. The entire time that I have been in Reign Dance Company, I have been at least 100 pounds overweight. When I first started Reign Dance Company, I really thought that I could dance! It was not until I started the technique classes that I realized that my choreography at my last church and the dance moves that I did at the club were nothing compared to what I was experiencing. Moving with extra weight does not excuse you from executing movement with power and passion; you may just have to work a little harder. There were some days that I thought that they should just understand that I am heavier than they are, but I am glad that they did not allow me to excuse myself out of the call and will of God.

I was pushed and I was encouraged to go higher in technique and in the Spirit. Because I submitted to the training, I was able to dance for longer periods of time and to give everything

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that I had without passing out. My body may be heavier, but it is conditioned for movement. I do believe it is time for me to lose the weight and go to a new level in service to God. God has called Reign Dance Company to go higher and the more altitude we gain, the more conditioned our bodies need to be in order to make the transition without breaking down.

In Reign Dance Company, I serve as the Chaplain. My responsibilities are to organize and facilitate the prayer team, establish weekly prayer calls, determine fasting schedules, provide counseling, and give holy correction when necessary. My role is vital to the company because prayer is an important factor in any ministry. We cannot leave the responsibility to pray and fast only on the Artistic Director. There are certain things that need to be addressed that are better off not coming directly from the leader. Through the power of God, I have been able to teach, warn, provide direction, and prophesy to every member of the company, assisting the Artistic Director with the weight of serving. As watchmen, we have to be in tune with God so that we can see the plan of the enemy from afar and dismantle any evil schemes before they enter into the camp.

I encourage anyone in the position of Chaplain to listen to the Holy Spirit, to read and speak the Word of God daily. If God has anointed you to say it, fear not! We have various age groups in Reign Dance Company

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and the majority of the people I prophesy to, counsel, and instruct are older than I am. God does not have an age requirement for us to start operating in the reason for our creation.

Make sure that you stay in position by always communicating clearly with the leader and staying under submission to Godly authority. Pastor Rekesha gives me a lot of the liberty in Reign Dance Company when it comes to the spiritual instruction; however, I check in with her on a regular basis to make sure that I am being accountable as well as aligned with the vision.

When preparing to minister in a church or a corporate setting, I pray to stay focused on God and to remain flexible. We have to be prepared to go into different settings—outdoors, theaters, churches, and banquet halls. We have to remain teachable, learning from our mistakes and retaining the things that work. Sometimes we go into places that have a wonderful atmosphere, expecting the power of God to move, and sometimes we go into places where entertainment is expected. At times we go into places that have enough room for us to move freely and many times we have to fit everyone into a cramped space. Whether there is an expectation of worship or entertainment in the atmosphere, great dance floors, or a storefront pulpit, we have to demonstrate the Kingdom of God through movement.

There are so many breakthroughs that I have experienced in Reign Dance Company, but I

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think our rehearsals have impacted me the most. Being able to witness my sisters in Christ receiving physical or emotional healing, and allowing God to speak through me in a place where the main focus is supposed to be about perfecting movement has changed the way I think about worship. There will be times when we do not even get to dance during practice because God wants to perfect our hearts. I love that we have the liberty to allow the Spirit of God to flow even in rehearsal.

Reign Dance Company has accomplished some awesome things and has journeyed to some amazing places. Some of the greatest things that I have seen occur through Reign Dance Company happens in the four walls of our dance studio. In that very same room, I was healed from the damage of being abandoned and released to operate in my true purpose.

Traveling with Reign Dance Company has included many memorable adventures, including South Africa. It was a faith walk just thinking about raising \$3,600 in only three months. All the glory belongs to God! Even with all of my bake sales, poetry nights, and personal requests for donations, I still did not get the full amount on my own. Some of my RDC sisters fundraised over and above the amount needed and I was able to reap from their overflow. My best friend is also a member of RDC and was planning to go with us, but had family circumstances that prevented her from going to South Africa. Even

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though she could not make it, she requested that the funds that she raised be transferred to me. Our South Africa mission was miraculous and life-changing and so was the way that I received the funds to get there. God will supply and send many rams in several bushes!

Reign Dance Company has been an exciting adventure and I only expect us to go up from here. I see us doing more productions, continuing to travel, exploring new territories and even extending Reign Dance Company to other cities!

Alma K. Banks

Prophetess Alma K. Banks has been a Las Vegas local for the majority of her life, migrating from Louisiana at the age of four. She was raised in church, developing her gifts in worship arts and intercession.

Prophetess Alma serves as Chaplain of Reign Dance Company. She has traveled nationally and internationally spreading the Gospel of Christ. Prophetess Alma believes in the power of prayer. She longs to see and develop the merging of intercession and dance.



CHAPTER 5

Fashioned for His Glory

by Tiffany Stitt

Why Reign Dance Company? At first, I would tell you because I was in search of something different or seeking a change; however, I must truly admit it was just God-ordained. At the time I found out about Reign Dance Company I was going through many different transitions in my life. The greatest and best change was that I went from being a non-believer to accepting Jesus as Lord! Can anyone say, "Praise the Lord, Saints?" I was ecstatic because I became another soul for Kingdom use!

I had the honor and privilege of meeting Mrs. Rekesha Pittman at a local chapter meeting for Phenomenal Women of Las Vegas, which was a local women's networking group for business and inspired business owners to showcase their organizations for growth and expansion purposes. I was looking to change my activities to coincide with the lifestyle change I had made. After all of the preliminaries of our meeting were out of the way, Rekesha and I officially met for the very first time. If I tried to recall her exact words when she introduced herself to me, it would go something like this: "Hi, my name is Rekesha Pittman and I will be opening a dance

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company soon." Because of her presence and enthusiasm, my reply was, "Hi, I am Tiffany Stitt, I am an insurance agent and please be sure to call me, I will come." We talked for a moment, shook hands and she proceeded to talk to the next person. My mind was already made up.

I made the decision to join Reign Dance Company before it actually existed physically, before the vision manifested, before the building was secured, before the team was assembled, and most importantly, at its initial birthing stage. My God, how amazing is that? I trusted God by faith to believe in someone else's dream and vision before the actual manifestation of it.

In order to understand why meeting Rekesha was so pivotal in my life, let me give you some background information. It was at a time in my life that I had tried everything else, and frankly, I was enjoying it. Like many people with a lot of money, I owned a lot of material things. I had a business, cars, children, a home and money—with no substance. Have you ever felt like you were missing something? I was a lover of making money and the things that went along with it.

I had several bad experiences with people who went to church; people who openly professed that they loved Christ but did the same things I did and was still doing. Let that sink in for a moment... For quite some time I would hear the same names in my dreams: "Christ,

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Jesus, Lord, God" and it puzzled me. But why? All I can recall is remembering falling asleep and asking myself, "Who is this person?" "Who is this Man that people seem to be so crazy over?" After several months of the same recurring dream, I woke up one day, looked in the mirror and said, "If You are real, then show me who You are. Allow me to meet individuals who are true to You. If You can do that, then direct me and I will follow." I thought that I was talking to myself because I suddenly heard a voice say, "Call your mother and tell her that you have chosen to live for Me and our journey will begin." I reluctantly called my mom and told her, "I have decided to believe in the Man y'all call Jesus Christ and if He is who everyone says He is, then I can do it at home in my bedroom." By the time I met Rekesha I had only been saved for a few short weeks.

My mother guided me through the process of accepting the Lord as my personal Savior and this wonderful life journey began. I did not know that being saved required maintenance! Several months had passed from the time that I met Rekesha and during that time my mother challenged me to find a church home. I visited several churches in the Las Vegas area and would walk in and see the same people that the pastors were preaching about in attendance. These people were at the very same club I was hanging out in—singing, dancing and screaming in church the very next day. Although I had the

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desire to change, I started to feel like church was a joke! "Church-goers" and "club-goers" were the same, except they lied and covered up who they really were on Sundays.

A couple of months passed and I began to get discouraged, visiting church after church and seeing the same disappointing patterns. As I contemplated returning to the old "me," you know, the non-believer, I started visiting the same church and then out of the blue Rekesha contacted me and gave me the invitation to come to the Reign Dance Company's Grand Opening. I must admit, I had no idea what I was in store for but I went anyway. I continued to go because I needed something to help me to stay accountable. It was a struggle. Everything that I was learning was new. Most of the things I did not understand. I was believing in something I could not see, feel, or touch and now Rekesha Pittman was no longer just another business owner, she was now Minister Rekesha Pittman—my dance leader, instructor, sister and friend.

I have so many great memories as a Reign Dancer and pivotal moments as a spiritual dancer. I attended my very first dance conference, "Dance Ministry Detox," where I met my current Pastor, Apostle Paul Kelker of Fresh Wind Ministries. My whole household accepted Christ! I was able to dance with my children while ministering the Gospel. I was able to travel to different places to freely embrace movement

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from different cultures and levels of experience. As a bonus, I have been able to connect with many different and wonderful people of God. I have gained multiple brothers, sisters and friends and have been able to spend time with men and women who truly love Christ and show it openly.

I have had to opportunity to observe a woman wanting to own a dance company, to opening and running that dance company. I have seen her transition from Mrs. Rekesha to Minister Rekesha and now Pastor Rekesha—which is very encouraging—but wait! My favorite revelation is that I discovered that I am a worshiper. God has blessed me to transform from living as a non-believer into a true worshiper. Thank You, Lord!

I have had the strength of overcoming situations, some that I am still conquering. I have had to press through many personal trials to remain a Reign Dancer, like the naysayers—people who couldn't believe that I could change. I have endured financial struggles, like losing my business. I have even had to deal with serious health issues. I am a two-time stroke survivor! I lost my home, family and friends while being a part of this company. Although it seems and appears that I have experienced a lot, the stability of going to rehearsals allowed me to keep my sanity. These gatherings provided my mind, body, and soul with a place of freedom, healing, rejuvenation, and refreshing while I

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continued to develop my relationship with God. I had to learn to embrace my feelings and emotions while dealing with the alterations to my life.

The biggest challenge for me was dealing with the ailments and residue of my strokes. The right side of my body has a constant tingling feeling down to my toes. I had to regain comprehension of what my body was capable of, its stressors and when I needed to relax. I refuse to use my ailments as an excuse not to train. I had to learn to be my own best encourager to dance, learn technique and remember routines. The greatest benefits I have gained are hard work and dedication. I am a dancer on assignment for the Kingdom, impacting my community and the nations.

I serve in leadership with Reign Dance Company as the Keeper of the Wardrobe. It is my position to make sure that every RDC member is dressed appropriately with the correct garments for the occasion, event or conference. My job is important because it allows my leader to concentrate on other company responsibilities.

As the Keeper of the Wardrobe, I must know our company schedule, what garments we have in our wardrobe and how to maintain them, the approximate size of each dancer, as well as who will be ministering at each event. It is very important for me not to wait until the last minute to think about what we are going to wear. I must have a plan together so when the

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visionary asks what are we wearing, I am prepared to give instructions. I also must be ready just in case she does not want the company to wear what I have presented and have a backup plan. The quote, "It is better to plan for the opportunity than to miss it" helps me with that. As Keeper of the Wardrobe, not only do I concentrate on what we are wearing, I must also coordinate our accessories, hairstyles, make-up, and shoes. If Pastor Rekesha is busy handling other company needs, I post our clothing itinerary for ministry and travel dates.

As part of the travel team, I am Pastor Rekesha's personal stylist. I assist with her clothes, garments, hair and make-up. Leaders are often so busy preparing to teach, train, and motivate us through ministry that they can forget about the little things. My job is to lighten her load—not because she ordered me to, but because I am here to serve. I try my best to think of the things that she may forget so that she is never caught without what she needs for ministry purposes.

I am also the Kirk Franklin House of Blues Las Vegas ministry team leader. I had the opportunity to be one of the first praise dancers through Reign Dance Company to dance at the Gospel Brunch on Sundays with Ms. Patti Pennington. This is a wonderful experience as I minister to God on the Las Vegas Strip to people of multiple backgrounds and cultures.

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The advice I would give anyone in any of these positions is to first enjoy what you have committed yourself to, take pride in your duties, and be comfortable enough to own, operate and present what you have to offer. Enhance the ministry you are involved in and always try to be innovative and have something to bring to the table. Be willing to train a replacement and remain humble. To whom much is given much is required. I try my best to live by this statement: "It's not how many serve you but how many you can serve." It helps me stay focused on how can I assist in the Kingdom by taking the focus off of myself.

The breakthroughs I have experienced as a result of our ministry have truly been an experience. I have seen people possessed with tormented spirits be set free, demon-possessed individuals healed, witnessed emotional and spiritual healing, and celebrated reconciliation with families and friends. I have also watched the faces of the individuals God has allowed our group to bless with our prayer, praise and worship. We have been able to prophesy to individuals visiting our rehearsals through movement and the Word to let them know that God is still in the blessing and correcting business.

Reign Dance Company has truly been a blessing to me. RDC has provided me with the education and training to become the dance ministry leader at Fresh Wind Ministries, be an

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impromptu dance instructor at the "In Him We Move" conference in San Diego, California in April of 2013, and I am now embarking on this new journey as a published author all for the sake of the Kingdom. Reign Dance Company will continue to raise ministry leaders that can serve in multiple areas, not only within the company but in their home churches as dancers, singers, teachers, ministers and more.

Tiffany Stitt

Tiffany Stitt has been with Reign Dance Company since its inception. Through the education training received, Tiffany also serves as the leader of the Dew Dance adult ministry and children's praise dance ministry at Fresh Wind Ministries.



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Reign Dance Company



CHAPTER 6

Return to Sender

by Monica Taylor

Growing up in a Catholic family that attended church very seldom (Christmas and Easter to be specific and that was only if we were visiting relatives who were more consistent) and where there was no form of prayer that I can recall, praise dancing was a foreign concept to me. However, due to technical training as a teenager I was given opportunities to choreograph dances for a few praise teams while in college. Having no spiritual foundation, dance was simply about movement to music; a performance for an audience. Thankfully, my mind would soon be changed.

One day in 2009 while listening to a local radio station, I heard a commercial for a community dance company that was looking to audition dancers. I immediately decided that I would attend simply as a way to receive dance training and as a form of exercise. I was very nervous, but I prepared some choreography that would showcase my abilities and anxiously awaited the day. I called in advance to confirm and to inquire about the attire only to learn that it was an informal audition, which was a major relief. During the meeting, the Artistic Director was very humble and welcoming. We had a

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lively discussion about praise dance versus performance, reviewed her vision, and she then inquired about our experience. From that first encounter I knew that this was no ordinary dance company and my life was about to shift drastically.

During my first year of membership with Reign Dance Company (RDC) I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit regularly. Gathered together every Saturday morning and Monday evening, I was surrounded by women of all ages and different educational, spiritual and occupational levels, but we were all on one accord in worship. I formed friendships with these ladies that were so valuable to my growth. Ironically, I learned more about the Word of God during our rehearsals than I did attending church.

Other things that I can recollect from the beginning stages of RDC were that we rehearsed a lot, ministered frequently, and were held to high expectations. Instead of accepting this as the training ground for God's Word to be delivered through dance, I cowered away from the responsibility and chose to step away from the company. This decision was easy for me because my history had shown that I had difficulties balancing life's responsibilities and fulfilling expectations. I did the same thing in high school by not appreciating the access to dance instruction that I was being given. I became like the world and took the comfortable way out, or so I thought.

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For the duration of my time away from the company, I faced many personal challenges. I found temporary happiness in worldly things. In spite of this, the Holy Spirit was constantly there reminding me of the consequences of sin, although I was a hearer only. I missed my RDC family tremendously during this time and always felt I had made the wrong decision. I stayed abreast of God's favor upon the company through social media. I looked at pictures of the ladies ministering in places such as California, Puerto Rico and South Africa and satan tried to get me to submit to jealousy; however, my knowledge of God's Word is far greater so I know that jealousy is not an emotion given by Him.

Ironically, the reason I stepped away was the very reason I needed to return. In August of 2013, I chose to rejoin RDC and walk in my purpose, or shall I say *dance* in my purpose! Before I left, I was considered a more advanced dancer due to the training I had received in my younger years, but I never felt comfortable being placed in the front as an example. I enjoyed being in the back, blending in, but I was never allowed to because I am a shorter dancer and I have dance experience. I took the formal training that I received for granted, so I always carried the weight of how much further along I should be. I constantly minimized my abilities because I did not want other members to feel insecure dancing around me. In my mind, I was

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nowhere near as great of a dancer as people gave me credit for. However, I am made in His image and likeness. He has caused me to be great, so therefore I dance boldly and I acknowledge my abilities given by Him.

Coming back into the company, I have seen the benefits of formal training through the other dancers. Instead of our Technical Trainer always showing us the steps, she can now call out the vocabulary and it can be done. We are challenged every rehearsal with warm ups and across the floor combinations but the benefits are that our ministry is more effective and our bodies are so much healthier.

We are not limited to just one type of choreography. We can now apply different forms of dance so that as we minister through song, His Word will be manifested and received by a single move or throughout the whole piece. Eyes are not drawn to one dancer but to the group as a whole. Yes, it hurts and yes, I messed up, but I know for Whom I dance and I know from Whom I get my strength.

1 Corinthians 12:12 tells us that it takes many members to form one body and so it is with RDC. Within the company I serve as Assistant Technical Trainer to MarQue Smith. This area is essential so that formal training is constantly being taught in the absence of the teacher. I have been assigned the responsibility of studying technical vocabulary and movement, being attentive to Ms. MarQue's instructions so

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that I am able to demonstrate and bring to remembrance things done subconsciously. If you serve in this position, it is critical to remain in your position. You must serve humbly, knowing that you are not always called to lead. Your leadership comes through your obedience to the leader. *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."* Mark 10:45 (NKJV). Being an assistant is a training opportunity as well. You are being molded because you have the leadership qualities that will be manifested in His right timing.

In serving, God's light has begun to shine through me and others have noticed. Through our ministry and life examples, souls are being won because obedience is far better than disobedience. He has placed in us every tool that we need to worship and created us to do just that. Praise dancing cannot be a foreign concept inside or outside of the church. Choosing to do anything else would be foreign.

Some breakthroughs that have occurred from our ministry include deliverance from illnesses such as depression, suicidal thoughts, poverty mentalities, mental and physical bondage, and blessings such as job promotions, career opportunities, and many tangible items. The greatest leap forward for me has been becoming transparent with my sisters in dance and deepening my relationship with my Lord and Savior.

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Since RDC has been called as a national and international dance ministry I have been able to travel, although only one time so far. I was able to go to St. Louis, Missouri for a dance conference with the company. We participated in many fundraisers for this trip and I was able to raise enough cash to purchase my room, registration and airfare and still have spending money. God's favor is definitely on us. If He has an assignment for you, He will truly make it possible for you to carry it out. He simply needs us to be open and obedient. During that trip I enjoyed hearing our Artistic Director teach on relationships. I was able to experience her authority outside of dance and also to take in how effective she is as a leader. The thing I will remember the most was getting to know my sisters in dance better and finding out how silly they truly are. A trip to Crystal's (a hamburger place) was the highlight, since some of us are kind of "food junkies."

In the years to come with Reign Dance Company, I look forward to strengthening my technical abilities, solidifying my teaching talents and grasping the art of worship choreography that will win souls for God through Jesus Christ. I am excited about joining the company for international worship and ministry experiences. We are called further than the city of Las Vegas because His Word has no boundaries. I truly believe that RDC is a model for dance ministries around the world just as Alvin Ailey

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has become for modern dance companies. I am enthusiastic about the opportunities that God is opening up for the individual members of RDC and the company collectively. We have accepted the title of "dance ministers" because of God's calling and anointing. His favor causes us to be called upon by many people to minister God's Word through dance.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

-Jeremiah 29:11-13 (NIV)

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Monica Taylor

Monica Taylor has been a member of Reign Dance Company for 2 ½ years. She currently serves as the Assistant Technical Trainer. She also assists Ms. MarQue with Witness Performing Arts, a children's dance ministry. Monica is an elementary school teacher and mother of one son. She attended Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Visual and Performing Arts where she studied dance for 4 years. She was an auxiliary dancer in her university's marching band and became the group's coach upon graduation. She was a cheerleader for an Arena Football team in Georgia before moving back to Las Vegas. Monica enjoys ministering through dance at her church, The Assembling Worship Center of Las Vegas, NV.



CHAPTER 7

Loving the Skin I'm In

by Carol Jean Simon

My life was broken in 2007 and I did not know what to do. I wanted to dance, but my weight always was in the way. My friend and co-worker at the time, Crystal Daniels, was always inviting me to Reign Dance Company rehearsal. She would say, "It doesn't matter what you look like. Is your heart right?"

One day, while waiting for my teacher to meet me for my piano lesson, my appointment was forgotten. I met this extraordinary woman. She was on the phone encouraging someone. I did not want to seem like I was in her business or eavesdropping. Her name was Rekesha Pittman. We talked about her ideas and visions. I mostly spoke with her about praise dancing and my situation. "Maybe it's not your time. Pray that God moves and softens your Pastor's heart," she said. Those words stuck with me. As I was sitting down in my church, I prayed for myself and I prayed for my Pastor, that God would lead him in His timing. I also prayed for the time when our congregation would be ready for praise dancers in the church.

I finally joined Reign Dance Company on May 7, 2010—two weeks before Reign Dance

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Company's first annual retreat. I did not feel that I should attend, since I had just enrolled. Ms. Rekesha said that she wanted me to come anyway. This retreat was an eye-opener. And the walls began to fall slowly.

There were many moments, two that I can think of that were really significant. The first was that someone believed I could come in and dance into my destiny and minister through training and technique. I was a beautiful person, but now I could minister beautifully. The second was when I was given the assignment to dance outside of my comfort zone. I was asking to join the "House of Blues Gospel Brunch" team with Ms. Patti Pennington. The assignment was not as a liturgical dancer, but as a mime! Me? Really? I prayed that God would give me the strength to step outside the box that I was used to. It was challenging at first, but God showed up and showed out! I let Him intervene, and He did just that!

The House of Blues Gospel Brunch is a wonderful God-led experience. The atmosphere is awesome. We are able to bring Jesus to the Las Vegas Strip and amazing things continue to happen. God brings the right people to spread His Word through song and movement.

I have had to overcome many obstacles including staying financially current with tuition, making garment purchases and other ministry requirements for Reign Dance Company. I was

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the only breadwinner in my household at the time that I joined RDC.

I believe that God opened doors for me and He said, "I can fix you if you only let Me in again." I felt so broken and I carried a lot of spiritual weight. Even though I underwent a life-changing procedure in 2008 with regards to my physical weight, I was still unhappy with my accomplishment. My skin sags and continues to remind me of the weight and heaviness that I still carry with me. Reign Dance Company has shown me how to overlook my flaws and look to God to change my appearance and the feelings of heaviness, imperfections, and the walls I still hide behind. I have learned to allow the barriers to fall away in God's timing. This has helped me to slowly build up my stamina to complete our technical training exercises. They are still challenging, but I continue to work on my own for improvement.

I was asked to be the Historian for Reign Dance Company. A Historian is: *One who writes or compiles a chronological record of events.* I help capture significant moments for Reign Dance Company through still pictures and some video. This is a challenge for me. I am also responsible for getting any pictures after we travel or minister to our leader to make sure to document our journey. I have learned to ask God to be my guide in everything that I do, whether with my family or through Reign Dance Company. Serving as Historian is important to

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the group to preserve memories for current and future members and also helps us to celebrate all of the members who have served with us over the years. I also prepare a picture CD or DVD of our special events.

Our primary travel team currently consists of 7 members, though our company is much larger. Traveling with RDC is a blessing. I have made several trips in the States, but some of our members have traveled to South Africa, Haiti, and Puerto Rico, and the entire company is looking forward to going to the Bahamas together for ministry soon. My experience with the team has been awesome and there have been many lessons learned. I feel the bond with our team growing stronger with each trip. I pray that God shows you the amazing gifts He has placed in others on your dance team or ministry through times of fellowship.

One of my great memories during our travels happened on our trip to San Diego in 2013 for the "In Him We Move" conference hosted by Raymond Young. We each had an assignment to do, and also had to make sure that our team was complete and prepared. Even though there were hundreds of dancers there that leaped, turned and moved, God's presence was demonstrated through us as we were placed in leading areas openly to show the Kingdom of God in us through movement. I was also able to enjoy the testimonies of some of the other ladies from visiting ministries who had the

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opportunity to experience Pastor Rekesha's class.

We were also privileged to go to Dallas, Texas in October of 2013 for the "Gathering of the Eagles International Worship Summit." This was truly a God-sent experience! We were able to see many different nations coming together, worshipping in their native languages and celebrating the dances of various cultures. We worshipped with dancers from Haiti, Austria, Puerto Rico, Spain, Jamaica, and Korea, just to name a few of the nations represented. We then heard the Word from Dr. Jung Hong, who expressed that "Forgiveness is needed to get through your trials," and "Not forgiving will keep you from succeeding in what God has for you." As a believer in Christ, Dr. Hong spoke about how he lost everything because of holding anger and not forgiving. Oh, but when you release the forgiveness, God can bless you above and beyond!

As dancers in Reign Dance Company, our leader has done an awesome job training us to not only minister but to represent the Kingdom well. I am also trying to instill these principles in my dance team. Yes, after about 2 years of being in Reign Dance Company and praying, my Pastor asked me to start up a praise dance team with our church, "Praise N Motion." We are not Reign Dance Company, but we are training!

Being a member of RDC has been very educational, spiritual, loving, and we have a real

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sisterhood. RDC has taught me how to be entrepreneurial and to exceed well beyond what I thought I could accomplish.

I see God taking RDC even higher in worship and allowing us to gather the surrounding communities in the West region to birth additional movement ministries. This would help many ministries realize the need for "training to reign" and to raise the standard in their own ministries. I pray that you ask God for wisdom in all of your needs, and that you embrace your time to reign.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraided not, and it shall be given to him." - James 1:5 (KJV)

Carol Jean Simon

Carol Jean Simon has been a member of Reign Dance Company for 3 1/2 years, and serves as Historian for RDC. Carol Jean has also served as dance leader at Renaissance Church for "Praise N Motion Ministries" since 2012. Her team consists of ages 8-16 years old. She would love to broaden her horizons to an adult dance team, in God's timing. She is currently on the praise team music ministry as well with Renaissance Church in North Las Vegas, NV.



CHAPTER 8

Now Boarding

by **Camille Williams**

While attending a local church conference in 2012, I thought it would be a good idea to attend one of the classes being offered entitled: Praise Dancing. My personal thoughts regarding liturgical dance (prior to me joining Reign Dance Company) were never favorable. I was more connected to the traditional (ushering in of the Holy Spirit) worship experience as it related to musicianship, singing, and preaching of God's Word... not in the over-dramatized theatrics of mimicking a gospel song in dance. I often could not wait until it was over.

Looking back, I can admit that my disposition and observations, though sincere, were harsh and unlearned to a certain degree. In an effort to not remain completely biased and uneducated in my staunch stance regarding the ministry of dance, I decided to sit in on the conference praise dance class. This way, I would be able to further justify my viewpoint or at least become objective. As I sat and listened, to my surprise, I found myself becoming more appreciative and enlightened, not only about praise dancing and its relation to song and choreography, but to an entirely new worship experience.

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I had never considered or viewed praise dance as a serious ministry and was completely unaware of the sheer power it possessed. I have since learned that it is much more than a dance to be partnered with a song and that the same fundamentals are applicable for song selection, garment choices and choreography. My personal overview was beginning to unwind and I began to allow a submissive, unrestrained vantage point toward the ministry of dance.

I realized that God did not restrict Himself to select methods of praise and worship (Romans 12:2). Our bodies are to be a living and holy sacrifice to be presented unto the Lord (Romans 12:1). Also, we were created to worship the Lord our God (Deuteronomy 29:18, 1 Chronicles 16:23-31).

As previously stated, my intentions were to simply observe the class and the presentation, but my efforts proved futile. In my attempt to sneak out of class, the instructor called for everyone to be an active participant in the praise dance to be ministered later that night. Apparently, God was insisting that I participate! That night, I ministered my first praise dance, and it was great! To my amazement, members of my church family and various parishioners from visiting churches not only showered me with praise, but remarked as to how they were blessed by the group. I was more than astonished and speechless! This was my first encounter with praise dance and people were

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truly blessed. Once the conference ended, I kept the idea of praise dancing in the back of my mind.

Shortly thereafter, God impressed upon me through many situations and confirmation to earnestly pursue praise dancing. I searched the internet and found Reign Dance Company. I attended one practice session and soon became a member. I was welcomed graciously with open arms and at my level of dance. I had never done a chaîné or soutenu a day in my life! Questions about technique were never posed to me, nor did I have to audition. When I introduced myself and explained that I was being obedient to God, this was more than enough to be welcomed into Reign Dance Company.

Reign Dance Company has afforded opportunities for me to share and accent myself in ways that expand my knowledge of dance as a ministry. Since becoming a part of RDC, I have experienced praise dancing in venues ranging from local churches and conferences to grand hotels and major events! Each time I have gained an increased understanding not only through personal development, but in expressing and enhancing myself as a praise dancer and being on one accord with my leader and fellow company members.

One of my favorite moments to date was ministering at the LVH Hotel & Casino in February of 2013 for the Facebook Chorale, a local social media mass choir formed in Las

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Vegas. It was truly a "lights, camera, action" moment! Accompanied by live music, RDC was positioned on the stage and in the aisles of the massive theater, dancing and waving flags. We were also featured on a local news network that captured the concert. I not only had a fun time preparing for the event, but watching it materialize. To have praise dancing respected, appreciated and adored in that light was amazing.

There are times when you have to press to stay in a place that God has led you. As I began to regularly attend practices for RDC, it became very apparent that the company was not a typical dance company and that there were certain rules that everyone was ultimately governed by. In order to stay the course, I would have to abide by these expectations as well. I knew RDC was one-of-a-kind when it was quickly evidenced that personal accountability was, and is, the standard. In my individual experience, I have learned that you have to be responsible in your personal and spiritual life, not only as an effective member of RDC, but to be effective in your dancing as well. I can see that as my walk grows stronger in Christ, so does my appetite and appreciation for praise dance.

I always ask the Lord, "Please let my dance be a total reflection of my worship to You." This is what motivates me to stay the course God has laid out for me. There are times when it is

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challenging for me to keep up with the other members because many of them have been with the company at least 3 to 4 years longer than I have. Because God has placed me here for a reason, I dance to the best of my ability. I hold myself to the RDC standard because I strive to not let my lack of technical training impact the company. I simply have to try harder to rise to the current level.

I am also responsible to RDC within my local community. Not only is my commitment to the company reflected in my actions and dedication internally, my personal time spent outside of company rehearsals and events are held to a high standard as well.

RDC strives to operate and maintain excellence and this is why we engage in formal training. Each practice was a challenge and in my early days I honestly felt like giving up. I had to immediately fall into position in the company, executing 8 counts, trying to comprehend ballet terms, properly positioning my arms, being aware of spacing, spotting, understanding stage left and right, proper execution of choreography, etc... To top it off, I needed to add facial expressions with movement! I was also advised by family members to modify my facial expressions, and smile at minimum, because at least it would look like I was actually praise dancing and not projecting the scrambled thoughts inside my head! I have also learned to not take constructive criticism personally.

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Even though RDC has a Technical Trainer, there is only so much personal attention that can be directed toward me and only so much correction I can retain within our allotted practice times. It became evident that I would need to do more to assist myself with growth. Pastor Reksha, our Artistic Director and Ms. MarQue, our Technical Trainer, also advised the company as a whole to take extra classes if we needed them. I took the advice! I found a local dance studio that offered adult ballet classes once per week. I discovered that I was not as bad of a dancer as I thought; I just needed some extra time to develop my skills.

Like many other disciplines, dance becomes better with time, practice and dedication. I was amazed at how taking one extra hour per week has helped me find my key moments of understanding that aid me with proper execution. Now, ballet terminology is not so foreign. I do not feel so overwhelmed and left behind, and my attention, while always focused on the basics, can be directed toward my challenging areas. Most importantly, I can move forward with the company. I now enjoy technical training! I still have a long way to go, and there is always room for improvement, but I am happy and content that I am doing my part to contribute to the company.

In addition to being a Reign Dance Company member, I also serve as our Travel Coordinator. My position is key because it calls for a

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designated person to govern all traveling member's schedules. This includes compiling flight information, ground transportation needs, travel document reminders (i.e. passports), if any guests may be attending, emergency contact information and sleeping room assignments, just to name a few items to consider. Most importantly, the burden is removed from the leader who no longer has to maintain each individual member's travel itinerary and other detailed arrangements. These measures are taken not only to keep each member aware of group travel needs, but is an expression of caring for one another and maintaining everyone's safety. This also allows us to be proactive and not reactive to travel concerns that can simply be addressed with pre-planning.

If you see the need for, or have been elected to serve in the position of Travel Coordinator for your dance company, it might be a good idea to consider the following:

- 1) Make sure your duties are outlined by your leader and that you understand what will be required of you.
- 2) Determine the best and most effective method of communication for your dance company. A private group setting on social media works well for RDC, although you may have to follow up in person or by way of text message

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and email if an immediate response is needed or has not been provided.

3) When traveling, always have a hard copy of all pertinent information like travel schedules and emergency contact information. Do not rely strictly on electronic devices. While cell phones, tablets and laptops are excellent for quick access, wireless and internet services may not be available in certain urban and rural areas, in various countries or to certain service providers. There is also the possibility that your device could malfunction.

4) Stay organized! You may try arranging information according to age, last name or roommates. You should also consider the type of event, the number of dance members attending, the volume of information you may need to oversee, and decide what method works best for you.

5) Lastly, double and triple check all relevant information with company members prior to departure! Unforeseen circumstances and life occurrences are always a possibility.

When I prepare to praise dance at my church home, at an event, or in a corporate setting, I like to engage in moments of prayer and meditation. I also find it very important to know my choreography! In my inexperience, I would

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be too focused on the praise dance before the actual performance. I soon learned the level of my threshold that allowed me to be more confident before ministering. This is not to say that I will not make any mistakes, but I know that I prepared to the best of my ability. I can move forward knowing that I have positioned myself to not be concerned about something that could have been addressed with sufficient preparation and focus. I am instead able to pray for effective ministry for myself and my teammates, lay aside any outside influences and concentrate on the task at hand.

Within RDC, there have been times when we have ministered in the corporate setting and were able to break up fallow ground by first anointing ourselves with oil, and then proceeded to walk into the venue, blessing the room. Even if your company should minister without you, you should show your support in attendance and more importantly, with prayer.

Praise dancing is such a compelling ministry in so many ways. I have seen people encouraged, revitalized and touched by the Spirit. Personally, because I am walking in obedience by dancing for Him, I have begun to see God bless me in and through Reign Dance Company. I have been exposed to stern, but Holy Spirit-filled loving leadership, divine inspiration and constant guidance along my individual dance journey. I continue to not only become a better praise dancer, but I now walk in boldness,

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unlocking gifts, and am soaring to new heights as God leads and allows. I am truly thankful that RDC was founded in prayer, operates in the manner that it does, and has permitted me to be a part of this dynamic company.

Camille Williams

Camille Williams is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada. Prior to being urged and guided by the Holy Spirit to praise dance, she was no stranger to the stage as it related to drama. She has participated in plays such as: *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, and has theater experience in both technical support and onstage productions, relating to local community and church events. She has been ministering with Reign Dance for over a year.



CHAPTER 9

I Am Destined to Dance

by **Destiny Brown**

At the age of three I began learning ballet with Witness Performing Arts, directed by MarQue Smith. I stopped going to class because I was too tired to get up on Saturday mornings. One day, I saw my friends participate in a recital and wanted to go back. My mother explained to me that if I wanted to be in Witness, I had to stick with it. I could not just jump in and out when I felt like it. She gave me a choice and I decided not to return, but I regretted the decision.

When I was six, I danced with my church's youth praise dance ministry. This was my first time dancing in a worship environment. I felt like I was getting closer to God. I returned to Witness at age seven, but it was different. We began using our technical skills in worship movement. This was good for me because I was not just learning technique, but I also was not just learning choreography. I was not able to continue with WPA due to financial issues. This was upsetting because I enjoyed dancing so much.

Our church at the time did not have a dance ministry, so I was only dancing at home or in the audience during praise and worship. I would often go to Reign Dance Company rehearsals with my mom. I could not wait to be old enough

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to join because it looked like everyone was enjoying themselves. Sometimes I would try to get out on the floor and dance, but my mom would give me dirty looks and motion for me to sit down. I would go to the corner sometimes to learn the choreography; I wanted to dance so badly!

One Sunday at dinner in December of 2012, Pastor Rekesha asked my mom how old I was and said that I could join the company. I started on a trial basis at first since I was only nine years old, but when I turned ten on March 5, 2013 it became official! I joined Reign Dance Company because I knew that it would help me to build my dancing skills and I would be able to enjoy myself while worshipping God. I felt so happy that Pastor Rekesha was nice enough to let me join at ten when the minimum age was twelve. At this time, I am the youngest member of Reign Dance Company.

One of my favorite experiences since becoming a member of Reign Dance Company was "Dance Leaders Advance," a national dance conference hosted by Pastor Rekesha in 2013. This was my first time publicly ministering a choreographed piece with the company. I was very nervous, but I was confident because I knew God would show me the way. I enjoyed dancing and worshipping God. One of the classes that stood out was the one Alice Hernandez taught on building a website. I did

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not think that this type of class would be at a dance conference.

Another great memory was our 2013 retreat at Tahiti Village in Las Vegas. We were able to fellowship, eat, paint our nails and go swimming. It was fun and we learned a new dance. I loved learning choreography from Minister Layesha Walton to "Indescribable" by Kierra Sheard.

I have had to get over being lazy and do what I needed to do to continue in Reign Dance Company. This is a challenge for me because I love to sleep. I understand that I have to make sacrifices in order to be a part of the ministry. I also had to work on not getting upset when I do a choreographed or technical move the wrong way. I used to throw fits in the middle of class and go sit down. That did not last long. It was important for me to understand that making mistakes was a part of learning. I had to mature and grow up.

I try to make sure that I look my best when we go out to minister in the community. When someone is speaking or teaching, I try to make sure I am always focused; if I am not, I expect to get reminded to pay attention. Also, I prepare by making sure I am concentrating when I am getting ready to go out to an event. I do this by turning off anything that may distract me from remembering the piece to be ministered. In order to make sure I know my choreography I also watch a video of the dance.

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To make sure that I do all of this consistently, my mom, Crystal Daniels, keeps me organized.

I have learned so much from my mom, including how to avoid getting fussed at, how to talk properly, how to be responsible, how to do what I am told and a lot more. Sometimes I think she is being unfair to me, but I understand that she is doing it to prepare me and to make sure that I am presenting myself properly and in excellence. My mom has done so much for me. She cares for me, loves me, and protects me. I love my mom so much!

I do not feel like a normal kid because I do not have as much freedom as other children my age. Reign Dance Company has a very high standard and I have to uphold it. Even at school, I see other people doing what I know would get me in a lot of trouble so I just stay out of it. There are people getting suspended and beat up and I do not need to be involved in that. I try my best to be an example to other young people my age.

When Reign Dance Company dances, I see the audience and am astonished that I am doing something for myself and others. I enjoy praise dancing because it combines two things I love: dancing and worshipping God. I can also see that people are being ministered to. I am just amazed to know that I am actually doing something in the world. It is good to know that people all over the world are getting blessed by Reign Dance Company.

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I have learned so much from Pastor Rekesha while in RDC. I have learned about many dancers in the Bible: Miriam, David, and Herodias' daughter, to name a few. I have also learned not to sing when I dance, even though I still have difficulty at times. I love Pastor Rekesha as a leader and teacher, and I think of her as family. She is such a beautiful woman of God. I am proud to call her my leader.

I have learned from Pastor Matthew as well. He teaches us to count the beats to the music. I appreciate how he checks in on us and watches out for us during rehearsals. He makes sure that I am doing well in school, keeping me in check and asking what I have been up to.

Ms. MarQue has taught me many things about technique. She helps me by watching me while I am dancing, letting me know when I am doing good and what I need to improve. If I do something wrong, she tells me what it is so that I can fix it. I am so grateful for her training.

Being in Reign Dance Company has taught me how to be a successful young lady. Pastor Rekesha trains us how to use our gifts in an entrepreneurial way. She teaches us how to do fundraisers to raise money for tuition and trips.

I cannot wait to travel to the Bahamas because it will be my first time traveling with Reign Dance Company. Because I am usually in school, I do not get to travel with the team that much. This will also be my first time traveling internationally. How exciting!

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All of my fellow Reign Dancers are very special to me, especially Ciarra Guillory. Ciarra is my best friend in Reign Dance. She is caring and loving, funny, smart, and very pretty. I think it is good for me to have a friend around my age in Reign Dance; I have someone I can relate to.

All of my Reign Dance sisters are always there for me. They look out for me and tell me when I am doing something wrong and help me. At times we do not even get to rehearse; sometimes we just have prayer and worship.

All of my Reign Dance sisters are so beautiful and smart. Each of them uses their own special talents to minister to people in need. I LOVE REIGN DANCE COMPANY!

Destiny Brown

Destiny Brown (age 10) is a Las Vegas native. Her passion for the arts has been evident since a very early age. She enjoys using her gifts of singing and dancing to glorify God. Destiny is currently the youngest member of Reign Dance Company and plans to continue her journey of learning how to present her gifts unto the Lord in excellence.



CHAPTER 10

Dancing by Design

by Kellarice Rayford

From the time I was an infant I enjoyed dancing; pulling up on the rails of my crib to stand up to move to music that my mother was playing on the radio in the house. I always enjoyed attending plays or watching ballet and other forms of dance. I first realized that the arts were an expression of God's Word when I went to a Gospel stage play at West Angeles Church of God in Christ. It was very moving and touched many in the audience. A large crowd of people came up during an altar call at the end of the performance. Many were healed, delivered and set free. John 8:36 (KJV) reads, *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*

2005 was a year of transition for me. I went through a lot of emotional situations including my home being hit by a car, which in turn caused my family to become displaced for a short period of time. I later entered into a dysfunctional relationship, suffered a mental breakdown, was kidnapped and encountered many other circumstances that destroyed my self-esteem. During this time, I was isolated from my family and sunk into a deep depression.

One of my distant cousins reached out to me. We never had a close relationship, but God had

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placed me on her heart and she invited me to her church—Sword of the Spirit Power Ministries in Bellflower, California. I was reluctant to go at first. I eventually went and enjoyed the teachings I received.

On Valentine’s Day of 2006, I was in a state of loneliness. I was stood up by the man I was dating at the time. Grudgingly, I attended Bible study that evening which turned into a deliverance service. Hands were laid on me and the power of God fell upon me. While on the threshing floor, the Lord God spoke to me, telling me that I was His and that He loved me. At that moment I felt His arms wrap around me, hugging me. I then felt Him pour His love into my hardened heart. That evening I received the gift of speaking in tongues. Healing had taken place.

I became active in the church, singing on the Praise Team, producing Gospel plays, and assisting the Pastor with administration. Having a background in graphic design, multimedia and marketing, I designed the church flyers, business cards and banners. I took pictures at church events and made posters. I then realized that my artwork was evangelizing the community as more people came to visit the church.

In April of that year, a small group of women at my church attended an international dance performance where dance ministries from all over the world came to minister. I was amazed to see how different cultures worshipped the

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same Lord through their expressions of various styles of dance and music. This was the first time that I thought about dancing myself as a form of ministry. Before then, I had always thought it was great for me to attend a play, concert or dance conference as just a spectator for enjoyment. I was then inspired to utilize the gifts, talents, training, and experience I acquired from theatre and dancing in the secular arena to now glorify God. The Lord called me to dance for Him.

That same group of women formed a dance ministry at our church. While we were talking about the conference we just attended and how excited we were to start in this new venture, one of the church Elders asked, "Who is going to be the leader?" All of the dancers pointed at me simultaneously. We did not know what was ahead of us.

At the start of the ministry, we did not realize the seriousness of what we were getting into. Over the next few months, we experienced a lot of spiritual warfare as well as spiritual growth. We learned that the purpose of praise was to empower and encourage the saints, lead the people into the presence of God and set the atmosphere. We were held accountable to the congregation as we ministered to them and to ourselves as well. The dancers had to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth, or the dance was just a dance. I also learned that praise and worship through dance is a weapon of warfare.

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I have now been involved in dance ministry for 8 years. I have recently been given an opportunity to teach praise dance to the youth at my church. After just having a baby a few months prior, I felt it was time to further enhance myself physically, spiritually, and mentally. I wanted to press forward and challenge myself as a dancer.

Because of their reputation for excellence, I joined Reign Dance Company in January of 2014 to study technique, technical vocabulary, and to increase my knowledge of praise dance as a ministry. The ladies welcomed me with opened arms. I am excited about being a member of the company. Through the company I hope to overcome my fears and insecurities. I am looking forward to the journey, not just the destination, and transforming through the process. I want God to use me in my full capacity. I also realize that there are some things I need to release.

Being new to Reign Dance, I am just getting to know the other members. It is hard for me to open up and reveal my innermost feelings in this chapter; but I hope that my testimony can be a blessing to someone reading this. I pray that the trials and triumphs I have experienced through praise dance and in other facets of ministry in creative expression, can give you insight about what to expect in the ministry of movement.

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I have been a leader and choreographed several pieces in the dance ministry of my home church and served in mime ministry in Los Angeles. When I moved to Las Vegas, I was not sure of when or how I would get back into dancing. After a year in Las Vegas, I joined Mountaintop Faith Ministries and became a part of the adult praise dance team. I also started teaching the teen dance and drama department.

It has been a blessing to be able to express my love for God through movement and theater. I wanted to take the little training I had a step further by investing in technical training. Being new to Las Vegas, I did not know of anyone who danced or of any dance studios. After speaking to a friend in Texas, she referred me to check out Reign Dance Company.

I visited their website, got the rehearsal information and attended a practice. Having no technical training, I found it difficult to adapt to the choreography, learn new vocabulary, and use muscles I did not know I had. Choreography class is also a challenge when learning new movement. I have chosen to stick with the training, even though it can be humbling and challenging. In class, I have become the student and not the teacher. Learning and memorizing someone else's choreography is more difficult than creating it yourself.

Reign Dancers are great at memorizing the moves quickly and many of the dancers are trained at higher levels of skill. The focus is on

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strengthening your core, precision and form. This is a great dance ministry because our mission is to be excellent for the glory and honor of our Lord.

To prepare for ministering through dance, I consecrate myself by fasting from certain foods and from worldly things like television. I limit myself to worship music, and spend time with God in prayer and Bible reading. I also take a bath instead of showering to immerse myself with water as a form of baptism (to die to self) so that God alone gets the glory through the dance. I believe that this is my season for increase in the areas of knowledge (technical training), wisdom (obedience), excellence (service/ministry) and confidence (knowing that I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me).

I would advise those who are considering starting or joining a dance ministry to first consult God. Prayer is vital to the unity of the dancers in your ministry. You must be on one accord. Keep your guard up (put on the whole armor). The devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Do not let him in through your weakness, be it your emotions (fear, doubt, jealousy, disagreements, etc.). Protect the ministry and remember this is not about you but about Him. We are on the battlefield for our Lord, and dance is a weapon of warfare. As spiritual dancers we have to put on the whole Armor of God.

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"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

-Ephesians 6:10-20 (KJV)

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Be bold in the Lord, pray continually, and dance for Him!

Kellarice Rayford

Kellarice is a Minister of the Gospel and Minister of Creative Arts. She has performed in many showcases as a singer, songwriter, and poet. Kellarice has traveled as a dancer with the mime ministry, Silent Praise of Los Angeles, CA. She also danced with Daughters of Fire at her home church, Sword of the Spirit Power Ministries in Bellflower, CA.



She studied Evangelism at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Los Angeles, CA and obtained her Ministry License in 2010 at Saints of Value Ministerial Training Center in Norwalk, CA. She was Ordained as an Evangelist in October of 2011. Her ultimate goal is to win souls through the Ministry of the Arts. Kellarice and her husband Evangelist Ellery Rayford are founders of Spirit Global Ministries. They currently reside in North Las Vegas, Nevada with their three young children Lauryn Hughes, Jalen and Jeremiah Rayford. They are active members of Mountaintop Faith Ministries. Kellarice is the Coordinator of the Teen Dance Ministry, Anointed Clay, and dances with the adult dance department. Her husband is a music producer and Gospel Rap Artist with Well Fed tha Gospel. Working together, they are evangelizing Las Vegas through the ministry of music and movement.

CHAPTER 11

Turn it Over to Jesus

by **Ciarra L. Guillory**

When I was younger, I watched myself dance in front of the mirror in my room. Now, I watch myself dance in a studio in front of professional mirrors. Since I had a desire to dance, my mom told me that I had a gift from God and that I needed to dance for Him! Although we attended church, we prayed to God asking Him to guide us to a ministry that would be pleasing to Him.

One day, my mom and I began searching for praise dance ministries online. The first site that appeared was Reign Dance Company. She told me that she was going to call Pastor Rekesha to find out additional information about the company and see if it would be possible for us to come and watch the class. At the time, I was only 9 years old, which was too young for Reign Dance Company because the membership age was 12. I prayed that Pastor Rekesha would say that I could become a member and she did! I am now entering my fifth year as a Reign Dancer.

Reign Dance Company is blessed to have MarQue Smith, our Technical Trainer who challenges all members to push beyond their physical circumstances. Pastor Rekesha Pittman and Prophetess Alma K. Banks make sure that all members receive support and are not lacking

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spiritually by helping us with our personal growth.

I love ministering to people in the community and across the nations, and receiving formal dance training. I have learned that I am not dancing for my own benefit. I am ministering to win souls to Christ.

I have been given the opportunity to be a role model for our younger members of the company. I have pushed myself to attend rehearsals no matter what is going on around me. Rehearsals with the company are not just practices. Rehearsal is a time to reconnect ourselves to God by praying and worshipping, blessing others and learning. I have realized that I do not have to be a perfect dancer because Reign Dance Company members are all different in our own way but we operate in unity.

Reign Dance Company has physical benefits with the training we receive. We are learning how to develop strength and endurance in our legs and arms. We also practice our posture. Members are required to operate in excellence, so half-stepping is not allowed. Our Technical Trainer challenges us with new movement during rehearsals. I have learned that it is important to learn basic technique before doing more difficult moves. The technique portion of rehearsal is critical because the moves learned are choreographed into the ministry pieces.

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When ministering, it is important to stay focused and avoid distractions, if not, the mistake becomes everyone's mistake. A hint that I can share with overcoming challenges with arm positioning is to "turn it over to Jesus." Remember, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* - Philippians 4:13 (NKJV).

It is very important to know who you are. I am God's child, so I strive to give God my all and I aim to spread His Word. There is not a specific age limit for serving God, so I serve as a youth leader for the younger members of Reign Dance Company. I am responsible for praying and encouraging the youth, and assisting them with choreography and positions. My role is important because the company believes in all members receiving what they need. Plus, young people are encouraged to keep excelling and not give up because we are conquerors. The advice I would give another young person who would like to help the youth in dance ministry is to stay close to the Lord, pray that your parents are always supportive, attend all rehearsals, be responsible for knowing your part in the choreography, be prepared for all ministry events, practice at home and respect other members.

Before ministering at events, I pray before I put on my garments and the company prays when we gather at the ministry location. After prayer, I am in ministry mode and am focused because God will begin His work. I have seen many lives changed after Reign Dance Company

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has ministered and I dedicated my life to God again when I became a Reign Dancer. I am thankful that Reign Dance Company has a leader who is a Pastor and loves the Lord.

Reign Dance Company does not limit our ministry to the inside of the walls of the studio. Our company travels internationally to share God's goodness and hosts several conferences within the community and supports ministries across the nation. I remember when we traveled to California. Reign Dance Company ministered to many people who were broken in their spirits and they were transformed.

I see Reign Dance Company in the future having many members that are sectioned by age categories—children, teens, adults and seniors. All of the dancers will work on ministry pieces that they will be able to share with the communities around the world.

Ciarra L. Guillory

Ciarra L. Guillory is a saved 13-year-old who loves the Lord. Ciarra lends a helping hand to others and is willing to show them how they can better themselves with remembering choreography in the movement ministry. Ciarra has a desire to continue to spread the Good News about God's Word through worship arts and wants to become a teacher or a police officer.



CHAPTER 12

A Kingdom Pattern

by Alice Hernandez

I grew up in a very conservative Christian household. I thank God for this because I view this as a privilege that not many people have had the opportunity to experience. Due to the conservative nature of my upbringing, I was subject to a very strict discipline that included the way I dressed, spoke and presented myself; this also included a deeply embedded belief that dancing was contrary to God's will. I was under no circumstances allowed to even consider dancing of any kind.

Coming from a musical and theatrical background, I always expressed myself through movement. From the very beginning of my twelve years of playing the cello, I always found myself unable to control the swaying of my whole body as I played pieces; as if it took my whole body to make music, instead of just my fingers and hands. As a vocalist, I also found it nearly impossible to sing a piece without complementary facial and corporal expression. It was as if I needed my entire being to truly capture and believe the words in order for my

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vocal chords and diaphragm to produce the correct melody and lyrics.

I feel that God has been preparing me for a life of ministry. I knew in my heart that God called me for His service, and I knew that He had a vision for my life that I could not comprehend at the moment. Waiting for the vision of God to be revealed is in no way any easier simply because one knows that it is coming.

I remember the exact moment when God called me to dance for Him. In early 2012, a few months before I graduated from college, my mind was troubled about what the future would bring. I was listening to music on YouTube, when one of my favorite songs came on. I usually ignored the videos and just listened to the music, but this time I caught a glimpse of it. It was Delki Rosso dancing to "Revelation Song" with her daughter. My first thought was, "Dancing to this song? Really? How is this even Christian?" I could not stop watching. The dance was more than beautiful—it was anointed, and I could feel from my room that the Spirit of the God that I served was in the woman in that video. I found myself on my knees crying, asking God what this meant. Why I could feel His Spirit stronger through a YouTube video than in many church services I had attended? It is at

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that moment that God called me to dance; but not only to dance, to dance For Him. On that day, I did the craziest thing I had ever done in my life; the thing that Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, and all of the prophets did. I believed that the voice in my head was God. I obeyed it, and that is what made all the difference.

I had never had any kind of formal dance training, cheerleading experience, step team practice, or gymnastics classes. To be honest, I was the furthest thing you could be from a dancer. I really did not like exercise in general or most sports that involved running or movement. Yet here I was, called to dance for God.

He took me around the Las Vegas desert valley for a year and a half. During this time, I faced trials, persecution, denial, desertion, economic deficiency, spiritual anguish, and rejection. I also danced at district youth events, national and district conventions, leadership conferences, and started a local dance group in my church. If I had to go back and revisit these low moments in my life, I would gladly do so. I know that the blessings that God has in store will outnumber the valleys I have gone through.

Although I was learning on the job, guided by the Word of God, I did not have much support. I had to be there for everyone else, but there was

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no one to stand with me. My spirit was thirsty for instruction and training, but most importantly, for guidance and discipline.

This is when God led me to Reign Dance Company. I had never heard of RDC. I did not know anyone from RDC. I did not even know that there was such a thing as a Christian dance company in Las Vegas or that true Christian ballet schools existed at all.

God literally showed me the building where RDC was in a vision. I saw the outside of the building as well as the inside of the dance studio. I remember that it was a Monday when I "accidentally" found the RDC website in an online directory (there are no coincidences in God). When I saw the map, I knew that it was where I had to go. That same day, I rushed out of work and went directly to the studio, walked in and hugged the first person I saw—who happened to be Pastor Rekesha! I knew that I was in a place with people who served my God with all their hearts and that He had sent me there for a reason.

I found a group of sisters in Christ who support each other and are willing and eager to be of service to one another. Keeping your spirit lifted and staying grounded in the Word of God is not as difficult when you have a community of

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worshippers willing to join you in prayer and ready to embrace you in love.

Going from once per week dancing at my local church to dancing three times per week including RDC rehearsals, church services, Bible studies and special events has been a difficult adjustment for me. I no longer have weekdays when I can just go home after work and relax. Gone are the lazy Saturdays where I can wake up late, roll over and go back to sleep. I knew that I had to organize my time and start prioritizing things better. This has helped me balance myself and grow as a young adult.

Beginning ballet as a non-athletic adult was a serious transition. I started using muscles and tendons that I had no idea even existed. I faced the new experience of not being naturally talented at something. Learning ballet technique and keeping up with dancers who have much more experience than I do is still a challenge. I am thankful for the life of Ms. MarQue, who has simultaneously been caring, patient, and rigorous in her technique classes. Having to work very hard on disciplining my body to unlearn lifelong habits and learn new positions and movements made me stronger. I have more energy and can dance more than I did before.

As an asthmatic, breathing after dancing has

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been a real concern. Continuous exercise has actually helped me keep my asthma symptoms under control. Formal training has aided me, not only in my ministry as a dancer, but to also consider my health and make lifestyle choices that will benefit my quality of life in the future.

One of the things that I absolutely love about Reign Dance Company is that you do not stay a stranger for long. Only a couple of months after joining RDC, my knees still shaky and my piroettes wobbly, I was given the opportunity to speak at a national dance conference, "Dance Leaders Advance," hosted by Pastor Rekesha. This was actually my very first dance conference! I did not know that Christian dance conferences existed before this event. It was a real blessing for me to be entrusted with such an honor, knowing that I would be speaking to people who were older, more experienced, highly educated, and knowledgeable. It was only through the grace of God that I was able to follow through and I pray that it will not be the last time.

During DLA, I actually debuted as a manufacturer of dance flags and streamers. I have been sewing for about 10 years now, and love to use my abilities for the honor of God. As a result of the conference, God commanded me to

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"dress His warriors." I am now working with our Keeper of the Wardrobe, Tiffany Stitt, as our in-house seamstress and garment designer. I have had the honor of helping to create Divinely inspired garments for women of God such as Pastor Rekesha.

I am humbled by what God can do when we allow ourselves to be used as tools in His hands. He is the Master Craftsman. I believe that God designs some of us with a gift for creating things for His honor and glory. My advice for someone who has such a gift is to always find a way to use your skills for the advancement of His Kingdom. Do not allow yourself to use your God-given gifts to advance pharaoh's kingdom or the celestial kingdom.

A Kingdom mentality is not something that we are naturally born with. I often wondered why it was so difficult to convince church members to give and was not surprised when I found that many of the dancers in my local church were also reluctant to sow into their own ministry. Fundraising and economics can be uncomfortable topics in church settings, but they are an important part of any ministry. Rearing dance ministers who take ownership of the Kingdom mentality is essential for a thriving dance ministry. Our members must fully

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understand that investing in the Kingdom of Heaven has a greater return on investment than any stock or bond one can purchase.

Many of us have heard of the concept of "God first, family second, work third." As ministers of God, it is important that we examine ourselves to make sure that our priorities are not "Me first, work second, family third, friends fourth, and God fifth (if at all)." Daily prayer, consecration, biblically-based studies, fellowship and unity are imperative for ministry. Praying before ministering can be the difference between ministering to the hearts of the congregation and performing a pretty dance routine.

Becoming a dance minister has changed my life. I went from being a shy, timid person—who as a child was too afraid to raise her hand in class to answer a question—to developing into a strong woman in God. I no longer fear the harsh critiques of others who may not share in the Kingdom mentality. I am not afraid of standing before people to speak, dance, or minister in whatever way the Lord deems fit. It fills my heart with joy to know that God can use my life to touch the lives of other people and to inspire them in the same way that I have been. Walking by faith is no longer something that I just read about, it is part of my daily life as a dance

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minister. The way you see the world and society changes when you know that you have been trained to reign with Kingdom principles on earth.

I look forward to traveling this year with RDC as a new member. Since travel expenses and budgeting must be considered, I have been trying to prepare myself ahead of time for ministry-related travel. The Lord has prompted me to be prepared at all times for an opportunity to minister. This reminds me of the parable of the 10 virgins who waited for the bridegroom. The 5 virgins who were prepared with ample oil were able to go with the bridegroom, and the 5 who were not were left behind. I have resolved to not be the dancer who is unable to travel and is left behind due to poor planning and unpreparedness. I want to be like the 300 men chosen by God to fight with Gideon because of their readiness to do what had to be done.

I cannot say for sure what God has in store for my future in the ministry, all I know is that He has managed to keep on surprising me and has blessed me with more than I could have imagined. I know that God's plans for us are greater than anything that we can plan for ourselves. If you let Him lead you, He will take

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you to where you can flourish.

Alice Hernandez

Alice Hernandez is one of the newest members of Reign Dance Company. She serves as the in-house Seamstress and garment designer working with Miss Tiffany. Prior to joining RDC, she founded a dance ministry at her local church, mostly comprised of youth and children. Alice hopes to help train them to worship God in Spirit and in truth.



CHAPTER 13

Stretching by Faith

by **Geniene Harrison**

I really did not know too much about praise dance when I came to Las Vegas. One day I went to a concert being held at the church I attended at the time. A guest dance ministry ministered to "God Is Here" by Karen Clark Sheard and I instantly felt a connection. I could not identify what I was feeling, but the song really touched my heart in a special way. Later on that week, my church's praise dance team ministered. I did not even know we had a dance team! I knew that it was time for me to learn more about this type of ministry. I joined the team, hoping to learn how to worship God through movement. Unfortunately, after a short period of time the team was no longer in operation.

My friend Alma told me about a dance company she knew about. She said, "Mrs. Rekeshia teaches praise dance. She teaches how to worship through movement. Do you want to go with me?" In February 2010, we went to a rehearsal and engaged in the technique portion of the class. I felt intimidated because some of the members looked as if they had been dancing since they were little. I thought, "Maybe this is not for me..." It reminded me of the time

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I took a dance class in West Virginia. The feeling was all-too-familiar.

As a guest, I sat on the side to watch the choreography portion of rehearsal. I witnessed the company rehearsing “Washed Away” by Kirk Franklin, dancing with red buckets. Another familiar feeling surfaced... I was in a dance studio—not a church! The ladies were in sweats—not beautiful garments. I felt what I can now identify as the anointing. I knew God was real, but experiencing His presence in this type of environment was new to me. I have been a member of Reign Dance Company ever since.

During my time as a Reign Dancer, I have felt so honored to be in God's presence during rehearsals. I feel peace when I gather with my sisters. We are able to minister to each other during practice times. Even when we are asked to break into groups for the purpose of perfecting our choreography, we end up seeing true ministry go forth.

Sometimes when rehearsal has ended, I do not want to leave. I feel like I am wrapped in His arms. The feeling is overwhelming. Words cannot describe how good He is to me. I feel as if I do not deserve it because of mistakes that I have made. He still makes me feel like a daughter. He still makes me feel like the apple of His eye. He still has His hand on my life.

As Reign Dancers, we understand the importance of ministering at all times. I remember a time when one of the members had just had

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surgery and we all came together to pray for her. Her body was weak and somewhat paralyzed. We stayed by her side until we saw a breakthrough and God's healing manifested.

Reign Dance Company has taught me how to persevere. At times I get frustrated because I am not always able to retain certain sections of our technical training or choreography. I have even felt like giving up, but I know I must keep trying because in my mind that would be equivalent to giving up on God. I believe He led me to Reign Dance Company and there are still things He is trying to pull out of me through this ministry.

One of the benefits of technical training is learning how to control my body. My posture has improved because I implement what is being taught in class. Pulling up and keeping my head level when walking has become second nature for me.

I also learned the importance of stretching and exercising at home; not waiting until we meet to practice turns and arm and feet positioning. This is still a challenge for me. Sometimes I have good intentions, but it is difficult to stay consistent because of discouragement. I know that I cannot allow my challenges to get the best of me.

Consistency is the key for developing good practice habits. In order to practice effectively, I have had to learn how to open up to our Technical Trainer and the other members to get

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a better understanding of what I need to work on. I cannot give up on myself, because the team is depending on me to do my part.

Rehearsals are an important part of preparing for ministry. It is crucial to be familiar with both the music and the movement. In preparation for ministry, I listen to the music and read the Scriptures that line up with that song. This is especially important to me when I minister a solo. I want to make sure my movement appropriately flows with the message that the song is relaying.

We once traveled as a group to Chino Hills at the California Institution for Women. It was amazing and overwhelming to fellowship with inmates. It warmed my heart to see how appreciative they were to our Artistic Director, Rekesha Pittman, for receiving her book, *"Company Keepers: Dance Ministry Daily."* Rekesha blessed them with the book to help them become more effective in dance ministry. We ministered to them, but they ministered to us as well. I was surprised at how well they ministered to us through dance. It was an experience I will never forget.

At times we were required to pass quizzes regarding praise dance. I did not think I would do as well as I did (I am not a good test-taker), but Pastor Rekesha broke things down so well that I was able to get a good understanding of the concepts. By taking tests on *"Company Keepers: Dance Ministry Daily,"* my eyes were

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opened to how much I did not know about the ministry of dance. I learned about the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ministry garments, how to wear proper undergarments, relevant song selection, and the importance of supporting other dance ministries. Even if something was unclear to me, I knew I could ask my leaders to get a better understanding of that subject.

Recently, RDC started a program where we are assigned partners for a specified amount of time in order to get to know each other better. I love this! It strengthens our ability to grow personally and spiritually. Our collective ministry will also be stronger because we will be better able to work together in love.

Reign Dance Company will have an even greater impact on our city. I believe more people will get healed, saved and delivered through our ministry. I know without a doubt that we will be able to reach out to more people in need. We will continue to bridge the gap, bringing the arts together in unity. Greater worldwide ministry is coming in our future.

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Geniene Harrison

Geniene Harrison was born in Los Angeles, California and has been a Las Vegas resident since 2007. She participated in drill team as a youth and took a dance class during her time in West Virginia. It was not until she joined Reign Dance Company that she realized she could use her natural talents for the glory of God. Geniene has various interests, such as reading, cooking and taking pictures, but ultimately loves to worship God through dance.



CHAPTER 14

A Coordinated Effort

by Crystal Myles

Creative arts has always been of interest to me. It is a way to outwardly express an internal feeling. Throughout my childhood, I remember participating in the arts while in school. This included drill team, cheerleading, dance team, varsity choir and creative writing. Growing up in a Christian home also meant that I had to participate in the arts at church as well including choir, praise team and praise dancing. Once I became a teenager, it became clear that dance was not accepted because many claimed that it brought attention to the body. I did not dance for a long time, but when I did it was usually at special events and was self-taught.

I always felt that there was another way for me to praise and worship God outside of what was normal as and that it should be done in excellence. A family member gave me a flyer for open enrollment with Reign Dance Company five years ago and I joined. God has been exceeding my expectations of dance and of Him ever since.

One word that describes what I have experienced with Reign Dance is favor. Favor is not only being blessed but having the ability to bless others. Reign Dance Company has had many opportunities to have an audience with individuals of influence. Proverbs 18:16 tells us

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that our gift will make room and bring us before great men. I believe that because we have been gifted with pure worship and the ability to do ministry in excellence, God has positioned us to minister before Pastors and Bishops from other countries. We have also worked with artists in the music industry and are frequently special guests on programs throughout the nation.

The community dance classes we offer have been our opportunity to impact our city by sharing what we have learned over the years. Individuals from all ages and races come to receive materials, training and choreography. They are able to take this with them as inspiration to let God lead them in moving beyond the familiar.

I have also had my seasons of testing in the movement ministry. During the summer of 2010, I tore the ligaments in my knee while dancing at an outreach event for the church I was attending at the time. The injury required outpatient surgery and the doctors told me that I was not going to be able to dance for at least a year. When you are dedicated to something and it is suddenly taken from you, it can leave you feeling hopeless.

I struggled with depression after my surgery because being a dancer was the only identity that I felt I had. It was also difficult being unable to complete simple tasks without having to rely on someone else, especially because I am such an independent person. Throughout the 6-month process of surgery and rehab, I

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constantly wondered what else I had to offer to God if I was unable to dance. He revealed to me that He had me in a season of wilderness to focus strictly on Him and not on the tasks and programs that started to distract me from Him. He also showed me that dance was the vehicle and not my destination. It was not just about beautiful choreography.

Dance was going to take me to places that my words or personality could not and once I got there, I had a mandate to declare His Word through teaching and prophecy. Throughout this time, I still attended Reign Dance rehearsals and events. It was important to still support my team as well as receive the encouragement that I needed. Once I started to focus again on the purpose behind my dance, God quickly healed my knee and I was choreographing and dancing in the Christmas program at my local ministry!

I have also had to deal with being self-conscious about my weight and abilities. I remember struggling with my weight throughout my childhood, but that did not prevent me from being active in the arts. As a movement minister, I was also aware that my body could be a focal point or a distraction, so I did my best to stay covered and to dance as gracefully as possible. I can recall numerous occasions when people would say to me, "You dance so gracefully for a big girl." Yes, I had to use my body to convey the message, but were the people

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receiving what God had given me or were they overly-concerned with my extra padding?

I stopped dancing for a while because I no longer wanted my physical struggle to be on display. Once I joined Reign Dance Company, those feelings resurfaced as I began comparing myself to my teammates. Everyone was either smaller than me or had more training and experience. My bubbly personality made it appear that I had no issues with the attention that I was receiving from dancing out front, yet on the inside I was dancing in fear. There were times when I would not push myself to be excellent because I felt I could never be as good as the others dancing next to me. I would also push myself beyond my limits because I felt that I had to be just as great as my teammates, being the "big girl" and all.

Movement ministers frequently dance with weight—both natural and spiritual. Hebrews 12:1 tells us to lay aside every weight so that we may run the race set before us. Sin, illness, fear, depression, condemnation, physical aches, pain, laziness, lack of discipline or poor eating choices—Lay them aside! God had to teach me to be confident in who He created me to be because He did not make any mistakes and not everyone has the same abilities. I have learned that there are people that I can personally minister to because they can relate to what I am overcoming through my relationship with Him.

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There have been various benefits to the training that I have received with Reign Dance. I am able to understand dance vocabulary and can interact with dancers who have experience in the secular world of dance. When attending conferences and workshops, sometimes it is a fast-paced environment. We typically learn multiple dance pieces from instructors who are teaching several classes because of their knowledge of the craft. We are often combined with other dancers who may not have any experience. This can be frustrating because instead of advancing, the instructor has to spend time explaining the basics in detail.

Having a foundation means that we can spend more time building. MarQue Smith, our Technical Trainer, is amazing at teaching the fundamentals of dance in terms that we can understand and challenges us weekly with new concepts. Another benefit of formal training is physical strength and conditioning. Proper training prevents injuries and builds the correct posture so when advanced choreography is presented, it can be easily retained. One more bonus of formal training is knowing how to conduct ourselves. The Word says that man looks at the outward appearance. A well-kept exterior, proper etiquette, humble disposition and intellect can determine if someone will treat us favorably.

I have served Reign Dance in the areas of Membership Services, Event Coordinator and as

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a member of the travel team. Membership Services responds to the personal needs of our members including birthday celebrations and bereavement. This branch of the company guarantees that each member stays connected by the heartstrings. Some organizations can get so big until some of the members feel lost in the numbers. Reminding your members that they are seen, supported and valuable will serve to benefit the overall vision.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 speaks of there being many members of one body. Naturally, we know that every part of the body is essential in ensuring that it functions properly. Members who feel valued are more than likely to take ownership in the vision.

As Event Coordinator, I get to organize social activities that foster sisterhood between our members. Game nights, movie nights, potlucks and holiday parties are just some of the gatherings we plan in order to stay connected. Reign Dance Company has also attended professional musical productions and shows together. When we attended the staged production of "The Lion King" together, not only did we have a chance to bond, we were also creatively inspired in our own choreography.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 reminds us to know those who we labor with. When you know someone, you acknowledge them, give affection when needed, know their strengths and weakness and appreciate their individual gifts and

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talents. We are women and young ladies of different backgrounds and denominations, yet we are able to work together to advance the Kingdom of God.

I also assist with organizing and serving at events that Reign Dance Company either hosts or is connected to. Concerts, workshops and conferences all have a team that is dedicated to making sure that the event runs as smoothly as possible. We serve as decorators, cleaning crews, menu creators, food servers, ushers, runners, and whatever else is required. We also aim to provide VIP services for guests, prepare gift bags for participants and staff information booths as needed.

Hosting an event in excellence guarantees that those participating will get everything out of it that God intends. Both membership services and event coordination require a servant's heart. You must have the ability to anticipate the needs of the people and be humble enough to serve even if your name never gets called.

I have had some unforgettable experiences in my travels with Reign Dance throughout the years. The most recent was The Gathering of the Eagles International Worship Summit in 2013 hosted by Apostle Chris and Apostle Dr. Pamela Hardy. This was unlike any conference I had ever attended.

Collectively, dancers, painters, singers, musicians, leaders, business entrepreneurs and five-fold ministers came from all over the globe

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to impart into each other and worship without limits. The United States, Korea, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Brazil and several other nations came together both in English and in their own respective languages to worship through Word and dance. It was mind-blowing to see hundreds of people give love, receive deliverance, gain hope and seek for God to manifest His power in their individual countries. I felt like I had seen Philippians 2:10-11 in the flesh: *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

I also travel with Reign Dance as a member of the travel team. This team supports our Artistic Director, Pastor Rekesha Pittman, as she travels both nationally and internationally teaching various classes on movement, entrepreneurship, and preaching the Word of God. There are also times when the entire company cannot make it to all of the events, so the travel team is sent as a representation on behalf of the entire company. It is important to remember that if you are placed in the position to be Aaron (helper) to Moses (leader), you must equip yourself so that you are an asset and not a liability.

Whether serving in your local ministry or on a team that travels, you must continue to be a watchman at all times. Pray, be humble, and

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read the Word to serve and operate in the Spirit constantly. The Word tells us to go into the world, preaching and teaching so that the body may be edified.

Being a part of a traveling ministry has provided me with opportunities to be an instrument that God uses to bring deliverance and restoration. I feel honored and in awe of God every time He uses me to bless someone through dance, prayer or prophecy. It is evidence that He cares for the individual behind the dance.

I have participated in conferences and workshops across the nation for educational advancement as well. Learning the physical components of dance through stretching, mime, hip-hop, and master choreography classes provokes me to worship through dance at another level and to not become stagnant. Sometimes, ministers of movement do not embrace the importance of technical training. An athlete trains his body to perform at its peak and we should desire to give God excellence as well. We know that in the end, all the glory belongs to Him.

The goal after the music ends is to have someone ask, "What must I do to serve a great God like yours?" What I have realized after many years in the movement ministry is that my peers respect my standard for excellence. It is not seen as a competition, but is instead an agreement as partners working together to promote the expansion of God's Kingdom.

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Crystal Myles

Crystal Myles has been with Reign Dance Company for five years and currently serves as Events Coordinator. She has taught workshops, movement classes and has been director over numerous dance ministries (including children).



CHAPTER 15

On Bended Knee

by **Linda Ficklin**

I joined Reign Dance Company in 2012 after I saw them minister a couple of times. The first time I saw Reign Dance minister was at a conference where they did a pageantry piece. I was very pleased to see teens and women of different ages and sizes in the dance ministry. I was also amazed by their ministry and the anointing of GOD on them. I was so impressed, that I asked Pastor Rekesha for her card. I called her and she told me that they were not having enrollment at that time, but that I could come by the studio on Monday evening to check things out. She also mentioned that she could use some help if I was available. I felt that I was too busy after working all day to give up my Monday evenings.

I saw Reign Dance Company again at an event sponsored by my church. This time, they did a spontaneous free flow dance piece and I experienced the anointing once more. I called Pastor Rekesha a second time and she told me to come by the studio on the following Monday to join. At first, I felt a little intimidated because everyone else in the class seemed to know what they were doing, and here I was trying to figure it out! Thanks to Pastor Rekesha and our Technical Trainer, MarQue, I was encouraged to

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hang in there as they guided me through the basics.

I have witnessed how the company as a whole is advancing to push forward as a dance ministry that is led by the Holy Spirit. I like that we always begin and end our rehearsals with prayer. Sometimes we never get to the choreography because the Holy Spirit just wants to take time to minister to us. Reign Dance Company comes together as a family to support one another as we advance both naturally and spiritually. We do not just receive training through dance, we also are taught the Word of God as we learn who danced in the Bible (and why), and we are taught the importance of why we dance.

I have had to wrestle with my self-confidence, but this issue has been easier to overcome by having women in Reign Dance Company that will pray for me, support me and tell me the truth. John 8:32 (NIV) says *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* I was diagnosed with osteoarthritis in both of my knees, and at times I have increased knee pain and limited range of motion. Through the support of my Reign Dance family and their prayers, I am able to push beyond the pain.

Formal training provides structure as you are taught proper technique and dance terminology. I learned that a turn does not just consist of whirling around in a circle, but has precise moves. Technique also helps us to recover

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quickly from our mistakes and teaches us to get it right from the start. I remember a time when Reign Dance Company was ministering and the music stopped in the middle of the song. RDC kept it together and continued ministering in movement. When the song resumed, we were able to pick right up and continue.

In Reign Dance Company I serve in the area of hospitality. Why does a dance company need a hospitality team? Matthew 23:11 (NIV) reminds us that, *"The greatest among you shall be your servant."* I keep track of birthdays so that we can make each member feel appreciated as we celebrate them on their special day. I am responsible for bringing cake to celebrate the birthdays for that particular month. I also assist when team members in the company have a death in the family and coordinate whatever the needs may be for that member.

When traveling with the company, I make sure that Pastor Rekesha has water and towels. Additionally, I help with decorating for Reign Dance Company when we have events or special occasions. As part of hospitality, I serve in whatever area is needed—whether it is praying for other company members or just listening. I would advise someone who serves in this capacity to use the gifts and talents that God gave you to bless someone else. You should also embrace the vision of the leader you are serving under so you can help to bring the vision forth.

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I prepare for ministry by praying and sometimes fasting. I also practice the choreography several times and review videos of the pieces often. I listen to the music repetitively, so that I know the music thoroughly. I am not ashamed to ask for assistance from our team coaches for steps that I may need help remembering.

I have had people tell that when they see Reign Dance Company minister, the anointing is so powerful it makes them view praise dance in a different light. I have heard others say that the dance was ministering directly to them. I remember when Reign Dance Company ministered at a women's conference and the speaker had them come back up at the end of the conference to minister the same piece again. As they were ministering, people received deliverance and spiritual breakthroughs! This was life-changing for me because I had not seen a dance ministry do this before. It made me realize that dance ministry is important and encouraged me to learn more about true worship through movement.

I have traveled with Reign Dance Company once so far to the Dominion Dance Conference in Whittier, California, hosted by Sherry Traylor. As we were leaving a workshop, a lady walked up and started talking to Tiffany, one of our members. Tiffany told us to wait where we were. Tiffany then asked the young lady if she could give her a hug that hug turned into prayer. As we prayed fervently for this young

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lady, she ran and shouted, "I am free!" I praise God for the training received in Reign Dance Company. We must always be prepared to serve.

I have learned that a minister of dance should always carry themselves in a respectful manner at all times. We may never know who is watching and if we conduct ourselves in a manner that is inappropriate, we could destroy the impact that we could have had. I learned other key things, like being sure to wear proper garments at all times while dancing. We wear several layers and are never exposed when it comes to our wardrobe. I have had people say to me, "I could not wear all that to dance and that's really not necessary." I tell them, "Yes, it is if you are ministering." If a skirt is thin and people can see undergarments or black leggings under a white skirt, it could be distracting and they may miss the message altogether. We have always made it a habit to remain dressed in our worship attire even after dancing because we must be ready when the Holy Spirit invites us to minister in dance to bring healing or deliverance. I believe Reign Dance Company sets a good example for other dance ministries throughout Las Vegas and internationally.

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Linda Ficklin

Linda Ficklin was born in Suffolk, New England. She accepted Jesus into her heart at the age of 9, but did not develop a personal relationship until 27. Linda became interested in the worship arts as an adult and attributes most of her knowledge concerning worship dance to being a member of Reign Dance Company. Linda is a wife and mother of three and loves arts and crafts. She uses her special gift for creating personalized favors and planning parties.



CHAPTER 16

Make it Count

by **Sha'Londa Greene**

Reign Dance Company has been a blessing to many across the nations. Reign Dance Company members are not just "praise dancers," they are "Spirit-led worshippers" who love God. Pastor Rekesha Pittman often tells the story of how Reign Dance Company was birthed through prayer. There are many praise dancers across the globe, but all do not receive the type of training that Reign Dance Company is blessed to have. Reign Dance Company does not just focus on choreography alone, but holds each member accountable to ensure that the spiritual man is in line with the vision and mission of the company, as well as God's plan for their personal lives.

Reign Dance Company has traveled across the nations to minister before God's people. I had the opportunity to travel to the California Institution for Women in Chino, CA with the company to share the goodness of God with the inmates. This assignment was encouraging because many of the women had life sentences but were full of joy and were allowed to worship God freely through worship arts.

Reign Dance Company has participated in many national dance conferences including "Dance Ministry Detox," "Worship, Inc," "Dance

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Leaders Advance" and dance productions such as "A Night in Shining Armor" and "The Son and the Reign." Praise dancers, leaders and ministries from across the world have been able to fellowship with us through these gatherings and events. Reign Dance Company also offers community classes once per month that encourage other dance ministries to learn a complete choreography piece that can be shared with their local church or organization. Reign Dance Company is about our Father's business. *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* - Matthew 22:14 (KJV)

I am not a dancer with Reign Dance Company; however, I am an active supporter. My daughter Ciarra has been a member of Reign Dance Company for four years and it is refreshing that she is involved with a praise dance ministry that cares for her soul. She does not merely attend rehearsals, but is fed the Word in many ways. The company prays before and after rehearsals, holds its members accountable, and is a training ground that encourages its members to raise the standard in their daily lives.

Reign Dance Company encourages the families of its members to become an active part of the company. There is so much to do within the company that one person cannot be responsible for everything. There are several key leadership positions needed to keep the company running efficiently and there are members within the

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company that have the gifts to handle these assignments.

I serve as the Financial Officer of Reign Dance Company. I am not only responsible for maintaining precise records of the organization, but I am responsible for reviewing financial risks that may be associated with maintaining the company. Reign Dance Company's first investor was its Director, Pastor Rekesha Pittman. Pastor Rekesha has contributed thousands of dollars toward supporting our operational expenses. Many do not take into account that even though you may dance the angels down from Heaven, behind the scenes, there is a price that must be paid in order to keep the doors of the company open. Let us take a look at some operational costs that those who dream of running a dance company may not readily consider:

Studio Rental

Reign Dance Company currently rehearses at a local dance studio in the Las Vegas area. A dance studio was selected for the company versus a church location because the dance studio is a professional environment that provides cushioned dance floors with non-slip surfaces and mirrors needed for dancers. Renting a studio space for rehearsals costs money, so it is suggested that leaders of praise dance ministries encourage members and supporters to invest in the ministry.

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Communication

There are many communication avenues needed to help Reign Dance Company, such as promotional costs (flyers, website, graphic design) and telephone communication. One must budget the actual expenses associated with maintaining each area and promote effective communication across the board. This includes submitting reports on a regular basis.

Events

When planning an event, it must be led by the Spirit and planned strategically. Reign Dance Company carefully plans each event months prior to the actual event date. Everyone in the company has a responsibility to assist with planning and running our events and actively completes an assignment during the gathering. An example of an event that we assisted with in 2013 was "Dance Leaders Advance," which was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This conference included powerful worship arts leaders who led the conference sessions and praise dancers from across the world who were eager to receive a refreshing download from God.

To host a conference of such intensity, money was needed to help pay for venue rental, airline tickets for speakers, ground transportation, equipment, advertisement and hospitality expenses. How was an event of such magnitude funded? Reign Dance Company received favor from God that allowed supporters to sow a seed

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into the work and we planned fundraising events which left the conference debt-free! When supporters see the fruit of those who labor, they are more willing to support the work that God has ordained.

Tuition and Fees

Those in praise dance ministry often have the mentality of thinking that it is not necessary to financially support the ministry, but are eager to support the local cheerleading or sports team. This mentality often hinders the progress of ministering with excellence. If you do not invest in the ministry, how can the ministry continue to operate? Reign Dance Company charges tuition that helps to offset our operational costs. According to my records, the monthly amount collected from members does not cover all of the monthly expenses. To offset any additional costs, we host fundraisers. Our tuition remains affordable because we serve a demographic that is of limited income.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are held for obvious reasons: to help raise monies for a particular purpose. Reign Dance Company has hosted several Community Class fundraisers which allows praise dancers in the community to come in and learn a ministry piece that can be used at their local churches. One fundraiser I remember in particular was the Urban Contemporary Praise Dance fundraiser

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which was held in August of 2013. This attracted many youth in the worship arts community. The children and teens were blessed to see that they can celebrate and have fun in the Lord and dance in a respectful manner.

Since Reign Dance Company impacts the world on an international level, travel is required. Those who travel in the ministry are aware that it takes money to pay for registration fees, airfare, car rentals and hotel accommodations. Therefore, it is recommended that fundraising is continued on an ongoing basis to help raise the monies needed in advance.

There are strategic ways to raise money, but it is advisable to choose a fundraiser that would be most beneficial. Various fundraisers include sponsorship campaigns, garage sales, tutoring sessions, babysitting services, house cleaning or spa days. These examples are not limited to services offered to the members of the company but can also be extended to those outside of the company. Prior to scheduling a fundraiser, prayer is needed to ensure that the appropriate supporters will rally around the cause.

As the Finance Officer and a supporter of Reign Dance Company, it is imperative that I am in alignment with the vision and mission of the company. Even though I am not a dancer, I am still a representative of Reign Dance Company. The standards that are required of members are also standards required of me. I am also an example to other parents in the community who

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have children who are involved in the ministry. Proverbs 22:6 (KJV) reminds us that we are to *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* Parents with children in the ministry are encouraged to be an active part of the ministries in which their children are involved. The more connected you are as a parent with your child's ministry, the more encouraged your child will be about serving God.

Sha'Londa Greene

Sha'Londa Greene became a supporter of Reign Dance Company when her daughter, Ciarra Guillory became a member. She stands behind the importance of praying, fasting and supporting Reign Dance Company as they stand on God's Word and share the good news of how marvelous our God is by ministering and impacting the nations through Spirit-led praise dance ministry.



Sha'Londa currently serves as Director of Finance with Reign Dance Company. She ensures that Reign Dance Company's accounts are accurately managed by overseeing the budget and providing oversight of expenditures. Sha'Londa is humbled and feels blessed to be a part of Reign Dance Company and will continue to provide support in any area needed within the company.

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A Heart for the Nations



CHAPTER 17

Dance to the Music

by **Matthew A. Pittman**

I have been connected to Reign Dance Company since its inception. I have watched this company grow from its infancy into something that has exceeded far beyond my expectations. When I think of RDC, words like "anointed," "Spirit-filled," and "excellent" come to mind. RDC possess a gift to shift the atmosphere in the most challenging of spiritual situations. If you have never had the opportunity to have them minister to you, I pray that you will one day.

I have been brought to tears many times by the sheer awesomeness of their ministry. Every time I enter into one of their rehearsals, I immediately feel the Spirit of God flowing through the room. This is truly a dance company unlike any other.

I serve in many capacities with RDC. First and foremost, being a loving husband and supporter of my wife Pastor Rekesha Pittman—Founder and Artistic Director. This woman of God is absolutely amazing. I am not just saying this because she is my wife, but she is excellent at everything she puts her hands to. She gives her all to this company and I have witnessed the blessings in her life because of it. I never get tired of listening to my wife talk about how wonderful a rehearsal was, or about how the

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Lord showed up, or how a piece is coming together. RDC is truly something special to behold and I am proud to be a part of it.

I have had the privilege to travel with RDC on several occasions. Sometimes as a driver, security guard, musician or any other area where there is a need. Let me be the first to tell you, it is not always easy but it is rewarding. Having to pack bags filled to capacity with dance garments is quite a chore. There have even been occasions where I have ironed a garment or two (for my wife)!

One thing you will learn by being a part of this company is support. Support is defined as *bearing all or part of the weight of* or *to hold up*. Support in any ministry is vital to its success. Without proper support, any structure will eventually fail. Being a supporter of any kind is not a job to be taken lightly. You must be ready to serve at any time, at your full capacity.

I have been also a financial supporter of RDC since the beginning and the blessings in return have been wonderful. I have donated my time on several occasions and would gladly do it again. I am a part of an organization in which everybody is always there for each other (and that is rare these days). I gladly enjoy serving alongside my wife and the members of RDC

I can remember the first production that RDC hosted, "A Night in Shining Armor." Wow! What a Spirit-saturated evening that was! Witnessing a packed house in Las Vegas coming to see

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ministry in movement was a real sight to behold. To see the impact on people's lives that night was very inspiring. I have been involved in many productions over the years in a musical capacity, but to be involved in a dance production was a different challenge altogether. I had the opportunity to experience for myself a full-fledged dance production come together from start to finish. I was amazed at the level that everyone achieved. I can only imagine how their next production will turn out!

As I am not a "movement minister," I do not encounter all of the challenges that the members of the company face, but I do have challenges of my own. I grew up with one sister and two brothers; so now, having a plethora of sisters is at times daunting but well worth it. They have become a real family to me that I would not trade for anything. I love RDC!

Musicians are equipped to work with dancers. They go hand in hand, one supporting the other. One challenge that I had being a musician was that I was sometimes confused when I heard "5-6-7-8" as a count off into a phrase. I am used to saying and thinking "1-2-3-4." I had to adapt my way of thinking to coincide with being a part of the company. If you want to be involved in anything, be prepared to be flexible.

I have had to familiarize myself with the basic movements and positions that each member is required to know. Since I do the musical edits for the company, I need to have an

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understanding of their terminology. If I want them to respect what I do, I also have to respect what they do. I know what a "grand plié," a "pas de bourree," and a slew of other dance-related things mean. Now, ask me to demonstrate them and that will be a whole different thing entirely!

RDC is very unique in comparison to other organizations. The amount of talent and potential that is within is almost immeasurable. You would never know that some of them did not have any prior dance training, but to see them minister tells another story.

It has been an enjoyable experience over the years with RDC. Yes, there have been some rough patches along the way, but they have always been outweighed by the good. I have seen people come and go. I have had to comfort my wife through some very difficult times. I have witnessed tears of joy and sadness, but the anointing has remained throughout.

This is not easy. RDC is not an organization that you can just breeze through and expect to excel without working hard. If you are planning on being a part of something like RDC, prepare yourself to be challenged in your life.

The members of RDC are truly dedicated to being in the company. I know that the future holds miraculous things for RDC and I look forward to sharing in the joy that it will bring. I love my Reign Dance family!

DANCE TO THE MUSIC

Matthew A. Pittman

Matthew A. Pittman serves as Musical Director for Reign Dance Company. Matthew is a professional musician and traveled the world as Musical Director for Gladys Knight for several years. Matthew is a graduate of the prestigious Los Angeles County High School for the Arts (LACHSA), where he studied piano, voice and music production. Matthew currently works as a songwriter, composer and producer.



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REIGN DANCE COMPANY

Reign Dance Company is a training ground for dancers both naturally and spiritually. We exist to develop character, integrity and knowledge in each company member. We offer education in the practical and technical elements of Christian dance, grooming each dancer to impact the world with his or her unique talents.



Reign Dance Company is a performing company of worship artists that have a passion for the surrounding community and the nations. We train each company member to be fluent in the language of dance that ministers to the souls of men, women and children across ethnicity and cultures.

Reign Dance Company was established in 2009 by Rekesha Pittman, and continues to thrive in its mission. Reign Dance Company has traveled throughout the United States and has served as international missionaries to South Africa. Reign Dance Company has spread the Gospel through movement in prison, churches, concerts, professional venues and at international conferences. We continue to serve the Las Vegas area through classes, workshops, and outreach events.

REIGNAISSANCE PUBLICATIONS



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