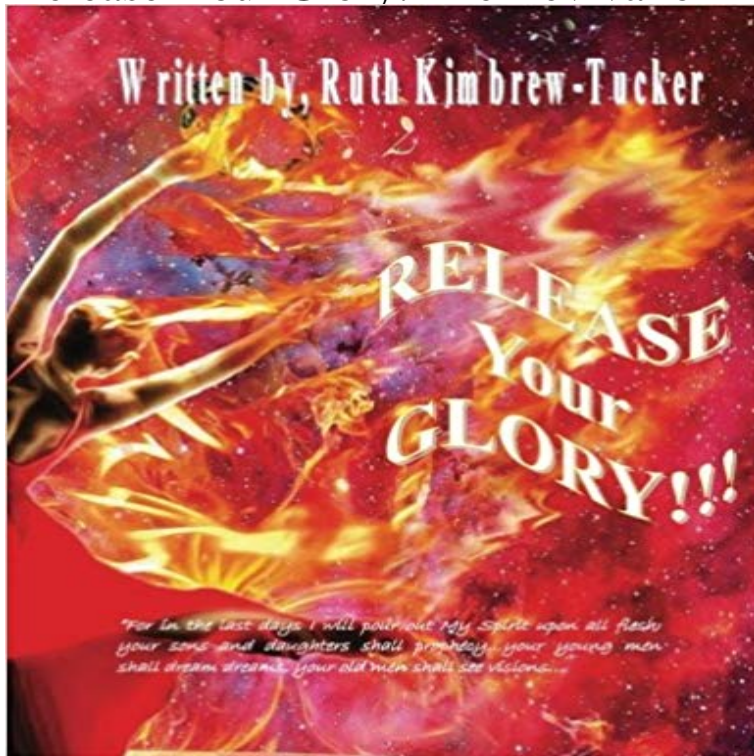


Release Your Glory: The Revival of Modern Day Dance Movement



My first recollection of dance being done inside the church occurred in 1982, at about the age of 12 years old in the church that I had been raised in, in the basement where our Junior Church Childrens group met, This particular day I was there with Ms. Elaine who had been teaching the young girls dance at the church for some years, and I watch her with her own children as she made sure they were always involved in dance and other activities as they grew. During this time, dance was not a regular part of church service, and it would be on a rare occasion that I would see someone dance at school or for a play to a Negro Spiritual or some kind of inspirational black anthem song. Other than that, there was no dance during worship, no praise and worship, unless you consider Father Abraham a praise and worship song for kids But this particular afternoon, I can remember watching Ms. Elaine who had taught the teen girls a dance, they were arrayed in black and white, big wide skirts, and black leotards, barefoot. I remember thinking, that's going to be me someday. Little did I know, that what God had on his mind concerning the resurgence of dance ministry in the church, was far greater than anything I could have ever imagined That day came and passed. I did not see dance in the church again for some time until 1986 and I was 16 years old now. My parents had finally allowed me to start taking class on Saturday with Doris Humphrey. She had been on Broadway and in several movies in the 40s and 50s. In her retirement years, she had opened up an arts center, and provided classes in tap, jazz, ballet and other classes for the youth in the community. My ballet teacher took three girls from our class to a church near the Morgan Park area, and we did a routine to Young, Gifted and Black. This was my first opportunity to go out to dance and it was at a Catholic Church. I can remember the beauty of the sanctuary, the ornate-ness

of the fixtures. I remember that as we got in place before the music started, I could feel the people smiling at us. It was a warm atmosphere. The dance was well received and it made a true mark on me. Not long after however, my ballet teacher began to be ill and left me in charge of the class. I was still very new to dance and did not feel that I was ready to teach children at all, but I did the best I could because I loved the art itself. The ballet teacher never returned and I now realize that God was drawing me and showing me my purpose long before dance was introduced and accepted on the scene. In 1987, Darcel Leonard, former lead dancer on Solid Gold, came to Chicago to our ministry to dance. Darcel, who had received Christ as Savior, had also received her call from the Lord to minister in dance. She had been ridiculed and shunned from dancing in her present church, but knew that she must still find a way to obey the unction that God had given her. I was 17 years old, and was watching the church broadcast. I was not a member of any church during this time, but when the broadcast came on, Darcel walked onto the stage in a white layered garment, hair pulled back into one braid, her feet bare, I sat mesmerized as she began to minister the song, Holy Ground. Tears formed in my eyes and I could not even speak for the sheer beauty of the Worship. The song ended but the image of the prophetic dance was ever etched in my mind. I knew from that moment forward that when I was old enough, I would go to that church, and I will be a dancer for the Lord. Two and a half years later, I joined that church in April 1990, and was able to see Darcel's ministry up close and personal as she was one of the guest artists scheduled to minister for that meeting. Two months after that occurred, Apostle C.E. Turner announced that he would be holding auditions to start a dance ministry in the church in Chicago Illinois, never done before, never seen. The rest is liturgical history

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