

*Disclaimer: The following document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*

## **Discipline to Dance**

Matthew 5:48-6:6, 16-18

February 16, 2003

Peter Hiatt

[Offering]

Let's see what we got . . . [blows a trumpet] . . . Aram gave \$200! [blares trumpet again] Andrew gave \$300! Come and get your reward! [hands out ribbons] . . . Doesn't giving feel good? What a joy!

[Prayer]

Matthew 5:48:

*“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.*

*“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

*“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. . . .*

*“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Jesus just said in the last chapter, “Let your light so shine before men.” But that light is the Beatitude Attitude (poor in spirit, humble, persecuted for righteousness’ sake). Now He points out three cardinal disciplines of the Jewish religious life and our religious life (alms, prayer, and fasting). But now He says, “Do it in secret.” You should “give in secret.”

Well, even the Rabbis taught this, and it's doubtful they ever really did blow an actual trumpet in the synagogue. And *we* don't blow trumpets . . . but we toot our own horns. (We have donor banquets, plaques, Founders Clubs, etc.) When we pray, we like to let people know, "Oh, I have prayed and prayed for this church, don't you know." When we fast—when we do without—we love to indicate our sacrifice.

Jesus says, "Don't do those things to be seen by men, or you already have your reward. Do it in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." *He* will reward you.

But rewards are confusing, whether I get them from men or God. First of all, if I think I earn rewards, what happens to grace? Secondly, if folks have different and varying rewards in Heaven, won't I be jealous of others' rewards for all eternity? Thirdly, when people do good deeds to get rewards, they usually end up hating the deeds they do. They're . . .

- no longer reading for fun, but reading to pass a test
- no longer singing for joy, but working a gig
- no longer sharing the Good News, but toiling in the ministry
- no longer giving a gift to the Beloved, but paying taxes to a welfare case
- no longer dancing for joy, but exercising to lose weight . . . doing aerobics

Lastly, if you do good deeds to get some other reward, the deeds aren't good. If I give to the poor for some other reward, I'm a hypocrite ("hypocritos" in Greek). It means "actor." I'm *acting* like I love them, but I love the *reward*. I'm using them, defiling them, to get a reward . . . a mercenary or prostitute. If I do loving things to get some other reward, the things I do aren't loving but evil.

Well, Jesus clearly says, "Don't do good deeds for some reward from men." I think He's also saying, "Don't do good deeds for some other reason." God will see, and He will reward. But don't do the deed to get some other reward, for, in fact, you shouldn't even know you're doing it! "Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, so it will be done in secret." That is, even *you* won't know.

"How can I do a good deed for a reward  
if I don't know I'm doing it?"

Don't do it in order to be seen by men . . . or God, for that matter. "Be perfect like your Father, and don't be aware you're doing it." Now do it!

"When you give, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." [Left hand goes behind his back, right hand takes out wallet, teeth take out a dollar bill.] But, you see, that doesn't work. Both hands are controlled by my self-centered brain. To do this, I'd have to be out of myself, unaware of myself, dead to myself. I'd have to lose myself.

And that is a nice thought . . . for whenever people do good deeds and they're conscious of themselves, their good deeds stink. (They smell like Pharisees and do-gooders.) It's no wonder

poor folks resent our charity. It's no wonder people resent our evangelism and witness. They can *smell* it. "You just went to some seminar, and now you're relieving your guilt using me to feel better about yourselves!" That's not love . . . it's rape.

Our self-consciousness  
makes our good deeds  
profoundly ugly.

Little children are so cute . . . until they become conscious that they're cute and, therefore, *try* to be cute. Then they're no longer cute, at least in the way they're striving to be cute. We call that *growing up*.

In the novel Perelandra by C. S. Lewis, the newly created Eve on Venus is tempted by the Evil One with a mirror with which she can see herself. In the Garden the newly created Eve on Earth was tempted with a tree of knowledge, so she could see herself and know if she was good or bad . . . judge herself.

Ever since then, we've been striving to be good, because we see we're bad. And Jesus said, "You must become like little children." Paul writes, "It's a small thing that I'm judged by any of you. I don't even judge myself."

Well, it's a nice idea to be non-self-consciously perfect, but it's a bit beyond us.

"Give without knowing it."  
"Move in perfection without striving."  
"Do the whole law—no greed, no lust, turning the other cheek—all without disciplining yourself to do so, a secret even to yourself."

That's quite a command! It reminds me of Hebrews 4:11: "Strive to enter God's rest." It sounds like, "Work to not be working. Discipline yourself to not be disciplined."

You know, God is at rest, yet Jesus said He's always working. What kind of work is really rest? What kind of perfection is absolute personal freedom? Christ "sets us free," yet He also says, "Be perfect like your Father"—that is, everything in order, in perfect harmony, perfectly coordinated.

"Well, how do I not let my right hand  
know what my left hand is doing  
without being totally uncoordinated?"

I was thinking about all these things when I remembered an old movie clip and couldn't get it out of my mind. It's about an underprivileged, uncoordinated boy whose family spends evenings singing songs on the porch. But no matter how hard he tries, he cannot coordinate his hands and feet with the music. The harder he tries, the worse it is, until one night, having given up, a miracle happens:

[Movie Clip—“The Jerk.” Steve Martin plays Nevin. The radio is on while Nevin sits in bed eating a Twinkie. His feet begin to tap in time to the music. Then he is snapping, and finally he is dancing around the room, ecstatic.]

Now, please don't think I'm a racist, because I'm not. I'm just pointing out the miracle of dance. Nevin said, “Mom! Dad! This music speaks to me!” And when it spoke to him, without trying, he began to dance. His entire body began to move in perfect order — harmony.

If you've studied music theory and physics, you know that music is extremely logical. It seems mysterious to us because there is more logic than the conscious mind can comprehend. Yet the conscious mind can recognize it as *good* and *beautiful*. Our bodies can be coordinated by its logic—its “logos” (in Greek).

Animals don't have the same capacity. But the logos may find a place in us, and we dance.

Nevin said, “This music speaks to me!” and he danced. Jesus said to some Jewish do-gooders, “My word (logos) finds no place in you.” “We piped and you would not dance.”

So how do I not let my left hand know what my right hand is doing, yet be entirely coordinated? Well, I must lose myself and be coordinated by something else. When I dance, I surrender to the logic of the music. The more I surrender, the better I dance. But the more I stop and think about what I'm doing, the stiffer I get and the more uncoordinated I become.

A great dance is incredible order, yet it's also perfect freedom, for the logos (logic) bypasses my conscious brain—my self—and animates my body. And all the while, my conscious brain is just thinking, “I dig this funky music!”

What kind of perfect order is absolute freedom?  
— A great dance.

What kind of work is really rest?  
— We call it *play*.

When little children play, they build things. They expend tremendous amounts of energy, and they suffer pain. But it's not work; it's play. They don't have to *make* themselves do it.

But if Dad comes out and says, “Listen up! If you build three Lego houses and run around the yard twelve times, I'll reward you. But if not, I'll spank you!” . . . it's no longer play but work. For the children are all at once extremely conscious of themselves.

But children are good at play, and their life is like a dance, because they lose themselves easily. And they lose themselves easily, because everything is bigger than them.

The bigger you are, the harder you are to lose. And the less your world is filled with wonder, the less likely you are to be swept off your feet and caught up in a dance.

Proud people don't dance well.

To be proud is to be self-absorbed and self-conscious. The arrogant and insecure are equally self-absorbed and equally proud. They feel equally responsible. They must be in control; that is, they must be constantly aware of what their left hand is doing and what their right hand is doing. So they are a drag to dance with! No fun.

To dance is to surrender to something somehow bigger than yourself. So what do you believe in (trust) that's bigger than you?

Many people won't dance and won't believe in God, for He won't fit into their world. (I suppose that's true of all of us in some way . . .) But what if the biggest became smallest and entered our world?

- . . . like a baby in a manger?
- . . . like a Word from beyond?
- . . . like a song sung through prison walls?

What if it found a place in us and we began to believe in life beyond? Well, maybe then we'd *dance*, even in this prison.

Richard Wurmbrand wrote, "The Communists believe that happiness comes from material satisfaction, but alone in my cell, cold, hungry, and in rags, I danced for joy every night." He was thinking of Jesus. And the guards gave him extra food, because they thought he'd gone crazy.

Dancers only seem crazy to those who can't hear the music.

Well, God *is* bigger than you, but He became small to enter your world. He then gets large so that you might lose yourself and find yourself in Him; that you might *dance*. Friedrich Nietzsche said he could only believe in a God who would dance. Well . . . what music is larger than God? Such that He could dance to it? To dance, He would have to, like, *limit* Himself and dance in His own glory, like a Son surrendered to a Father.

Well, Friedrich, Christians not only believe that God dances, but we believe He *is* a dance . . . and the dance has a name.

C. S. Lewis writes:

All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that "God is love." But they seem not to notice that the words "God is love" have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love. . . .

And that, by the way, is perhaps the most important difference between Christianity and all other religions: that in Christianity God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance. . . .

And now, what does it all matter? It matters more than anything else in the world. The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made.

“Above all else,” writes Paul, “put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” “Put on love” — that is, “put on Christ.” “This is love, not that we loved God, but God loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” God is like a dance. We are invited to enter, for He has entered us and begun to sing.

Walter Wangerine said that if a European wants to understand something, he takes it apart. If an African wants to understand something, he dances with it. In European countries, God has been declared dead. That’s what happens when you take something apart. In Africa God is dancing across the continent with His Bride. That is, the Church is profoundly fruitful there.

Will Willimon writes, “You and I can give thanks that the locus of Christian thinking appears to be shifting from North America and northern Europe where people write rules and obey them, to places like Africa and Latin American where people still know how to dance.”

. . . “write rules and obey them” . . . that’s what the Pharisees did! Remember that the religious people crucified Jesus. They took Him apart, tried to cut Him down to size, but they couldn’t control Him. He’s the Lord of the dance.

Pharisees hate the dance. And Pharisees don’t dance. The religious spirit doesn’t dance. Oh, they’ll tell you to dance . . . even *make* you dance. But their dance is exercise, it’s no fun, it’s work, and everyone is self-conscious the entire time. They’ll say, “David danced and so should we.” They’ll turn David’s dance into a law. But David’s dance was holy, precisely because it was *not* some law . . .

He wasn’t obeying a law.

His left hand didn’t know what his right hand was doing.

He lost himself in God and became small and filled with wonder. He surrendered control.

When David got home, his wife Michal rebuked him. “How the king—the big king—dishonored himself, made himself small today. Undignified!” David was no longer acting (“hypocritos”) like a king but a child. And Michal hated that. Queen Michal lived for control and wanted to control David’s dance.

An evil, religious spirit always seeks to control other dancers. But what Jesus says, Jesus does. He has a body, and we are His members. And He doesn't let His right hand know what His left hand is doing. That is, I can't control your dance. And when I try, your dance becomes ugly. Yet when all members surrender to the music of the Father, mediated through the Head, which is the Son, we will see a great dance and recognize it as the perfect beauty it is: our Lord's finished Bride.

Well, Michal tried to *seize* control of the dance, and she was barren all her days.

Of course, in the New Covenant, many are physically barren but profoundly fruitful. Abide in the dance, that you may bear much fruit. When bride and groom are fruitful, bearing life, it's because they were lost in a dance, making love to *each other*.

The dance is incredibly fruitful, but the dance is its own reward. In Matthew 24 Jesus says that on judgment day He'll say to the sheep on His right hand, "I was hungry and you gave me food to eat." And they'll say, "We don't remember that . . . we're not conscious of that . . . our right hand didn't know what the left was doing. We must have been . . . *dancing*." And Jesus will say, "Yes. You were dancing with me, my Bride." Their deeds bear life in this world and forever.

In Matthew 7, they're conscious of their deeds. Jesus says, "On that day many will say, 'Didn't we do many mighty works in your name . . . ?' Then I'll declare, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evil doer.'" Their deeds bear evil and death.

Well, the dance bears fruit, but the dance is its own reward.

In the parable of the talents, the good stewards are rewarded with *more stewardship*. The good givers are rewarded with *more giving*. The good lovers are rewarded with *more loving*. "To him who has will more be given."

The reward for dancing is the dance!

If you love good deeds, you're loving love and you're loving God. C. S. Lewis writes:

Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to. There are rewards that do not sully motives. A man's love for a woman is not mercenary because he wants to marry her  
 . . . .

You are the Bride of Christ.

When you love, you're dancing with Him, being prepared for your wedding.

You are the children of God.

When you love, you are becoming sons of your Father.

The dance is its own reward.

Romans 8: “God gave us his only begotten Son. Will he not give us all things with him?” God gives you all things. But here on earth you’re acquiring a taste for the *best* thing: the very heart of God—Jesus.

And how could there be jealousy in Heaven? All things are yours! So maybe your unique reward would be a unique perspective on Jesus and all things. If you thought you had more, your joy would be to give it away, to sing God’s praises to your neighbor, to give yourself away. Everyone would be giving themselves away like Jesus . . . not one, but *everyone*. So instead of looking like a cross (one dancer, one giver in an evil world), it would look like a great dance! Heaven!

God is love, and the Father sings a song over this dead world. The song is Jesus—the Word—Logos (through whom all things are made)—the Rhythm of the dance.

Does He find a place in you?  
Does the Father’s song speak to you?  
Will you surrender to His tune—His Word?  
Will you dance?

That is the judgment.

Some of you may say, “Great. That’s nice. But seriously, how much should I give? How long should I pray? When I fast, can I drink liquids?” If that’s you, perhaps . . .

Your play has become work,  
Your love has become toil,  
Your dance has become aerobics —  
an exercise in religion.

You’re dancing, because you *should*. But it’s like someone turned off the stereo long ago. That is, you’ve stopped worshipping. If you do all these good deeds but you don’t hear the music, the deeds are worthless . . . less than worthless, a lie. And you’re a Pharisee, a noisy gong, a clanging symbol. You “give away all you have and move mountains, but you have not love.” You don’t hear the music!

Some of you may say, “Well, I don’t give, pray, *or* fast.” Well, then, you’re certainly not dancing. But the answer is not to get psyched and try harder. The answer is to listen to the music: the love of God. Think of Jesus, listen to Jesus, believe Jesus, ingest Jesus, worship Jesus . . . and then take a step while you hear the music. One day you’ll be amazed at your moves, what your right and left hands are doing.

I read that 100 years ago the Presbyterian missionaries in Ghana, Africa only allowed the African converts to worship in their native style during one part of the service. They allowed them to dance during the offering. To this day, in some churches in Africa, I understand that they dance the offering. It’s the only part of the service in which anyone smiles. And I bet they have a good offering.



Did you remember that when David danced before the Lord, he gave loaves of bread, raisin cakes, and date cakes to everyone in the crowd of Israel and blessed them all? I wonder if he even *knew* what he was doing. Well, his wife did. But David didn't calculate.

Remember in the parable of the talents, it appears that the good stewards were not the conscientious, calculating types. They just invested everything, trusting their master. The only one who is recorded as calculating is the evil steward, who buries his talents in fear for himself.

I'm saying do your deeds while you're dancing. That is, *always worship!* As St. Augustine put it, "Love God and do as you please."

"Well, should I even *try* to do good deeds?  
Should I even *practice* the disciplines —  
Giving, quiet times, prayers, fasting?"  
The answer is yes, yes, yes.

- Yes, because they show you that you need to hear the music.
- Yes, because they describe certain movements of the dance — dance steps.
- Yes, because they are points at which we enter the dance.

We practice dance steps in the hope of dancing . . . unconscious of the steps, because the dance is our nature.

My son Coleman got an electric guitar for Christmas, and he's learning to play. But it's hard telling your left hand to form chords on the neck of the guitar while telling your right hand to strum a certain rhythm. But Coleman still disciplines himself to practice, because he loves electric guitar music. He's already *hearing* it in faith.

If you do the Christian disciplines  
to join the dance,  
to know Jesus,  
to know love,  
because you love Love,

I think you're already hearing the music in faith. And you have faith because you already hear the music.

Well, we got the score for an Elvis tune. I showed Coleman where to put his fingers for the chords, and I described the strum. But it all sounded really bad . . . until Coleman discovered a secret. Now he says, "Dad, you sing and I'll play along." When I sing, his fingers begin to dance: His right hand strums in rhythm; his left hand changes chords at just the right times . . . all because he joyfully surrenders to the words of his father as I sing "I'm just a hunk, a hunk of burning love." At that point his discipline turns to dance.

God the Father is singing.  
His Word is Jesus.

He *is* burning love.

Discipline yourself in such a way that you might forget your discipline, lose yourself, and find yourself playing along, a son of your Father, His Word in you making you dance.

So on the night Jesus was betrayed, being the only dancer in this dead and evil world, He took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper He took the cup and said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of me.”

It’s recorded in the Gospel of Matthew that He also said this: “I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it with you new in my Father’s kingdom,” where everyone dances.

[Singing:]

I danced on a Friday  
 When the sky turned black -  
 It's hard to dance  
 With the devil on your back.  
 They buried my body  
 And they thought I'd gone,  
 But I am the dance,  
 And I still go on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
 I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
 And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
 And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he

Do you want to dance? I’m not talking about dancing in this room to our worship set; I’m talking about dancing your life to the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

---

I’ve been preaching out of the Bible for over ten years, and I’ve had this perennial problem: the practical application point. When you really dig into Scripture and get right down to it, God is, like, *everywhere*.

*God the Father* calls me,

I respond because I have been chosen in *Jesus Christ* and He came to me to redeem and save me,

I respond to God because *His Spirit* is at work in me.

It’s like Jesus the Son sings to His Father through me and is glorified in me. So what am I supposed to do? When I understand this correctly, I think, “I’m lost in the dance, in the Godhead.” Do you understand that that’s what you have been called to? Sometimes all you can do is say, “Wow!” Do you know what that’s called? — *Worship*. Your life is to be worship.

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
thou hast loosed my sackcloth  
and girded me with gladness,  
that my soul may praise thee and not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever.

King David wrote that. It's the Gospel! Believe it. In Jesus' name, amen.

### Further Reading

Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of faith is to see what we believe.

St. Augustine

As long as you notice, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don't notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or light, or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God.

C. S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm

Nietzsche said that he could only believe in a God who would dance . . . and I feel the same way.

Anne Lamott, Traveling Mercies

For in self-giving, if anywhere, we touch a rhythm not only of all creation but of all being. For the Eternal Word also gives Himself in sacrifice; and that not only on Calvary. For when He was crucified He “did that in the wild weather of His outlying provinces which He had done at home in glory and gladness” [George Macdonald]. From before the foundation of the world He surrenders begotten Deity back to begetting Deity in obedience. And as the Son glorifies the Father, so also the Father glorifies the Son. . . . From the highest to the lowest, self exists to be abdicated and, by that abdication, becomes the more truly self, to be thereupon yet the more abdicated, and so forever. This is not a heavenly law which we can escape by remaining earthly, nor an earthly law which we can escape by being saved. What is outside the system of self-giving is not earth, nor nature, nor “ordinary life,” but simply and solely Hell. . . . The golden apple of selfhood, thrown among the false gods, became an apple of discord because they scrambled for it. They did not know the first rule of the holy game, which is that every player must by all means touch the ball and then immediately pass it on. To be found with it in your hands is a fault: to cling to it, death. But when it flies to and fro among the players too swift for eye to follow, and the great master Himself leads the revelry, giving Himself eternally to His creatures in the generation, and back to Himself in the sacrifice, of the Word, then indeed the eternal dance “makes heaven drowsy with harmony.” All pains and pleasures we have known on earth are early initiations in the movements of that dance: but the dance itself is strictly incomparable with the sufferings of this present time. As we draw nearer to its uncreated rhythm, pain and pleasure sink almost out of sight. There is joy in the dance, but it does not exist for the sake of joy. It does not even exist for the sake of good, or of love. It is Love Himself, and Good Himself, and therefore happy.

C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

God “dances” creation. He is the dancer, creation is his dance. The dance is different from the dancer; yet it has no existence apart from him. You cannot take it home in a box if it pleases you. The moment the dancer stops, the dance ceases to be. . . . Be silent and contemplate the dance. Just look: a star, a flower, a fading leaf, a bird, a stone . . . any fragment of the dance will do. Look. Listen. Smell. Touch. Taste. And, hopefully, it won't be long before you see him -- the dancer himself!

Anthony DeMello, Anthony DeMello

“All that is made seems planless to the darkened mind, because there are more plans than it looked for. In these seas there are islands where the hairs of the turf are so fine and so closely woven together that unless a man looked long at them he would see neither hairs nor weaving at all, but only the same and the flat. So with the Great Dance. Set your eyes on one movement and it will lead you through all patterns and it will seem to you the master movement. But the seeming will be true. Let no mouth open to gainsay it. There seems no plan because it is all plan: there seems no centre because it is all centre. Blessed be He! Yet this seeming also is the end and final cause for which he spreads out time so long and Heaven so deep; lest if we never met the dark, and the road that leads now hither, and the question to which no answer is imaginable, we should have in our minds no likeness of the Abyss of the Father, into which if a creature drop down his thoughts for ever he shall hear no echo return to him. Blessed, blessed, blessed be He!”

C. S. Lewis, Perelandra

The dance is a particularly interesting expression of important issues in that it connotes an intensity which avoids the burdensome. This is because dance is a form of playing – not working. . . . The seriousness of play as opposed to the seriousness of work reveals a mode of being totally given to its raison d'être while work is always done for the

purpose of something else. . . . Play, then, is a highly ordered but totally free experience which can also be said of sacred activity. Freedom and order (the law) are perennially the watchwords in religious thinking. Freedom in its relation to sacred order means freely willed rather than constrained obedience to law. Lewis summarized it well: "For surely we must suppose the life of the blessed to be an end in itself, indeed The End: to be utterly spontaneous; to be the complete reconciliation of boundless freedom with order—with the most delicately adjusted, supple, intricate, and beautiful order?" (Letters to Malcolm, p. 94). It is in the dance that the reconciliation of freedom and order can perhaps be most vividly imagined. "The pattern deep hidden in the dance, hidden so deep that shallow spectators cannot see it, alone gives beauty to the wild, free gestures that fill it, just as the decasyllabic norm gives beauty to all the licences and variation of the poet's verse," Lewis writes when talking about Milton's world view. In some sense we could say that the dance reconciles the two poles, but at the same time freedom and order generate the dance. A result of their fusion is a concrete and dynamic third reality, or, more appropriately, freedom and order are a dance. . . . The distinctions, freedom and order, generate the dance: their reconciliation is a dance. The material not only has religious significance in the dance, but is, along with the spiritual, essential to the dance. And this spirituality is not burdensome because the seriousness of dance is the seriousness of play.

Marcia Tanner (our very own),  
The Image of Dance in the Works of C. S. Lewis

Love teaches asses to dance.

French proverb

I danced in the morning  
When the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon  
And the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven  
And I danced on the earth,  
At Bethlehem  
I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he*

I danced for the scribe  
And the pharisee,  
But they would not dance  
And they wouldn't follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen,  
For James and John -  
They came with me  
And the dance went on.

I danced on the Sabbath  
And I cured the lame;  
The holy people  
Said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped  
And they hung me on high,  
And they left me there  
On a Cross to die.

I danced on a Friday  
When the sky turned black -  
It's hard to dance  
With the devil on your back.

They buried my body  
And they thought I'd gone,  
But I am the dance,  
And I still go on.

They cut me down  
And I leapt up high;  
I am the life  
That'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you  
If you'll live in me -  
I am the Lord  
Of the Dance, said he.

Sydney Carter

© 2003 Peter Hiatt

**Lookout Mountain Community Church**  
534 Commons Drive, Golden CO 80401  
Phone: 303-526-9287 Fax: 303-526-9361  
E-mail: [info@lomcc.org](mailto:info@lomcc.org)