

DANCING *Out of Darkness*

THE SUSAN NIKIRK STORY

I was born in New York City to a Jewish mother who came out of Germany at the start of WWII, and a father that came from Cuba. I was raised Jewish in tradition - attending the synagogue on the High Holy Days, and going to Hebrew school for a short time. I always had a desire to know God and wondered as a young child why I was born. My father was very sick, suffering with heart disease and diabetes. He was in and out of hospitals until he died when I was nine years of age. I became very fearful during this time. Later I also found out that my mother tried to abort me in the womb as she was in her 40's and fearful of giving birth at this age. Fear and rejection were living inside of me, although I didn't recognize them until later in life.

A Lineage of Rabbis

I believe that this fear was also passed down through my lineage since my mother, aunt and grandparents were living in Germany, experiencing the beginning of the Nazi movement. Through a miracle of God, they were able to leave Germany with the help of my uncle Eric, who had come to America as a young man. I am grateful to my uncle, since without his help I probably would never have been born and my family would have gone to the concentration camps. Unfortunately, some of my other family members were killed during the Holocaust.

My great-grandmother Babette Carlebach, who died in Germany during the war, set the standard of Jewishness in my immediate family. In my lineage, there were many famous rabbis serving the Jewish community in Germany. One of the most famous was the late Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, who immigrated to America with his parents. His father was the late Rabbi Naf-tali Carlebach who founded the Carlebach Shul on West 79th Street in New York City, which I remember going to as a small child. Today this Shul is still a landmark in the Orthodox Jewish community. Rabbi Shlomo was known as the dancing rabbi, who composed about 1,000 tunes which can be heard

in synagogues and around Shabbat tables throughout the world today. He was a cousin of mine and I believe through this spiritual heritage came my desire to serve God. My immediate family drifted away from the Jewish traditions after they came to America, yet deep in my heart there was a longing to know God and not just our religious traditions.

So how does a good Jewish girl from New York City get to become a minister of the Gospel?

At the age of three, my mother took me to see a movie, "The Red Shoes," and from that moment on I wanted to dance. Since we couldn't afford dance lessons, I received scholarships. At the age of four, I appeared regularly on the panel of a television show called "Juvenile Jury." The answers I gave on the show already indicated the calling of an evangelist. I continued to study dance; ballet, jazz and modern throughout my teenage years.

My dance career soared, and at the age of eighteen, as part of "The Discotheque Dancers," I was in the opening act at the Beatles concert at Shea Stadium in 1965 and also toured with them on a private plane throughout the USA and Canada. From a successful career on Broadway and in television, I ventured into the fashion industry for a short time and stopped dancing. I was always looking for security and love, but looking in the wrong places; careers, men, philosophies, etc. Nothing filled the void inside of me.

Eventually, I went back into the dance industry, becoming a Theatrical Ballroom Champion, teacher, choreographer and author. I married my dance partner and for about ten years we traveled and danced competitively. During this time my mother developed cancer and my husband became a drug addict, leaving my life in the pit of Hell. Eventually my marriage ended in divorce along with my dance partnership, which brought my dance career to a halt. I moved to Florida to take care of my mother, not realizing that God was starting to work

in my life.

God Are You Real?

I met a Christian girl who became my closest friend. She had a great peace about her, even though she had been through a divorce and her husband also had a drug addiction. I wondered, could I have this peace she had? She told me she was a "born-again Christian." I thought there were only Catholics or Jews. She gave me a Bible, and although I didn't know what to do with it, I found myself looking into it. This girl also began to visit my mother and pray with her during her bout with cancer. For almost two years I watched my mother slowly dying of cancer. I remember my mother saying to me, "Susan, I am not afraid to die. God is real, and if you do your part, He will do His." A few days later, as my mother went into a coma, I was seated at her feet in her living room. It was pouring rain all day and very dark. At the moment of her death, an unusual sign happened - a very small part of the sky opened up and a light shown down on her head for a few minutes. I knew something was happening, but was not sure what it was.

A few days later, my friend took me to my first church service where I heard the message, "Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life - no one comes to the Father except through Him." I was confused and upset. I was Jewish - told never

to believe in Jesus - and that Christianity was the cause of so much hurt to the Jewish People, including the Holocaust. I cried out to God to show me the truth, that if Jesus was His Son, the Messiah, I wanted to know. For the next two months I studied the Bible and attended Bible studies. Then the day came that I knew Jesus was the Messiah; I asked Him into my heart and God became real. This was the beginning of being set free of fear and rejection. A new life had begun.

Here Am I, Lord Send Me

I was on fire for God! Everywhere I went I spoke about the Lord, with many people getting saved, from supermarkets to airports. Eventually I was led to an Assembly of God Church in Miami, Florida. I gave my dance gift over to the Lord, and through much prayer the Creative Arts Ministry developed. I choreographed large church productions which touched the lives of many. It was at this church that I had another divine appointment - I met my husband, Gerald Nikirk.

Our last name, Nikirk, comes from a German word Neukirch, meaning New Church. Little did I know that my marriage to Gerald was a prophetic statement that would be-

come the very core of our future ministry. Gerald, a Gentile Believer, and I, a Jewish Believer, together became Ephesians 2:14, "One New Man." We married and began to seek the Lord. Eventually, we knew we were to attend Bible School. We stepped out like Abraham, not knowing how we would do this, but each step of the way, God provided. I could write a book just

no longer visible. Through divine appointments, I began to connect with Messianic Believers who still seemed Jewish. I prayed and studied. I found that Jesus was Jewish and that most of the first Believers were Jewish. As I continued my research, I realized how much the Christian Church had separated from its Jewish roots and that this was not God's intent. I came to understand the true meaning of Matthew 5:17 when Yeshua said, "think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The meaning of the word "fulfill" is to clarify, to perfect a foundation on which to build further. Yeshua never meant to do away with or abolish the Old Testament teachings. I became a Jew again, but one who knows the Messiah. It is important for Jew and Christian alike to realize that when a Jewish person becomes a Believer in Yeshua, they do not lose their Jewishness. A Jew never converts!

The Spirit of God put a new fire in my heart to teach the Church its prophetic end-time role toward Israel, the Jewish People, and the desire to return to its Jewish roots. I returned to Europe with a new message: "God's plan for the Church and the Jewish People." One of my main teachings is on the Book of Ruth, which reveals the prophetic revelation of the role of the true Church in the restoration of Israel, the Jewish People, and the return of the Lord. Ruth, a Gentile, represents one type of Christian today. She joins herself to Naomi, who represents Israel and the Jewish People.

To my Jewish Mishpocha, my prayer is that you, too, find our Messiah who sets the captives free!

on the miracles we saw God do as we were obedient. These were years of wilderness, learning to live by faith, learning to serve, dealing with our rebellion, and learning to do things God's way. I had many opportunities to have a ministry in dance, but I had to lay my gift of dance completely down for the Lord to purify it and to find His perfect will for my life. I was called to preach and now knew I had been appointed to do this from my mother's womb. I cried out to God as Isaiah did: "Here am I Lord, Send me."

A Jew or Not a Jew?

After many miraculous years of serving the Lord in ministries in the U.S. and Europe, I began to feel that something was missing. Most of my mentoring since I accepted Jesus was from Christianity. My Jewishness was

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Visit her website for witnessing resources and to purchase her DVD/Video testimony "Dancing Out of Darkness," www.nikirkvoice.org or contact: Nikirk Ministries, Colchester, CT 06415, Phone: 860-537-5881.

