

FUSION Devo: Wednesday, May 27th, 2009

Title: Let's Dance

Text: Psalm 100:1-3 (NIV)

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Recently I had the enormous blessing of traveling from North Carolina to one of the most beautiful places in all of creation. Costa Rica. I and 2 other staff members of Tsunami Ministries traveled there to see what doors God would fling open for a new mission trip that we are planning. While in Costa Rica we had the blessing of meeting some amazing people and seeing some breathtaking sights. Whether it was seeing the Arenal volcano or the opportunity to sit in the presence of a 90 year old missionary who has dedicated his life to serving God by serving others in Costa Rica since 1950. The list of encounters that left us speechless would take pages to compile.

I would say that one event that most impacted me was the Sunday afternoon that we had the blessing of attending worship at a Methodist congregation in a section of San Jose named "Los Guidos". Los Guidos is probably one of the most dangerous communities in this Central American country. It is filled with the wide-eyed innocence of young children and the tortured lives of individuals involved in gang life. Los Guidos is certainly a place an outsider would not want to be caught without the security of those who truly know the dynamics of a neighborhood in such need. And right in the middle of this environment is this diamond of a church led by a truly Godly man, Rev. Edgar Ponce, and individuals who are embracing the life-changing relationship with Christ.

As we stood in the back of the sanctuary and watched the room begin to fill with the buzz and joy of worshippers, everyone from the "Young at Heart" to self-titled "Former Gang-Bangers" found their way into the welcoming atmosphere that grew in the anticipation of showing their adoration for the blessings that God has given them and looking forward to seeing what future God would unfold before them. The band began to play some of the very same songs that the youth worship band at my church play each week. The only difference was they sang in their native Spanish while the 3 "Gringos" in the room joined in by singing the English version. But no one minded. We were all worshipping. I also noticed that as each new song started, a few more of the teens in the room would make their way from the pews to the front of the sanctuary, and before we knew it, about 50 young people ranging from about 3 years to 18 years old were standing and dancing and singing and worshipping with a reckless abandon that is rarely seen in any who call themselves "Christians."

There were no amazing lights flashing, no huge video screen with eye-catching images. There was no dramatic stage area with artistic flare that would set the feel of the room. Instead there were only those who entered this sacred space with an open heart, open mind and open soul, and authentically invited God to fill them with the Holy Spirit. They worshipped with no care of what anyone around them may have thought. They were intimately engaged with God. These were young people who had no clue where their next meal would come from, what their lives would be like and even if they had a future at all. Many came from abusive homes where drug use was prevalent. But they didn't let any of that stop them from doing what we are all called to do. Worship God with all we have. It came so naturally to them. And when it was all over, and the 3 of us began to leave the church, the people embraces us, wished us well and I could tell my the gleam in their eyes that they were very glad that we came to share such an experience with them.

This was a moment that has been etched in my brain and my soul, and one that I have replayed, with the vivid recollection of the sights, smells and sounds I encountered at that moment in Los Guidos. I must tell you also that I have been moved to truly strive to put aside all of the distractions and cares about what others may be thinking as I show my gratitude for what God has done for me. I have been inspired to reflect on the many amazing and often non-deserving blessings I have in my life and look upon the throne of God with a new found appreciation for all I have and what God has called me to do, and let down my guard to worship God Los Guidos Style! You care to join me?

Something to Think About:

- How do you worship God? With a reckless abandon or with one eye opened looking to see who is watching you?
- Why do you think most of us find it so hard to let our guard down and just open our hearts to full-on worship?
- How can your attitude as you enter a worship setting effect your ability to truly worship God?

- What can you do to enhance your worship experience?
- How can the way we worship God impact the lives of those around us?

A Few Minutes with God:

God, reveal in me the many blessings and reasons I have to be so thankful for all you have done for me. Help me to find the passion of the worshippers in Los Guidos and embrace each and every opportunity to worship you, in all settings, in a way that will authentically touch the lives of those around me and more importantly bring joy to you. I am so blessed. I love you and words cannot express how very much I appreciate your unconditional love. Amen.