



Courtesy photo  
**Dancer and choreographer Mary Margaret Bawden uses dance and movement to emphasize worship. Below, Bawden, kneeling far left, performs with some of her students.**

## Sonlight Prayer-in-Motion is dance as ministry

**REDLANDS** — Mary Margaret Bawden says she felt God call her into prayer-in-motion at 15 years of age. Although her early training was in ballet, she found herself attracted to the varied choreographic approaches found in modern dance and as a result, she received a bachelor's degree in modern dance from the University of California, Riverside, in 1975.

As an undergraduate student in modern dance, she was asked to teach the lower level ballet classes at the university. Upon graduation, she was offered the position of ballet and modern dance instructor for two junior colleges in the area: Crafton Hills College in Yucaipa and Mount San Jacinto College in San Jacinto.

Bawden's movement development over the next 17 years was sporadic due to her involvement in the lives of her three children. Eventually she blended activities in her life, integrating her children and dance by developing a movement curriculum for children in a summer arts program called "Creative University," which she taught during seven consecutive summers.

In 1995, Bawden taught her curriculum at the National Christian Dance Conference in Florida.

Later she choreographed several musicals for LifeHouse Productions, as well as the children's Christmas musicals held at her church. In the summer of 2003, she was asked to teach Soul-to-Sole Choreography at the National

as well as "No More Pain," sung by Point of Grace and a finalist entry in the "Festival of the Stars" choreography festival at the McCallum Theater in Palm Springs.

SonLight has placed in the finalist category of the festival which will be held Nov. 9. Choreography finalists included entries from Argentina, Florida, Texas, New York, Arizona, Nevada, San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles. SonLight was also a finalist for this festival in 2002.

The choice for the festival finalists was "difficult due to the overwhelming amount of quality talent submitted," said Shea New, founder and director of the festival.

Throughout the years, Bawden has attended a variety of workshops, seminars and festivals to further her personal artistic devel-

opment. She has studied with Loretta Livingston, Donald McKayle, Bill Evans, Donna Steinberg, Debra Knapp and many others. She was also privileged to study with Phyllis S. Weikert in Michigan during the summer of 1996.

Currently, she is enrolled in a master's program in worship with an emphasis on Christian dance at Hope University in Fullerton.

Bawden loves to choreograph and hopes for continued opportunities to do so. As part of her movement design perspective, she has developed a method of teaching choreography to both trained and untrained dance participants which allows them to access their own particular movement base through locomotor/non-locomotor movement.

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