

SHALL WE DANCE?

In the fifth chapter of her charming book, *Dancing in the Dark*, Barbara Lazear Ascher points to an aspect of the familiar creation story that is striking in its simplicity and power. The author tells of reading the Book of Genesis after a lapse of many years, and she comments, "As I read, I am touched and amused by the gaiety, optimism, joy, sense of fun evident in this first book of the Bible."

There it is! An idea so simple and yet so central to the way we might look at our world and our role in it. God had fun making this world for us. God got caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment, and the more God saw that "it was good," the more generous God's giving became. The ultimate step in God's dance of creation was the creation of man.

Ms. Ascher writes, "And so, as the story goes, He made 'man in our image, after our likeness' as though longing for a partner in this dance. If God so loved His creation, and if man was made Godlike, then wouldn't it follow that it is within our truest and original nature to accept the waltz?"

God has given us everything: the raw materials of our universe and the talent to use those materials in new and wonderful ways. God didn't hold back. God didn't worry about running out of resources or energy or enthusiasm. God had fun giving us everything He could think of.

If we, the children of God, are to be true partners in God's dance of creation, we should try to participate joyfully, to feel that the role we play as partners in the ongoing creative process, started so splendidly by God, is fun. God does not want us to participate, share or give until it hurts; God wants us to participate, share and give until it feels really good.

When we can look at what we have created or built through the sharing of the gifts of creation and say with genuine gaiety, optimism and joy "Behold, it is very good," we will have moved a long way toward becoming God's partners. It isn't easy, but we can take comfort in the fact that even the most elaborate waltz starts with a simple first step.

Let us listen for the music of God's creation; let us allow God to lead us in the dance; and let us take that first step. When you are ready to dance, the Episcopal Church Foundation can help you find ways to share your blessings with your parish or diocese in ways that will surprise you and perhaps prompt you to say, "This is very good!"

For a few good ideas, please give us a call at 800-697-2858, or contact a member of the planned giving committee at your church.