

Read Ephesians 4:1-15

As a parent of a daughter who was into dancing, I have sat through my fair share of dancing concerts. And, of course, I loved every loooooong minute of every one!

So I was amused when I read this news report about a four-year-old girl called Charlie who decided not to cooperate during her dance routine.¹ A relative posted a video on TikTok, saying: “Went to my niece’s dance recital and witnessed this legend.” The video shows a six-minute group dance sequence during which young Charlie stood absolutely motionless as the others danced around her – her only movement being to raise her hand to brush her hair away from her face, before resuming her game of statues.

Have you ever felt the urge to not play along with what everyone else is doing? To stand still and refuse to move when everyone else around you is moving in this direction or that? To resist going with the flow of the world around you?

There is a time and a place for doing that.

Here, in Ephesians 4:14, Paul says that if we grow to maturity in our faith, then we will “no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes ...” A mature faith will not “go with the flow,” or be led astray by the latest fad, or be sucked in by superficially attractive false teaching. A mature Christian will stand firm and not be moved by the pressures to change or conform to the whims of the society around us. A mature Christian, like young Charlie, will not be moved.

There’s an old spiritual called “I shall not be moved.” It has been re-recorded many times, and in recent decades has been used more as a song of social protest than a spiritual song. You see protestors marching down the street with their banners, singing: “We shall not, we shall not be moved!” I find it a little sad to see a spiritual song misappropriated as an anthem for a social movement, or for a sporting anthem (why do English rugby fans sing “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”?).

This song is originally based on Jeremiah 17:8-9 and Psalm 1:3, which both speak of a person trusts in God, who finds their hope in him, who walks in God’s way and delights in his word, being like a tree planted by the waterside, with roots sent down deep so that its leaves will not wither and not even drought can harm it. Again, it’s an image of a person of mature faith being unmoved and unshaken by winds of change that blow around us.

May you be like Charlie, and refuse to move in concert with the world around you. May you stand your ground and remain firm.

¹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/girl-4-hailed-legend-zero-22591477>