



ICDF Networks

December 2018

Missions and Dance



Photo: Provided by Linda Wells

When you hear the word ‘missions’, what do you think of? Going off to some exotic distant land maybe? Jesus said, “Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28: 19-20 (GNB)

So where is ‘everywhere’? Yes, it can be in another country but missions for us might also be sharing the Gospel of Jesus with those who have not yet heard it where we live. Reaching out, too, to the hungry, the homeless, the hurting people living in our midst. ‘Everywhere’, then. maybe outside our front doors - in our own or neighbouring villages, towns, cities and communities. Missions can be wherever the Lord has called us to be. Some of us will be called overseas - to different cultures in far away places, for short or long term periods of time. Wherever the Lord has or is calling us to be, it is our lives - the way we act - that are witnesses for Him. May each one of us be ready and prepared to be His witnesses - to be used of Him.

In this Newsletter you will find testimonies and conversations of those who have been called at home or overseas to be witnesses for Him through dance ... Dance in Missions. Be blessed and encouraged by their stories.

A Calling For Missions

Linda Wells, the Network Leader for the Missions Network, gives us a peek at the work that she is doing with Operation Mobilisation.

Soraya was one of the “Gather & Scatter School” students attending my Dance School this year for the month of September. Probably in her forties and a missionary in France she is a Muslim background believer. Having grown up in Algeria, she was always hungry for truth and to know Allah. She became so desperate for truth she somehow just “knew” she needed to move to France. It was an impossible dream, but move she did.... as if Allah was helping her somehow. Upon arriving in France she soon met other Muslim background immigrants, some of whom invited her to a Christian church. She liked them and for some inexplicable reason decided to go with these new friends to a “forbidden” Christian gathering.

During the service she felt moved to tears but not sure why. As people sang joyfully around her she gazed at a stain glass window. Suddenly, the windows began to shine brighter and brighter and suddenly she was looking at a living Jesus with hands outstretched, but it was not the Jesus on the cross, it was a smiling living Christ with arms open wide towards her. She began to cry and sob loudly with joy and finally the truth penetrated her heart, that Christ was indeed alive, smiling, welcoming and loving her deeply. In time she became involved in YWAM and is now a Missionary to muslims in France.

Soraya is passionately in love with Christ, almost embarrassingly so. She just never stops talking about him. I wonder.... really wonder.....sometimes....if I might have lost my first love..... whenever I am near Soraya.



Photo: Gather & Scatter students. Soraya far right.

Still, we press on and trust He will complete the work he has begun in us all.

My husband returns from his trips to the Middle East with staggering stories like Soraya's. We don't hear about the record numbers of Muslim background believers do we? They are coming to Jesus.... some merely (did I say “merely?”) from having a vision or dream of Him, but coming they are, by the thousands...yes THOUSANDS! So here I sit, writing about our ICDF Missions Network, wondering.....

Just wondering if the West might become the unreached region of the world one day, while staggering numbers of Muslim background believers become the “sending” nations of the mission future? Time will tell.

Mission Opportunities

We are sending three teams of Dance missionaries out in 2019. Two to Vienna, Austria at Easter and sometime (to be decided) in the summer. We need Advanced Ballet dancers for Austria. The third team will be to Athens, Greece sharing Dance Therapy with refugees, mainly from Syria or North Africa. It is part of the “Transform Outreach” with OM, July 8-18 (or 20th). We can only take eight.

If you can't go.... pray.... pray many more Muslim background refugees will “believe” and be restored in their souls. We need our “cousins” in heaven!!

Training for Dance and Missions

Anyone seriously pursuing a career in Missions who is a natural mover but has never had professional/ formal training is welcome to come and develop more excellence in the dance for a month of free accommodation and training. They just need to cover their own travel to Atlanta, USA.

For more information contact Linda linda.wells@om.org

Stations of the Cross – in dance and word

Much of my experience with dance over the years has been outdoors – dancing in parks, on streets, at festivals or at significant locations. Sometimes that has involved teaching dances publicly to groups of people or performing with dance-teams whilst spontaneous interaction with by-standers can change the dynamic completely. It's worth mentioning that usually the groups I've worked with have plenty of men, rather than being mostly women. There's something very authentic about our dance being able not just to command an audience, but continuing whether there is an audience there or not. I've known members of the public to enter our dance, and ask to join in – or once even to physically lift one of the dancers from the ground. He didn't even break character, and the rest of the audience intervened so the dance could continue.

One of the distinctive experiences we've had is doing danced Stations of the Cross events which usually involves carrying a tall cross from an initial start-location to 15 more places which become a temporary 'station' and performance-space along a carefully prescribed route representing Jesus' journey from Gethsemane to Cross and Resurrection. Over time we have included more dances to correspond to different stages in the journey, but the basic format remains the same:

The participants who follow from place to place are experiencing a sort of pilgrimage, walking with Jesus through his journey along the way of the cross. They may take it in turns to lead the procession by carrying the cross, or they may read one of the readings, or one of the prayers we all repeat the responses to. With little preparation some of the dances are ones most people could join in. This is particularly true of the spiral labyrinth when Jesus tramples on death and we follow the pattern connected to the one in front, following in their steps. At another point we individually walk through a symbolic curtain of tears, the tears of our life, before we can continue to the next location.



Photos: "Stations of the Cross" in Ghana

Another function of the danced Stations of the Cross is to celebrate a city or neighbourhood, and honour it as a place on the heart of Christ. Often local people can be approached to help plan the route and link the particular encounters on Christ's cross-carrying journey with local significant places. Sometimes the reading for 'Christ is stripped of his garments' will be outside a strip club or 'Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem' at a women's refuge. A park or garden is usually the starting point as we remember Gethsemane. Shop-owners or other locally recognisable people may be pleased to be asked to do a reading or prayer. It's amazing how clearly I remember places in various countries and settings where we've danced the Stations – and the people we encountered there. In Boston, Massachusetts, in the U.S. we had a good few people: a dance-team, then folk from prayer-groups in the area. One young woman was walking with us, but with crutches, and the whole event was taking longer and longer as she became more and more tired. Our men dancers came up with a solution: they carried her high above them, following the cross, and another brought up the rear with her crutches crossed over his shoulder. All unpremeditated, but unforgettable. When we came to the Combat Zone [red light area] carrying the cross and set it on the ground people in the street spontaneously sank to the floor.

Stations of the Cross – in dance and word ... continued

The Stations is also a performance, danced as well as we are able with rehearsal constraints. One dance is repeated a number of times, a solo-piece for a man seated, bare-chested so he becomes a picture of Jesus from the cross drawing everyone to him. ‘Lift Jesus Higher’, we sing, slowly. And one by one different guys embody that crucifixion. His face is seen through each. His skin is of different colour, from one dance to the next, and the man may be of any shape, age or size. I’ve seen snow fall on his tattoos. I’ve once seen the cross physically fall down across his back. I’ve seen a golden glow cover his skin. I’ve seen the audience weep spontaneously. I’ve heard lads from Dublin shout ‘I thirst’ from the cross. We’ve travelled with Christ into night-time city streets, and let the story tell itself.

Some years ago before the beginning of an Arts conference in South Africa I arrived to teach the Stations to a large group of dancers with limited rehearsal time. One man had brought his son who was to dance the part of a soldier, and was waiting to drive the lad home. The men had one session learning the solo crucifixion piece, and he wasn’t one of their dancers, but found himself learning it alongside the other men. It seemed unreal that he was joining in like this, but a day or so later he sat on the chair ready to begin his solo out in the street, without his shirt, feeling strangely ..exposed. Just then the generator failed and the sound-men told us to wait while they fetched a replacement battery. While I worried about how long we were being kept waiting, he began to realise his chair was just before a store selling porn material, and he was chatting with the guys going in and out, taking the whole situation in his stride. Once his shirt was off he was every man, no status, no shyness – he just dealt with it, and the dance was no problem, either. The generator-problem was a gift that day.

One of the readings says, ‘Will this road never end?’ and often I feel like that. It seems that the time drags or suddenly passes quickly, but we continue. The journey leaves its mark on us. Sometimes we feel tired, numb, way too hot or cold, inadequate – or closer to the events than we have ever felt.

In St Andrews, Scotland, and through the Night-Market and edges of the campus at Accra in Ghana, we have been able to use the Stations at the beginning of ICDF events. We hope to manage to experience this as one of the activities in India this coming May.

Andy Laine



*The photos show a sequence of one of the scenes of “Stations of the Cross” described in this article
Photographer: Sodapop Jeanville*

The Ugandan Way

Last month (November 2018) I travelled to Uganda with the Bristol West deanery to visit two of our link dioceses in Northern Uganda; Kitgum and Gulu. Whilst in Gulu I was introduced to two young men who have a passion for dance and for bringing dance to young people. Eddie and Herbert are part of Ugandan dance crew “Luo Fame” They also run regular classes in street dance, hip hop and salsa for the local youth.



Photos: Provided by Anna Arnold

As Eddie explained, if they can engage the youth in dance then they can encourage them off the streets, away from drugs and fighting, and teach them to use their energy in a positive way. These young teachers had themselves been introduced to dance in their teens by a project which used dance to reach out to young people traumatised by the war with the LRA.

Eddie invited me to join them later that day at one of their sessions. Their “studio” was a field next to a youth centre where I met with 20 or so young men and boys. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself and explain a little about the work I do in the UK with older dancers. We had a great time warming up and showboating – I even took a few turns myself, then I taught the boys a short contemporary phase. It was a real privilege to be welcomed to this group and be able to teach these young people.

Please pray for Eddie and Hubert as they continue in this work.

Anna Arnold



Photo: Dancing in high places (provided by Linda Wells)

Experiencing Missions and Dance

A few of the members on the ICDF Facebook group recently had a conversation about Missions and Dance. The following Facebook chat is published here with their approval. If you are not on the Facebook group and want your name name to be added, please contact us at icdfworld@gmail.com

Has anybody been on a missions trip lately where dance was used in outreach?

Prinith De Alwis Jayasinghe: Yes. Movement in Worship (www.miw.org.uk) had mission trips to Colchester, UK and Portugal this year where we took our dance and drumming out to the streets. I went with them to Portugal last year and Colchester this year.

Saartjie DeWet: Sounds great. Can you tell us, when you minister in another country do you work with the local believers there?

Prinith De Alwis Jayasinghe: We always partner with a local church. In Colchester church members were trained up prior to mission so they could join us dancing and drumming. Others gave out chocolates and fliers to Sunday service. Others prayed for people, etc. In Portugal we partner with a local church. We were involved in a worship night and their Sunday service. This year other Christians also connected with what was going on too. The public got to experience God's presence through our dancing and drumming. Last year we even had a stag do join us in our dancing with staffs. There were some conversations and invites too. We've had God appointments too...like last year a Brazilian choir of Christians on a mission trip themselves, turned up and ended up tag teaming with us (they sang in between our 2 sessions) and singing for a dance too.

Vera Chierico: Lately? I can tell you about some a few years ago ?

Christine Jeanville: Hello! Well, yes ALL THE TIME. Israël, Sweden, France, Ireland, Portugal are the nations of these past three months... We use it a lot in Asia, and do it subtly in some countries ... as we are not allowed to say anything about God, we dance as professional dancers with the Holy Spirit in the streets... and the results are beautiful and amazing. People are drawn to His Light and Love. And it is a first important step. We sow spiritual seeds in the lands...

Prinith, I enjoy reading you. Yes, Saartjie we always move connected to people and ministries in the land. It is so important and rich that respectful way, connecting our different anointings and authorities. Vera, I would love to read you more too on that subject!

Vera Chierico: In 1997/8 I was teaching and leading a Rosh ha Shana (head of the year) meeting in a Messianic fellowship in (French) Switzerland and also asked to speak about dance worship in an African church there. They invited me to go on a missionary outreach on the streets where they sang in their tribal languages and stunning clothes. It drew huge crowds and I suddenly realised I had circle dances I could lead to their African chants!!

I grabbed a few in the crowd who looked like they wanted to 'move' and we danced for a very long time to every song/chant they used! Often the choir members came to join the circle! It was so joyous that a British Jewish girl in Switzerland with African Christians could be part of that experience!

Another time I was in Paris teaching and presenting in a Messianic conference, with USA singing group Kol Sim- cha (voice of joy) they were singing their all scripture songs in Hebrew English AND French (roni roni chante chante) and I had several members of NJD with me. We had a dance for EVERY song they sang and we were all wearing our ministry T-shirt uniform blue with a white Star of David. When we finally reached the Arch de Triumph on the Champs Élysées the gendarme caught up with us and threw us off the street not for singing and dancing....FOR WEARING THE STAR OF DAVID!!

Christine Jeanville: Vera so good to read you remembering these times of blessings in our francophone part of the world. Merci beaucoup. Was it in Geneva with the African church? I think someone talked to me about you. Yes for the Star of David nowadays... you are not allowed to wear religious signs in secular places... and it is dangerous to wear anything related to Israël because some people would think you are provoking them and will come to you.

Vera Chierico: Christine yes and that was 20 years ago! Yes Geneva

What kind of music do you like to use. Do you choose music that proclaims the gospel mostly or do you have music on other Christian themes too?

Prinith De Alwis Jayasinghe: Saartjie we perform to the drumming.

Christine Jeanville: Any kind of music, depending how God leads and in which country we are... sometimes without music, sometimes with a musician, choreographed or spontaneous, instrumental or with words. God is so rich in His ways of expression.

Christine Jeanville: Prinith, I'd love to see that! Is there a video somewhere?

Prinith De Alwis Jayasinghe: <://www.facebook.com/groups/5057182188/permalink/10156978642262189/>

Christine Jeanville: Prinith, thank you! We will be in Sintra and Lisboa, Portugal next week! Thank you Lord for complementarity in Your Body

Vera Chierico: Saartjie my choice will always be Hebraic style music which is 99% pure scripture! However Messianic interchangeable dance can be done to any music any where (I teach workshops to that effect!)

If you had to give one tip to a person who wanted to do something similar for the first time, what would that be?

Christine Jeanville: IDENTITY. Be yourself as you stand in the streets, just willing to let God's Heart shine out from you, as you proclaim body, soul and spirit His Breakthrough Light and Love for the world. Don't "perform" but offer your living sacrifice. People don't need another performance, they need to be literally touched by HIS SPIRIT dancing with you, as you delight and declare in Him. Much Love from France, dear Saartjie and dancing Family in Christ. Like to discuss with you.

Saartjie DeWet: So much wisdom in this answer - thank you

Vera Chierico: Christine yes definitely! That's what I love about Biblical circle dance... no prima donnas?



Photo: Christine Jeanville
Photographer: Sodapop Jeanville

To become part of the Dance in Missions Network contact : Linda Wells linda.wells@om.org