



ICDF Networks

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Network for Missions



Photo: Provided by Linda Wells

There is GREAT power in praise that can defeat the kingdom of darkness. The Missions Network enables members to share opportunities, theory and experiences of using dance and arts in mission.

God has clearly shown that dancers, in fact, clear the heavenly realm as they dance, thus enabling other giftings in missions to see breakthrough physically and spiritually in their land of service. Psalm 149 also says: “Let them praise Him with dancing” (v3) and “May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double edged sword in their hands” (v6).

Dance Warriors for the Nations...come and join us!

**Once we come to terms with “going into all the world” no matter where that may be...
THEN....we begin to see those living in the reality of “greater works than these shall ye do.”
- Linda Wells, Network Coordinator**

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Project Hope, Nadezhda, Bulgaria

I have always been around missionaries. My dad came to England from America as a Missionary so I know roughly what life is like. However we lived only in developed countries. As part of the New Jerusalem Dancers we have taught and presented Davidic dance all over the world, some countries are more open than others to the idea of dance in a “religious” environment.

But this is what I have found recently: a very good friend of mine, Anna, and myself started to homeschool our children after we felt the faith school was very compromised and both of our sons have special needs where their needs weren't being met. So we developed a strong bond as we shared the duties of educating each other's children. After a year Anna informed me that she had been called to Bulgaria to live in a Roma Gypsy community and was going to work with the children there.



Photos: Provided by Natasha Chiterico

After they had been there a month myself and my son David went for a visit, it was a life changing experience. The poverty that this up and coming European country allow it's residents to live in is shocking. There is little sanitation and drains, only every few houses have a toilet or hole in the ground. We often see people urinating and other things just out in the street! There are roaches and rats that bite at the children while they sleep. Food is in short supply for the poorest families, although readily available from cheap “shops” (shacks) that sell things mostly in unsanitary conditions.

So the Roma Gypsies have it hard. Not only that but even while myself and Anna have been with some youth out in Bulgaria, they are treated like dogs, shooed out of shops and we are warned daily not to be near them because they are dangerous. They live in a community, an area given by the government to contain them in one place and rarely go out of it! Most of the community are unsaved and still live very much in sin, drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse are very common. But the families that have had their children saved in the youth services are starting to make a difference and now most of the children's families are beginning to change their lives. The pastors have put on extra services in the church aimed at the adults and families.

The reason Anna and the pastors there started a youth church was because children generally were not welcome in church, they don't tithe. Also the children aren't good at sitting, listening and behaving as you would expect a child to behave in a church environment. Most of the children lack basic life skills and mostly did not go to any type of school. Now, the church runs life skills lessons and we teach English and Bulgarian, to equip the children to go to a mainstream school. This is the only way they will be able to ever work, drive and integrate into society. When they come to a lesson they also get lunch so at least we know they have eaten. They have a child sponsorship scheme that helps to fund all of this.

Anna also runs a drop in centre and playroom from the bottom floor of her house, this is to allow children in desperate need to drop in and have a space to get warm, clothes, a wash and food. The playroom is for the pre school age children so that hopefully at age 7 they can go straight into a mainstream school and get a full education. The family gets funding for the children to go to school and they need to be in a state school to get the relevant papers to be able to drive and enter exams.

What's this got to do with dance? Well... Gypsies have amazing music! When there is music they dance! The music is ethnic, almost middle eastern mixed with reggaeton. It is very catchy for someone who is used to Israeli music! They have weddings, birthday parties out in the street and brass bands with drummers who accompany the party and they dance through the streets. It's like the thing that makes their lives better! They dance without music sometimes, just start dancing, all the time.

So when I walked into a youth service for the first time the kids were all dancing. Sometimes some of the older pastor's stop them and tell them they can't dance because it's a sin. This comes from the idea of parties where people drink and smoke marijuana which grows wild in Bulgaria and shake their hips. However, of course I reminded everyone of the Bible verses that refer to dance and verses that refer to decency and order. So the hip shaking inside church, not so much...

These young people have so much poverty and such a hard life, but they dance with beaming smiles! Why? How? Apart from the health benefits of dance, feel good hormones and the social aspect you wonder sometimes, but they don't know what our developed country is like. They don't know what it's like to have a secure room to sleep in with central heating and hot water. All they know is what they live in, so they don't see themselves that hard done by.

They have large families, lots of friends that play out in the streets, they have a party every other day to go to. So this is the thing that lifts them up, that brings them joy. Some of the mothers I have never seen smile, until they start to dance. When they dance they are free from the poverty, free from stereotype and they become full of freedom and joy. This is so much more exaggerated in church when they dance. As they have all of the above plus the Joy of the Lord, and the freedom and blessing that comes with being a child of God. There are no social expectations or judgement about dance in the community at all and this carries through into church. If someone wants to dance, they can, and no one will be looking or judging. Dance for them is the best part of their day. Some of the children have said if they couldn't dance they may as well not live. There are a few children who have really taken on some of the different dance that I showed them. They find it hard to do choreographed dances, they prefer to be freestyle with their dance. but do enjoy circle dances, Yemenite and Klezmer style dances. I have introduced them to some songs from Paul Wilbur, Joshua Aaron and others which have a very ethnic feel. One boy, Yuri, copied me one time to a dance I have for Agnus Dei and every time he sees me he does the moves but with Gypsy flair! I will just pass him in the street and we start to dance. I wish that happened to me more often, in my everyday life.

These children pray with fire, they worship like an army and love God with such passion it is truly inspiring to watch and be a part of.

Request - Anna and myself will appreciate prayer for the work being done, for good health and safety.

If anyone would like any more information please email Natahsa at ... projecthope.playcommunity@gmail.com. Videos can be seen at ... <http://www.icdf.com/en/galleries/networks-gallery/mission>

Shalom

Natasha Chierico



Gather & Scatter: From the Nations, to the Nations

"Amy W. is the Director of Training for OM Arts. As a dancer and historical theologian, she is passionate about discipling artists to be theologically sound, spiritually mature and artistically excellent."

"Miss Linda, I've been learning dance on YouTube. Can you tell me if this is the right way to do an arabesque?" While on a trip to the Middle East last summer, Linda Wells, director of Compass Dance Academy, found herself answering this question and teaching an eager young lady some of the basics of ballet in a parking lot, using a railing as an impromptu barre. From this and many similar past situations sprung the idea of "Gather & Scatter"—a gathering of international dance students with a heart to worship and glorify God through dance but lack access to proper training.

Initially dismissed as a far-fetched dream, Linda returned to the U.S. to focus on the dance studio she had opened just a few years prior. Within three months of her return, she found herself in a new studio space with the capacity to host such a training, along with a board of directors and staff who encouraged her to pursue this dream. Studio families and the local OM community were willing to host dancers from abroad. The dance teachers were willing to donate their time. Gather & Scatter moved from dream to reality.



In August 2017, eleven dancers from nine countries flew to the U.S. for a month of intensive training. Multiple classes were held each day to develop the dancers' technique in ballet, contemporary, jazz, hip hop and worship dance. Despite long and hard days, no one complained when a teacher asked them to repeat an exercise or to run the choreography again. Each participant was clearly committed to making the most of this time and training. When they weren't dancing, they attended sessions on the arts in mission, dance and intercession and teaching dance to children. Additionally, significant time was spent in prayer and spiritual formation with an emphasis on integrating all they were learning.

It was a time of immense joy. Laughter—in their classes, at meals and on breaks—was a regular occurrence, revealing a beautiful balance in this serious transformation. They endured the difficult training and heart work because of their joy and delight in both the Lord and each other.

In speaking with some of the dancers, each one affirmed how deeply Gather & Scatter impacted them. They spoke of deep community and friendship, of confessing sin to one another, praying together, ministering to each other, of a trust with surprising depths and a change of identity. The month was a time of rejecting lies they have believed and of relearning their true identity in Christ—transforming and training not just their bodies, but their spirits as well.

Gather & Scatter was always intended to not only be about internal heart work, but equipping dancers to minister. Kim from the U.S. put it best, saying, "I'm learning to see myself as God does. [At the same time] it's like He's putting demands on my potential." The more clearly Kim saw herself, the more she realized what God was asking of her.

Kim's was not a unique experience. And each of the dancers who were a part of Gather & Scatter is preparing to pass on what they've been learning, both technically and spiritually. In fact, they developed such a great community together they were already planning to visit each other and minister together in a number of their countries.

By the end of their time together, Linda was struck by how these eleven dancers had been uniquely prepared to serve as a short-term dance team anywhere in the world: “Trust and unity are the hardest things to develop in an effective short-term team. Since they’ve already got it, they’re ready to go!”

This unexpected but welcome realization is leading to serious consideration for the long-term future of Gather & Scatter, both for those who have come through it (as an ongoing short-term team) and for the planning of future iterations of the program. Linda described Gather & Scatter as one of the best mission trips she’s ever been on— with the advantage of being able to sleep in her own bed at night.

All joking aside, in equipping these eleven dancers, Linda and all those who volunteered time and housing have impacted nine countries around the globe. And who knows how many more, as those dancers embark in further ministry? So, the next time a young person says they’ve been learning dance from YouTube and asks about the right way to do an arabesque, may it be one of the Gather & Scatter dancers who’s standing in the parking lot and able to teach that young person ballet. May they continue to pass on what they learned technically, while sharing about the One who transformed them while they were learning it.

Amy W

"This article first appeared in OM Arts' December 2017 publication of VIVID magazine. You can help support OM Arts' and receive 2 copies of VIVID a year at my.omusa.org/getvivid."

South Africa: 40 Days of Worship



40 Days of worship took place all over South Africa but with a special focus of organised events in Cape Town from 25th September until 3rd November 2017. This was an initiative started by Francis and Mildred Lira from Brazil who received a vision and direction from the Lord in August 2012 concerning God’s plans for South Africa, plans of Revival and the manifestation of His Glory as a result of His Presence in this nation. The declaration was that the Fire of God’s Glory would ignite in Cape Town and spread throughout South Africa, to the Continent of Africa and on to all the nations of the world. This was a confirmation of what God had been speaking over South Africa for more than 108 years, through more than 40 prophets from the different nations.

At sunset on 24 September groups gathered on mountain tops throughout Cape Town and South Africa, praised and worshipped and blew shofars to usher in the 40 Days of Worship (see photo above). Following this people prioritized and dedicated their time to worship the Lord publicly in malls, on beaches, in schools, in parks, on the mountains, in their work places and wherever the Spirit led them. Members from the Christian Dance Fellowship of South Africa were involved in flashmobs in public places at Rhodes Memorial, shopping centres, Cape Town Parade market square, Cape Town train station and on Blouberg beach front. We also participated in a street march and stopped, prayed, and made declarations on each street corner (see photo below).



These are some of the testimonies from the event:

- A few of us gathered for worship in Sun Valley. The father of the house was bed ridden for a few months. We prayed for his healing. He grabbed a hand and rose out of the bed. This elderly man wept as he realized Jesus had come to bring him into Himself, to give him the intimate relationship he had been seeking his whole life. He was baptized and received the Holy Spirit.
- We worshipped God in the street and as we walked we saw a “Rasta” looking man who is a believer. He got saved in prison. We prayed for him and then two other young ladies joined. We shared Jesus and prayed for them to be free of addictions.
- After witnessing to a lady who was a former prostitute and now car guard, she accepted Christ and was baptized in the Holy Spirit there in the street. She was completely overwhelmed by God’s peace and joy and began to laugh as she asked to receive the Holy Spirit- where before she was burdened by all kinds of stress and worry.
- We witnessed two other men get baptized and freed from possession and addiction. After praying for a few other people, we watched God move them to tears as He healed their hearts and set them free!
- At the train station a woman confessed that she was on her way to shop lift. She was at the station and saw us dancing and stopped to watch. We prayed for her to be set free and for God’s provision in her life.
- At the Parade, we prayed for a woman who was bound by demonic spirits to be set free. We prayed for another man who had been homeless for many years. He shared that he desperately wanted to return home and come off the streets and be reunited with his family.

In three days, in three areas 28 people received Jesus in the streets, were baptized, and received the Holy Spirit. Prophetic words have been released over various neighborhoods as the Lord reveals His purposes in each. Disciples of Christ are being established and many believers are coming to life in Christ.

Genuine “oneness” in the Body is being seen, as believers come together to work the same fields. Since the 40 Days of Worship, we believe that God has changed the atmosphere in Cape Town and we have gained entry to places which were previously difficult to enter. An example is when leaders from various churches gathered to pray in our SA Parliament’s Chambers on 24 November, exactly 3 months after 40 Days of Worship. These open doors are quite significant post the 40 days, as these were answers to our prayers.

Hallelujah... Thank you Jesus. We are expectant for what God will still do throughout SA, the African Continent and the world.

Liesel Townsend

Gallery

40 Days of Worship

