Worship Dance to celebrate the Army’s birthday in Suriname

Boisterous youth celebrating the ‘Grand Old Lady’ of 90 years.

In Suriname, The Salvation Army celebrated its 90th anniversary in Paramaribo, 9-12 October 2014. In contrast to the longevity of the organisation, 65% of Salvation Army members in the region are under 40 years of age. This is a good thing in a country where young people are struggling to find a direction for their lives. Children and young people were cheering, singing, dancing during the celebrations, but also praying, witnessing and serving.

Especially impressive were the young girls’ dance groups, coming from Paramaribo, Nickerie and Pontbuiten. Through the celebrations they presented individual solo dancing, as well as performing in various group constellations.

In between meetings, I found a chance to meet with some of the dance girls and asked them some personal questions regarding this beautiful expression of worship and ministry.

Carol (18) from Paramaribo Central corps tells me how she started dancing in The Salvation Army:

‘Some years ago there was an occasion where our Captain asked me to do a dance with the children. Me? What on earth should I do? I love music, so I found a song they could dance to. Later she asked me to perform a dance myself, alone. That I had never ever done but she encouraged me to try, “the Lord will help you” she said. My first song I danced on was “Give it all to Him.” (Forever Jones)’

There’s a voice that cries out in the silence
Searching for a heart that will love Him
Longing for a child that will give Him their all
Give it all, He wants it all
And there’s a God that walks over the earth
He’s searching for a heart that is desperate
And longing for a child
That will give Him their all
Give it all, He wants it all

Priscilla (18) is the leader of the dance group from Pontbuiten. She is a professional dance teacher and dance is her life, but her life ambition is to serve God and his Word is central in the ministry of the dance group. ‘Through dancing I find peace. I can express my feelings and I can bless and encourage people. The most important in the dance is the expression, that the song comes alive within you. One of my favourite songs that I dance is “Your Great Name” (Natalie Grant).’

Lost are saved find their way at the sound of your great name
All condemned feel no shame at the sound of your great name
Every fear has no place at the sound of your great name
The enemy—he has to leave at the sound of your great name
Petra (18) is Priscilla’s twin sister. She started dancing at 8 years of age but stopped later in her childhood. Two years ago her sister revived her interest and invited her to join the Salvation Army dance group and now her favourite song is ‘Moving forward... I won’t go back’ (Israel Houghton).

I'm not going back, I'm moving ahead
Here to declare to You my past is over in You
All things are made new, surrendered my life to Christ
I'm moving, moving forward, oh

Riana (17) does break-dance in a dance group where she is the only girl. The Captain in her home town invited her to go to church in The Salvation Army and she is well aware that dancing in The Salvation Army has helped her to get through a difficult period in her life. At the 90th anniversary celebrations Riana presented solo performances as well as taking part with the other girls in group dances.