

A Time to Dance

June 27, 2010

The group, directed by Angel Leal, began seven years ago. Today, Yeshua has 15 members, most of whom attend Angel's father's church. They practice Monday through Friday, three hours a day, at the local cultural center where they regularly meet new dancers. An invitation to church is always extended but never forced. Angel says he wants the youth to attend church because of God, not out of pressure. If anyone wants to accept Christ, Angel talks to them personally to make sure they understand the decision they have made. An estimated 80 percent of new dancers become believers. Although the group primarily practices breakdancing, they also integrate a variety of other dances such as salsa and hip-hop. They dance to rap, rock, hip-hop and reggeaton music with Christian lyrics that are often interpretive of biblical stories or concepts.

One of their routines, entitled Resurrection, begins with John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." As the music starts, the team is laying on the ground. By the end, they have been resurrected from the dead, representing what Jesus did on the cross and the new life that believers have in Christ.

For many of the members, the song is more than an illustration; it is a personal testimony. Many have forsaken gang life to follow Jesus and be part of an evangelical Christian dance team.

Angel says the song provokes spiritual conversations from audiences. The name of the group, which means Jesus in Hebrew, is also a witnessing tool, allowing the team to share about the Jesus they are praising with a dance. Although unorthodox, the kingdom of God is expanding thanks to urban style dance.