



*Still fanning  
the flame ...*

*2 Timothy 1: v 6*

Front cover design based on an  
original idea by Colin Hale

... bringing  
'the Light of the World'  
to people, organisations and  
communities

## **SEASON'S GREETINGS**

Thank you for all your support this year



# Flame Trust

- education
- supporting disadvantaged people and the voiceless
- local and worldwide community involvement
- mentoring and social development in a variety of cultures and situations
- tours and events bringing insight and challenge to audiences in the UK and overseas

## News & Prayer Update Christmas 2021

### *Dear Prayer Partner*

I write this newsletter as the Climate Change Conference in Glasgow is being relegated to history. Dominated by argument and controversy, it appears that the resolutions have not ticked all the boxes ... as was to be expected. However, the theme that has attracted my attention has been the debate around the use of words and language, highlighted by the interjection of Greta Thunberg with the description of the talks as being 'blah, blah, blah'. Another activist described the discussions as being 'a load of twaddle'. In other words, too much talk which will not precipitate corporate action.

**The Christmas Story is defined by language that seeks to describe a moment in history when God reached down into the darkness and introduced light....or as John's Gospel describes it...'The**

**Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us'. This 'Word' was more than a figure of speech and definitely not 'blah, blah, blah' or 'twaddle'. Furthermore, God followed his revelation of the 'Word' with action ... providing, not only the basis of an agreement with His creation, but a pathway for addressing the malaise of mankind. As with the follow up to Cop 26, the responsibility is ours to respond appropriately. And of course, that is the Good News of this season. God showing himself in an understandable form and encouraging us to find faith , through trust in Christ ... the Light of the World.**

This is the message which is the reason for the season and the heartbeat of Flame....a message that spurs us on to continue to do what we do best - introducing light into darkness - whether it be through our

ministry initiatives, our Chaplaincy project, our construction of playgrounds for disadvantaged children, our encouragement and support of new and emerging ministries or just 'being there' when the going gets tough.

The following is our current update, and we thank God for his encouragement and indeed wisdom, in what has proved to be a very challenging season.

### **CHAPLAINCY MINISTRY**

It was in September that we called our Chaplaincy team together for refreshment and training, after what had been a very difficult season and in anticipation of the weeks and months to come. Gerry Denston, our brilliant organiser and motivator, devised the programme and it was a terrific time of sharing, ministry and feedback. It helped to invigorate attendees and indeed, since that

time, much has been happening with strengthened relationships with the Academy group that is the prime focus for this outreach, and the use of church facilities for ongoing development. Gerry writes:

*'God is certainly doing new things. We welcomed several new chaplains into the group, and one of these is now establishing chaplaincy in Pedmore for the first time. All six schools in the group are now covered. A request has come through via the chaplains to the local church, asking if we could set up a second hand uniform shop. Plans are now in hand for this to be realised, and another local church is adapting its premises to provide a safe and secure learning environment for children to continue their education'*

If you want to read Gerry's report, check out the Flame website.

*Dave and Gerry engaging with attendees at the Chaplaincy training day at Kinver High School in September*



## PLAYGROUND PROJECTS

Yes...you read this heading correctly! As a result of the success of the last Playground Project (see *the children enjoying the facilities below*), we are currently looking at



another initiative to improve the lives of children in Romania. Three requests have been suggested although of course, at this time, we shall only choose one, but we may well be working in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. Habitat builds homes for disadvantaged families, and there are several locations in Romania where children need some recreational space and opportunity for therapy and exercise. However, Romania is currently in the grip of Covid and is rated as a 'red' country so research

and further enquiry is on hold. There is also one other situation that is independent and in need of support, so watch this space ... or at least, keep an eye on the Flame website as we will let you know what is decided at the appropriate time.

## Q3 ACADEMY

After some months of deliberation, the main board of the Q3 Academy group has decided that it is time to consider a merger with another group of academies here in the West Midlands. My concern in this development has always been that as we grow, we need to recognise that there needs to be renewed governance as none of us is getting any younger!

Yet at the same time, there needs to be a recognition that Q3 is a network with a distinct Christian ethos. Indeed, it was part of my responsibility, along with the original Sponsor, to make sure that we were registered as a 'school of Christian character', and it is that ethos that has underpinned

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our educational provision and that has served us so well.

Another Academy Trust has been approached that endorses this emphasis, and so we are currently actively researching some exciting possibilities. I shall still remain as Chair of Governors at Langley where of late, we have seen some wonderful things happening and where we have been recognised as one of the top schools in the country. We also have brand new facilities ... the provision of creative theatre space and extended dining room facilities, plus added teaching and learning areas (*see the full site below*). I wish I could take you on a guided tour, but there is a link here <https://youtu.be/C-hGuY-wmS4> and on our web site to the recent Remembrance Day commemoration that will give you the overview. Take a look and I think you will see what I mean.

## TIME OUT 2021

Despite the understandable restrictions, the regular Time Out Conference in October went really well. David Coffey was brilliant in his exposition and we also had excellent contributions from other speakers based in Torbay. But it was the last one of its style as we have decided to draw a line under this initiative and replace it with a different kind of opportunity for the Flame family to meet, with less travel challenge. Plans are still being discussed, but again, watch this space and it may well tie in with some other news that I shall share later in this letter.

## PERSONAL NEWS

Thank you to so many of you who have enquired about my health, and my Atrial Fibrillation diagnosis. Interestingly enough, after Time Out, the episodes of heart racing and beating





irregularly increased, so it was back to the cardiologist, who I have to say was brilliant. In a nutshell, Afib is something that is quite common 'in maturity' and having looked at all of the test results, he confirmed that the heart is in good shape with no apparent weakness or blockages.

Consequently, he is determined to see if he can control it with an adjustment in the medication regime. We shall see, but your prayers appreciated. Afib is not life threatening, but is very uncomfortable to say the least. However, my perspective is that as we get older, we have to adjust our expectations of what we can expect from our earthly frame and having very close friends who are currently experiencing some serious health challenge, I am grateful for God's goodness and strength at this time.

I just need to be realistic and get the balance between activity and relaxation.

As my GP said, 'Your problem is that your mind thinks you are 40, but your body is reminding you of your real age'!

## **ON THE ROAD AGAIN?**

Many folk of late have suggested that I should do a series of ministry evenings, sharing the vision and ministry activity of Flame, but using my music as a platform for sharing and encouragement and raising the profile on service opportunity.

I have also had one or two other prompts that this might be appropriate so ... hold your breath for this ... I am considering doing a series of events across the UK next Autumn, probably early November, where I will be joined by John Daniels – my brilliant songwriter and ministry partner in the 70s and 80s – writer of some of those songs that now feature on the 'Still Waters' album.

Music would play an important part, but the main thrust of the evenings would be to encourage folk to consider how they can involve themselves in God's work, irrespective of age and excuse.

I would also invite a special guest for some of the evenings, and it may well incorporate an extended Flame Family



weekend, based here in the West Midlands – possibly using the Academy facilities with some residential opportunity for overnight stays in a local hotel.

Now I really want an honest reaction from my Flame Prayer Partners, so do let me know what you think. It was in

1986 that we toured with the *Dirty Hands* presentation. It was an amazing success, with many folk now in Christian service as a result of those evenings ... 2,228 people responded in one form or another.



The mission emphasis has always been an integral part of my ministry and therefore this project is one in which I am investing serious thought and prayer at this time. Indeed, if such an event would be welcomed by your church fellowship, drop me a line or tick the box on the Response Form.

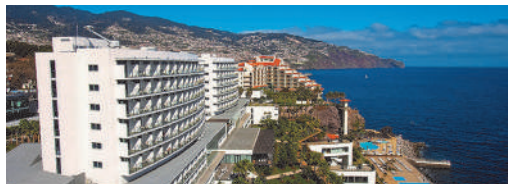
## **INPUT AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

When Flame was established many years ago, it was agreed that in my later years, I should make myself available to

support, encourage, advise and listen to leaders in other mission organisations that are charting their future strategies for being salt and light. That opportunity remains a regular feature of my ministry and although refusing to sit on committees and boards, I find myself being drawn into discussions with those who are thinking, praying and planning mission strategy for the days ahead. Please pray that God will continue to give me opportunity and wisdom for such encounters and input.

## **MADEIRA 2022**

Many folk have written in the past few months about the possibility of returning to Madeira, where we enjoyed fellowship, ministry and relaxation just before Covid put pay to travel plans. Consequently, we have researched and planned for a return to Madeira next year ... February 14th - 21st, and already over 40 people have signed up.



*The Vidamar in Funchal (above) will be the base - there are still some places available. More details on the website.*

## FLAME ADMINISTRATION

Adjustments have been made as to how we operate our administrative processes. We



withdrew from the office facility at a local church because it was not being used during the long Covid season, so now Jackie works part-time as my assistant, working from home.

Calin continues to help me on the practical side of what I do, as well as liaising with our Romanian partners. Stewart Hills and Jenny Beardsmore also have input into our administrative/financial management, along with Clare, who is our Board Clerk.

Our phone line – 01384 232786 - continues to be operational and is accessed by Jackie on a regular basis. All recorded messages are picked up, and all post addressed to the P.O. Box number is delivered appropriately and serviced.

Sometimes, there might be a slight delay and we may even consider using a dedicated mobile phone/number as we go forward which would be 'live' from time to time. The website is

being kept more current, so any breaking news or important notice will be posted there.

Of course, email is dealt with very quickly, and that continues to be the best form of direct communication. **If you are on email, yet have not given us your email address, please consider sending us that information.** It saves us time and postage and is very effective, but for those of you who are without a computer – no worries. We will still keep in touch via 'snail mail'.

I conclude by thanking you for your prayers and gifts. It has been a tough year, and we have made some decisions to maintain our commitment to good stewardship. Your gifts are really valued and appreciated and as we go forward, we will make you aware of our needs so that we accomplish what God is giving us to do. Some of you have in recent weeks increased your regular giving. Thank you for that consideration...a small regular increase makes a very big difference in what we do.

Be assured that we continue to use your practical support wisely and well.

Finally, may you know God's blessing and peace at this time of the year.

Growing uncertainties and the paucity of leadership across Nations reminds us that the Prince of Peace deserves His rightful place in our considerations and celebrations.

May that Everlasting Light shine into your homes, families and fellowships this Christmastime.

God Bless ... and thank you.

*Dave*



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Registered charity no: 1134374

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