



Flame Trust

News & Prayer Update - November 2018

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Registered charity no: 1134374 Company no: 06778011

- 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

Dear Parker,

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is here. As I drove along a country road this morning, looking at the mist that was covering the low-lying land, I could not help but reflect on the wonderful summer we have enjoyed, and all of the opportunity provided to appreciate the delights of the great outdoors.

However, my thoughts were soon interrupted by news reports that reminded me of what we have done to the planet and indeed to each other, and I was diverted from the sights of berry laden hawthorn and a beautifully rose tinted sky into what some folk would describe as 'the real world'. Fighting in Syria, proclamations by Mr. Trump, deliberations and arguments from Party leaders, the state of the nation and news of a couple having been brutally murdered....news reports on Radio 4 that contrasted with the sense of gratitude I was feeling about the privilege of living in a wonderful world. What a mess we have made of our stewardship and our care for this planet and for each other, and before this develops into a three point sermon, let me continue to say that what I share in the next few paragraphs is designed to honour our Creator, and address some of the inequalities, spiritual blindness and lack of appreciation of His creation.

Against the backdrop of questioning and disbelief, there is a rising tide of awareness that we are spiritual beings with the capacity to live in a spiritual dimension. I see and hear this as I walk and talk with the student population and, interestingly enough, students tend to be more sharp at dismissing the empty rhetoric of some of our politicians, and identify what

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values are important to see them through their dreams and ambitions. They will sometimes join the march for the wrong cause, but there is a conviction to stand up and be counted. Of course this is a generalisation and there are exceptions to the rule, but I perceive a new searching and desire to build substance into lives that will stand the test of time.

Thank you for supporting me and allowing me to be part of the communication of values that do make sense of what is happening around us, in providing foundational material and good news for those who genuinely want to make something of their lives.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Invictus Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy Initiative in six local schools is growing fast and has been warmly embraced by Heads of Schools, and Pastors in churches who are keen to address some of the issues that emerge in the student population. We have appointed Gerry Denston – not as a Flame Staff member but as a Liaison person, to work with the six schools, and 'cement' relationships and develop plans for the chaplaincies. On Friday November 23rd we have been asked to organise our first Sixth Form Conference on the subject of 'Ethics in the 21st Century' which will be attended by mature students from all of the academies. I have the privilege of chairing this event and it will also be attended by our local MP, Ian Austin who is very supportive of Flame. Please pray for the planning and preparation, and for all that happens in and around this Conference.

Q3 Academies

A very busy season indeed, with another academy being added to the Q3 family, within close proximity to Langley and Great Barr. Formerly Ace Academy that took over from the predecessor school, namely Alexandra High School in Tipton, the Schools' Commissioner asked if we would take responsibility for this academy (see below right). It was in 'special measures'. It has been a tough journey and we are still not clear of the challenges that have accumulated down through the years. Please pray for progress, particularly in addressing behaviour issues which are critical if teaching and learning is going to be successful.

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I continue as Chair at Langley, and it has been great to welcome some of the Flame family to come and see how the school 'ticks'. The invitation is open to any of you who want to visit and see some remarkable students enjoying a safe environment and growing in their knowledge and capabilities. I am very proud of what is being achieved under strong and committed leadership and 100% commitment from those with wisdom and oversight.



Beds for Romania

I am delighted to report that as a result of your generosity and support for Calin, my practical assistant, all of the necessary money was raised to supply brand new beds for the home in Romania that cares for young people and adults with severe mental disabilities.



The beds and mattresses were delivered on time, and the bedding company also supplied bedside chests of drawers free of charge. Everyone was delighted and we received a very appreciative letter from the Director of Social Services in Maramures, Northern Romania. Thank you for all your kindness.

Teaching, preaching and singing

This season has found me in a number of churches, speaking and sharing at events and services. I still harbour concerns that many fellowships are not making the connection between the fast moving culture and society in which we live and explaining the relevance of the Gospel and being 'good news'. And yet, as I alluded to in my opening paragraph, there is a growing spiritual awareness, prompted by the redundancy of effective leadership across our Nation and across the World. How we address that, I am not sure as the challenge is getting bigger, but maybe we need to spend a little more time telling the good news story more often and modelling what that is all about. Easy to say, but....!

Quite a number of you of late have enquired about some of those early albums that I produced, with the help of John Daniels – way back in the seventies and eighties. Many of you also bought copies of *Still Waters* which John, Ian Watson and myself worked on a few years ago now, and issued as a CD. *Still Waters* featured some of those old favourite songs with wonderful new arrangements and it was very well received.

Well...hold your breath!...John has been working on some of those old vinyl albums, namely *Writing on the Wall*, *Face to Face* etc., and with some very clever new electronic gadgetry, has been able to re-master those earlier albums so that they can be accessed by today's technology. In other words, we are considering re-releasing some of this original material. Once we have worked through all of the detail, we may well look at re-releasing *Thank Offering* and *Love Offering*. So, keep an eye on the website and we shall share more information as it develops. We may produce a limited number of CDs and also make the songs available as a 'download' from the Flame website. We shall see...

Personal News

Yes...I hit the 70 year milestone. Thank you for all your cards, gifts and greetings. Someone asked me what that felt like and I admitted not a great deal different to how I felt at 11.59 on the previous evening. BUT it has been a lovely season of celebration with close family and friends and reminder of God's faithfulness down through the three score years and ten.

Yet at the same time, I have taken some moments to consider what the next few years may look like if God's timing allows. I do want to be more

'measured' in what I say 'yes' to doing and have taken a close look at the diary to identify where my experience and gifts can be best used. I have begun the process of resigning from committees, unless they provide the basis needed for 'Telling The Story', and moving away from activities that have simply been absorbed by simply 'being there'.

My Board at Flame are wonderfully supportive. I have always said that, as I grow older, I want to spend more time with other mission agencies sharing some of the principles of growth and seizing the right opportunity, and avoiding some of the mistakes that can be so easily made. I have also been approached by several churches, asking if I would help build their vision for ministry as we find ourselves in this changing world. However, I am also aware that our resources are becoming more stretched. Of late, we have said goodbye to a number of very faithful prayer partners and supporters who have been very generous at all levels of support, so we are going to have to keep an eye on the Flame ship to make sure that we keep our sails well trimmed. I have always resisted the urge to make financial appeals – firmly believing in the truth that as you share need, the right people respond. I am still of that opinion, but I may need to be a little more upfront about highlighting those needs!

One or two health issues have emerged. Restriction in the higher vertebrae has left me with a diagnosis of spondylitis which at times, transfers itself to affecting the nerves in the neck and some 'giddiness and light-headedness'. A little disconcerting at times and often accompanied by loud tinnitus, but as I said to a close friend some days ago, this is a small inconvenience compared to some of the health challenges that are being endured by very close friends.

Calin, my practical assistant, has recently had cruciate knee ligament reconstructive surgery which puts him out of 'heavy' practicality for at least sixth months, and with the possibility of saying goodbye to St. James House, and then the need to de-clutter and get ready for a move, the timing of this is interesting. BUT at the moment, we have no definitive news that our exit is imminent so please pray that the timing will be right, should we be asked to vacate in the foreseeable future.

Jackie continues to do an amazing job considering she is only 'part-time'. Many of you have come to know her via the telephone and her

efficiency and attention to detail often allows me to bask in reflected glory. Pray for her and all that she does, as she has a very full life outside of Flame activity.

As I draw to a close

Thank you for all your support and encouragement down through the years. We shall be at 'Time Out Conference' as this news sheet is issued and I love the opportunity of meeting so many of you and getting current on YOUR news.

I am also travelling to Pakred in Thailand at the end of October (25th -31st), to support the work of Rainbow House (right), and to be with our students and staff from Q3 Great Barr who are visiting during half term. Please pray for effectiveness in that visit and safe travel.



Don't forget to use the Prayer Fuel page on our website. It does get updated - sometimes not as frequently as we would like - but that depends on getting updates from folk who request prayer, so please help us in keeping that current.

Daniel Todorov assists Jackie in posting news on the site, and we are thankful to him for his expertise.

May God bless you in all that you are doing and thank you again for supporting Flame's ministry activity,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve'.

PS As you are aware, postal costs are rising. We are really keen to make sure we have all of our partners' email addresses for the occasions we could send updates this way. If you haven't already sent your email information to us, then that would really help when we have 'stop press' detail.