



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 - November 2017

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Dear Prayer Partner,

As I start my day, Radio 4 reminds me that it is the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 articles of faith to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. What ensued was a movement that he could never have anticipated, and as I listen to the overview from a previous Archbishop and John Humphries, it gives a new meaning to that overused cliché – ‘the rest they say is history’.

But what I find interesting is that the explanation this morning, of Luther's objections to the established church was couched in vocabulary that would have little meaning to the generation of today, and although I find myself agreeing with the tenor of what is being commemorated, it is yet another reminder that our message today needs to be understood in the workplace, the school, the college, on the streets, and indeed wherever salt needs to be scattered and light needs to be shed.

I am sure that the explanation of this anniversary would have been lost on many of the listeners – although of course many of today's generation would probably have been tuned into Radio 1 or some other contemporary station.

Sharing, and being ‘Good News’ is at the very core of Flame's ministry. It is the heartbeat of what we do, whether it be in UK based opportunity, or working with partners at home and overseas. To extend that well-known phrase that is rightly or wrongly attributed to Luther – ‘Here we stand, we can do no other’.

It is also our mission, our calling and our imperative.

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THE CHALLENGE I FACE

As I begin to share what is currently happening in and around Flame, I want to preface my comments by re-iterating that I have no desire to expand Flame as an organisation. Movements can become monuments very easily, often precipitated by adding staff and thereby more responsibility, or by taking on duties that are 'high maintenance' and resource thirsty.

However, as I head towards one of those milestone birthdays, I want to be sure that the experience that God has been gracious enough to give to me down through my 47 years in ministry, is invested wisely and can be dispensed into the lives of others who can take on the baton. Not that I am thinking of retiring. Nothing could be further from the truth, but I want to make sure that I can accomplish God's plan and purpose for such a time as this, without having to attend to areas of work and management that have a knack of diverting your attention from the main thing.

SO, what I now share for your prayerful and practical support falls into that focussed commitment for whatever days lie ahead.

CHAPLAINCY OPPORTUNITY

In my interim newsletter, I shared the amazing opportunity that has been generated locally through another local network of academies in the Dudley area. One of the pastors from the local Methodist church has been so faithful in his commitment to a local school for twenty years, and has earned terrific credibility in his role as a chaplain. Consequently, the CEO of the Multi Academy Trust that comprises six secondary schools has invited Flame to build on this commitment and roll out chaplaincies into all of the schools . The idea is already endorsed by the six head teachers!

This is quite unprecedented, and so we have decided to invest in this opportunity, looking for local people who can be trained to serve as volunteers and be available as listeners, speakers, initiators, supporters etc.etc. It is a sensitive area and needs to be handled very carefully, as one over enthusiastic saint can make appropriate witness and ministry difficult for others.

So, in that respect, we are going to appoint someone with great experience in the education sector and a deeply committed Christian, who can help with the recruitment process and also encourage a 'Timothy' to work alongside. This will not be a Flame Staff appointment, but this person will be

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supported by us for a couple of days each week. This will all take time and discernment. Rushing these fences will lead to spills without the thrills, and we need to encourage prayer and practical support for this initiative – but what an opportunity!

Of course I am still involved in the Q3 Academies. I sit on the Trust Board for two schools and am Chair of Governors for Langley Q3. Both schools are enjoying wonderful success; indeed one of our students was successful in his application to Cambridge and achieved the academic results necessary to see him commence there last September. We have also been invited to 'tender' for another school opportunity and this is currently with the Local Authority, so who knows? Well, the Lord does....



But together with wider ministry opportunity that has been blessed of late, I recognise that there are committees I need to excuse myself from, and meetings I no longer need to attend. To that end, I am going through the list of my responsibilities to make sure that my time and talents are best used to maximise the impact for the Kingdom's sake. Please pray for ongoing discernment and an understanding from those who are reticent to accept that changes will need to be made.

THE ROMANIAN LINK

Many of you will have met Calin Rezmuves (*pictured right, in this photo*). Calin comes from a challenged background, having spent his first nineteen years in an orphanage in the northern area of Romania. It was a tough experience, and when he had to leave, he was on the streets and lived from hand to mouth.

In 2007, he arrived in the UK and helped us in some of our practical work at that time and commenced a course in English at Dudley College. Today, he is my practical assistant. BUT he feels that he should give back to those who are disadvantaged in Romania and has taken the initiative to relate to a home, near to where he was raised, that looks after adults with severe learning





difficulties. I visited this facility last July and was quite shocked to see the conditions that prevail.

So Calin has determined to raise some money to buy 16 new beds and mattresses for the people there, as an expression of love and support in a country that still has enormous challenges. If you want to help, please indicate on the response slip enclosed with this letter. £2500 will cover the total cost so any gift, however small or large will be appreciated.

UPDATES

In my August interim newsletter, I mentioned a number of areas for prayer support. The following gives you an update:

Peace Garden

As you can see, the garden at Q3 Great Barr (*pictured right*) is now constructed and has been planted with perennials and some lovely patio roses. Autumn planting, with lots of spring bulbs is underway, so it should be a riot of colour in 6 months' time. No date has yet been fixed for the official opening, but keep an eye on the website and we shall make it known in due course.

Vania Stankov

Vania passed away peacefully in Hammersmith Hospital, London, on Sunday morning, 30th July, and a memorial service was held at All Souls Langham Place, London, on Friday 3rd November. I had the privilege of



sharing in the service with Rico Tice, Noel Tredinnick, All Souls Orchestra, and other contributions that represented Vania's life and witness as an opera singer, musician, and as a wonderful wife and mother. Please continue to pray for Ivo and his son Theo. A scholarship fund has been established as a tribute to Vania's life and witness and will be used to support young musicians in their aspirations and training. I will include the detail online on our website.



St James House

A buyer has been identified for St James House, but a problem has emerged in that the original purchase, way back in 1990, was subject to a Covenant that restricted use to administrative purpose. The prospective buyer wishes to convert the building into apartments, so everything is currently on hold. Flame rents space in the building and the owner, a good friend of ours, does need to sell the property for a variety of reasons.

Please pray that a solution will be found so that this difficulty might be overcome and that as and when a sale is agreed, we will be able to find a new home.

Spring Break 2018

The travel industry is going through some turbulent times. The falling pound and the collapse of Monarch Airlines, has had a big impact on prices on popular routes and our research into taking a party back to Madeira proved to be too costly, so we have researched a very attractive alternative which I launched at Time Out recently.

BULGARIA is a beautiful country – very accessible by reliable airlines, and it provides an opportunity for rest and relaxation as well as linkage with the local church. I have been travelling to Bulgaria since the mid 70's and have built good relationships with ministries there, particularly in Varna. We last visited there in 2005 with a party from the UK and it was a wonderful time.

ST KONSTANTIN (*right*) is a very pretty and quiet spa resort with beautiful woodland walks and beach areas. It has recently benefitted from a big 'makeover' with the development of some



lovely hotels and restaurants. VARNA is only 8km away where I have many church contacts, so this will be the location for our spring break.



Nessebar, a UNESCO heritage site, near to St Konstantin, which we will visit

This holiday (15 - 22 May) is most reasonably priced - particularly in May - and single supplements are minimal. Spaces will be limited, and from the initial interest shown, I think this visit is likely to be very popular.

I will begin to head towards a conclusion. It was at Time Out this year that David Coffey reminded us of the changing times in which we live, when some of the things we would never have thought possible, are currently being debated and are high profile. Our tendency might be to detach ourselves from the world in which we live and be content in the departure lounge for our flight Home. This is not an option if we take our calling seriously. 'News at Ten' might torment us as we recognise that the world seems to have gone mad, where there is considerable lack of clear and dynamic leadership on the world stage, and when we live in an era when even the identity of some individuals is under debate and question. My incredulity at times is helped enormously by God's sovereign omnipotent wisdom. He knows what He is doing and His heart breaks with ours.

So, let's commit to spending more time praying for those situations that give us grief, praying against the erosion of Christian values, and praying for those who are in positions of authority, who are ambassadorial in the corridors of power. Pray for grace ... and lots of it so that we can be more loving in our understanding. And pray for the Pope! Certainly the one in Rome, but this one here in this corner of the vineyard where life continues to be exciting.

With grateful thanks for your support, expressed in so many ways.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve', written in a cursive style.

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.