

**ICDF NETWORK**

**2021  
Newsletter**

**FLAGS  
AND  
BANNERS**

**Joint Coordinators:-**

**Marie & Andrew Bensley  
Darlene West**



**International  
Christian Dance  
Fellowship**



Warmest greetings from the Flags and Banners Network of International Christian Dance Fellowship!  
It is our pleasure to send you this Newsletter with encouraging narrative and pictures for you to read  
and for your viewing pleasure.

*A note of thanks to Andrew who has blessed us by gathering and formatting this newsletter and we want to thank him for his investment of time and for using his creative gifts for the body.*

As the annual fee for Networks paid to the CDFs has been dropped, in future our newsletters for the Network will be supplied in PDF format to be attached to e-mails. If you have received this Newsletter as a hard copy, and you haven't already done so, please do give us your e-mail address if you would like to have future copies e-mailed to you, so we can add you to the database.

If you would prefer to receive a hard copy, please forward a cheque for £2.75 (payable to "Kingdom Dance" and sent to us at Sunset Hallows, 21 Admirals Close, Watchet TA23 0QD) to pay for printing, post and packing.

Thank you for your interest and support over the years. Do keep in touch,

Many blessings, **Marie & Andrew**

### **YOUR NEWSLETTER**

Many thanks to the contributors for this newsletter. Do YOU have something to share? If so, we would love to hear from you for our next issue! We would especially welcome articles from abroad. Please email your article to:- [bensley@clara.net](mailto:bensley@clara.net)

### **WORKSHOPS AND INFORMATION**

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Dear worshipping friends,

We have some news for you for 2022 - Andrew and I have decided the time has come for us to RETIRE from the position of Flags & Banners Network coordinators. In 2022 we will have been in the post for 25 years! - and enjoyed so much of what it entailed. Meeting likeminded people who worship and praise with flags, ribbons, streamers and other props. It has been a great privilege to serve the Body of Christ in this manner.

Because this will be our last Flags & Banners Newsletter we thought it would be interesting to look back over some highlights through the years, which you will find throughout this publication.

**Marie writes:-**

My first encounter with a flag in worship was at the 1994 ICDF conference in York (England). I went as a novice as my experience of worship dance was seeing Judith Stevenson and Andy Au dance on stage at the 'Spring Harvest' UK national conferences and also seeing Springs Dance Company dance at Greenbelt - a UK national Christian Arts Festival - in the early 1990s.

My first teacher was Andy Au when he led the 'flags in worship' workshop at York. Many of you know that this conference changed our lives forever as after that the Lord showed us we had to move to the West Country in the UK, and following that the 'Christian dance' involvement took over our lives. I gave up my job as a schoolteacher and started to teach, mainly on how to use flags and other props in worship, and I was soon leading workshops all over the country. In 1997 Andrew and I went to the South Africa ICDF conference and it was there that Mary Jones asked me to take on the leadership of the Flags & Banners Network. Andrew soon joined me as he was able to do the computer work for the Newsletter.

When we started to teach about using flags in worship, at the same time we began to learn about 'the Jewish Roots of our Faith'. We went with Paul Heyman to a Messianic conference in the UK and as he played his violin I taught simple Messianic movement so that everybody could join in. The main speaker was Christine Darg, a well known Messianic preacher, and even now on Revelation TV. We had finished the music and dance part of the day and were trying to pack our things away. She called out 'where are the dancers?' meaning Andrew and me! So we reluctantly went forward and she prophesied over us that we would travel to many countries teaching and sharing the message with many people..... We were astounded as we had no thoughts on those lines at all. So what followed in the next 20 plus years was all that she prophesied in her words that evening.

We went to Australia in 2000 for the next ICDF conference, and I taught a mainstream set of four morning workshops exploring all the aspects of using flags in Praise, Worship, Warfare, Prophetic, evangelism, all age and inclusion. It was a very exciting time. The dance I taught the delegates we performed in one of the evening celebrations was 'Shout to the Lord'. It felt so amazing to be at the conference and dancing with such an enthusiastic group from many different countries - a little taste of heaven!



*Dancing at the Australia Conference in the year 2000*



Just before we went to Australia we were invited to teach for the major Christian company Kingsway's Children's Ministry at Eastbourne in the UK. We did this for 13 years and had some amazing times at different locations in the British Isles with every workshop having over 100 children's workers and Sunday School teachers. The first workshop was so oversubscribed I taught standing on a table! So they had to find me a bigger room for the workshops - there was such a hunger to learn about teaching Christian dance to the children.

This led on to us developing our own 'flag ministry' - ***KINGDOM DANCE RESOURCES***. I started to sew flags and ribbons and write helpful booklets. We have lost count of how many have been sold but it must be 1000s! Fru Bird, who was the leader of Springs Dance Company in the 1990s/2000s said '***You are beautifying the Bride of Christ***'. This statement has been my motto ever since! Thanks Fru!

I became a Regional Coordinator for the CDFB and Andrew was elected Deputy National Coordinator - a post he held faithfully for 9 years. He has been a director of the CDFB for 20 years!

There are so many people to thank for our amazing journey but one period stands out and that is the Dance Weeks we led at Brunel Manor in Devon. The atmosphere of being in the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit as we taught and danced and fellowshiped could not be surpassed until we dance in Glory! So our thanks go to every dancer who came in those 15 years and to the teachers who inspired us. Debby Ward, Anna Arnold, Doreen Basar, Debby and Alan Tees, Gilly Bowen, Carol McDonald, Sue Doyle, John Usher, Tim Boaden, Debby Collett, Marilyn Williams, Janet Blake, Paula Hocking and others - all of whom shared their heart in testimony, words and dances.



***The dancers warfare with their flags outside Brunel Manor!***

The ICDF has played a major part in our lives for these past 25 years. We have been privileged to go to most of the international conferences and have friends from so many different countries that we would never have met. My enduring memories will be of teaching so many people and hearing stories of how it changed their lives. One in Singapore of a new service starting in their church and they used flags for the very first time and the blessing fell. Also of joining in with the national cultural dances of the countries. I have a powerful memory of dancing with the Navaho Christians in full national costume to the '*Reverse the Curse*' dance in Texas.....amazing! Also Andrew and me dancing our first dance together as a couple on the stage and what that led on to for us as dancers!

***So, huge thanks to so many people. We retire with bursting memories of amazing, happy, Spirit filled, never to be repeated times of dancing fellowship - and all because I picked up a flag and danced for the first time at the ICDF national conference in York UK in 1994!!***



# 2021 Newsletter from Darlene West

**Greetings** from Canada. Bless the Lord oh my soul with all that is within me, bless his Holy name!

**Firstly**, I want to thank the Lord because He makes a way where it seems there is no way. 2021 was a tough year for most of us with all the restrictions and lockdowns re "C", but I'm so thankful that a passionate remnant was still able to meet and worship.

**Secondly**, thank YOU, to everyone in this Network for pressing through, for holding the line, for continuing to raise your hands unto the Lord in worship. Thank you for allowing me to work with the Bensleys as joint-coordinator for a number of years. This is my last year as well, in this capacity, however, I will stay connected and contribute when I am able. Following is a snapshot of this year.

**I was really blessed** to teach these young ones how to use different instruments of worship in our weekly worship practice (blue billow flag).

**This summer** the Lord opened up a portal of heaven in the middle of nowhere in a densely treed area of Alberta. Upon my arrival I was heavy-hearted with a number of issues, until I opened my car door when the fragrance of freshly cut pine enveloped me, it felt like heaven. Then as I walked into the clearing of trees, I wept as I saw so many worshipping with flags that I created over the last 15 years. It felt like a home-coming.

**One weekend** I connected with a neighbour and we spontaneously met at a river, half way between our homes, and we worshipped in the fresh open air. Outdoor worship must be my favourite!



**Brown, the color of humility** and intercession, and the color of land; and butterflies that represent breakthrough and transformation. This flag was waved as we left an amazing out-of-town prayer meeting, and a half hour out of town, what did we see only metres away, 7 bald eagles! (The prophetic voice is coming back to town.)

**Darlene West,  
Joint  
Coordinator,  
Flags and  
Banners  
Network, ICDF,  
Canada**





## ***FROM SCEPTIC TO DANCER!***

As this Newsletter is a 'LOOK BACK' I have taken the time to read all the 24 newsletters we have written - what a wonderful task!

There were so many names of people we met over the years and also those who were influenced and helped by our teaching and workshops who we never met. I laughed and cried as I read the story of our ministry as it played out in the Flags & Banners Newsletters. Also with huge thanks to the ICDF for giving us so many amazing opportunities to teach and share what the Lord gave us.

I have a testimony here from Massimiliano in Italy as it sums up for us our story and the mandate God gave us all those years ago.

In 2008 Andrew, Thea Soltau, Vera Chierico and I went to teach in Florence and there we met, among others, Massimiliano. This story (written by him but which I have paraphrased) shines a light on what God had called Andrew and me to do.

Massimiliano writes:-

**A SCEPTIC** - I did not know anything about Christian Dance and I thought it was not compatible with church. However I had been thinking of young people and how they go to discotheques so perhaps 'dance' could be in the church. Three of us from Rome decided to go to a Christian dance conference in Florence. (The only conferences I had been to were Bible teaching ones). When I arrived I thought it would be 'just a laugh' - as I entered the building the whole congregation was dancing.....but I thought it was 'just having fun'. As I prayed God 'told me off'. He said '*you have been seeking, now rejoice in my worship*'. So I asked for forgiveness and started to let myself go into this new worship.



**Massimiliano and friends!**

**SCEPTICISM DISAPPEARS** - I had several moments of profound communion with God. He did a miracle in my life in the middle of a prophetic dance led by Maria Pia Flamini. About surrendering our problems that are like mountains to God - and I felt the power working and the weight disappear!

**GOD BRINGS HEALING AND WHOLENESS** - One example of this was that of Andrew and Marie. They told us how through 'Christian dance' they had seen the restoration of their marriage which was deteriorating after the death of their son. How they wholeheartedly entrusted themselves to the Lord and saved their marriage and were now serving the Lord through Dance. I thought if they solved such a big problem through dance worship I too could change my negative circumstances through worship. Marie and Andrew have inspired in my heart a great hope that God confirmed in my life. With them, for the first time, I took a flag in my hand and worshipped the Lord in total freedom!



## ***SOME HIGHLIGHTS from 25 YEARS of the FLAGS & BANNERS NEWSLETTERS!***

**1998** The first Flags & Banners Network Newsletter - we introduce ourselves!

**2001** ICDF Conference Australia 2000.



**2002** Teaching for Kingsway's Children's Ministry in Belfast, Northern Ireland!



**2003** ICDF conference at Texas, USA.  
Also the start of the Dance Weeks at Brunel Manor, UK.



**2005** Weekend teaching in Guernsey, the Channel Islands.



**2006** ICDF conference in Malaysia.  
David Stanfield becomes joint Coordinator (for 2 years).



**2008** Dance conference in Florence, Italy, with Thea Soltau and Vera Chierico. We meet Massimiliano (*see story on previous page!*) and Alessandra Bedin. We also teach in Singapore and New Zealand.

Judy Lam  
from  
Singapore

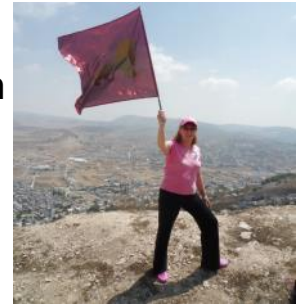




**2009** ICDF Conference in Scotland where we meet Darlene West.



We also visit Israel, and the photo shows Marie with her Lion of Judah flag above the Judean hills!



**2010** Darlene West from Canada becomes Joint Coordinator.



**2011** We visit Canada, teaching at the church in Quebec state where Johanna Cardinal (former ICDF coordinator) worshipped. We also took the opportunity to visit Darlene's dance chapter in Calgary, and were asked to speak at Belma Vardy's church in Toronto.

**2012** We continue to teach at Brunel Manor, and visit the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles in Israel.

Darlene teaches flagging outdoors and on spiritual warfare with her flags!



**2013** ICDF conference Puerto Rico.



**2014** We visit and teach in South Africa. Another visit to Belma's church in Toronto where we teach again.







**2015** Paula Douthett visits Darlene's group in Canada, and Darlene teaches at several amazing international conferences.



**2016** ICDF conference Ghana. Our friend and fellow teacher Anna Arnold taught a flags workshop as we were unable to go. Another friend and colleague of 25 years, Debby Ward, taught and danced at the Brunel Dance Week.



**2017** CDFB National Conference at Brunel Manor. Middle photo shows Helianthe from Holland dancing. Also at the Conference Steven Turner, CDFB Youth Coordinator, dances with flags. Darlene teaching at many Canadian conferences.



**2018** ICDF celebrates 30 years! Country flags laid out and prayed over at Brunel Manor.





**2019** ICDF culture tour of India. Last group photo of dancers at Brunel Manor before the centre very sadly had to close due to the pandemic. Darlene "doing battle for Canada!"



**2020** We are really pleased to receive the ICDF Foundation Flame Award!! The pandemic strikes and most workshops go online, or people worship outside.



**2021** Another year living with the pandemic, but we heard from many flag worshippers from around the world that praise and worship was still going on!

- ◆ *For more information on this and other ICDF Networks visit [www.icdf.com](http://www.icdf.com)*
- ◆ *This and all ICDF Networks are run voluntarily for the support and encouragement of CDF members / ICDF Supporters*
- ◆ *The Flags & Banners Network encourages ICDF Network subscribers to maintain their membership of a national Christian Dance Fellowship if there is one in their country, or become an ICDF Supporter if there is not.*