

*ICDF NETWORK*

2020  
Newsletter



# *FLAGS AND BANNERS*

**Joint Co-ordinators:-**

**Marie & Andrew Bensley  
Darlene West**





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.*

## **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)

Thank you for your interest and support over the years.

Many blessings, ***Marie, Andrew and Darlene***

## **GREETINGS FROM DARLENE WEST:-**

Greetings everyone, from Western Canada.

□□□ And HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021 □□□

Praise God that His mercies are NEW every morning and let's praise Him yet one more time that we overcame 2020! If we are alive today we are Overcomers!

I'm usually ALL about the photos but I don't have one photo this year. We did do (as a local group from Calgary, AB) a short Covid video - if you'd like to take a look, here is the Link:

<https://youtu.be/u2OymtPoTVk>

*(Interesting process as each of us submitted a short piece from our own back yard and it was pieced together into one song, wonders never cease!)*

Just a short note to encourage us all that THIS (covid-19) TOO SHALL PASS.

Also, I want to thank Andrew very much for all his work formatting this N/L, countless hours I'm sure, and Marie for coordinating and communicating with all the flag people who contributed an article. You two are amazing!

It's such an honor to be part of the F&B Network. Thanks.

**Darlene West** (Westworks Flags, Canada) [info@westworksflags.ca](mailto:info@westworksflags.ca), [www.westworksflags.ca](http://www.westworksflags.ca)



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## ***Hello dear flag and banner worshippers!***

At the end of 2020 Andrew and I look back on serving the ICDF and CDFB for 25 years!

As we reported in last year's Newsletter we had the very pleasant surprise of being awarded the ICDF foundation Flame Award for 2019 for outstanding service. It was delivered from Australia to our friend Debby who presented us with it as Mary Jones could not travel because of the pandemic.

You can see our delight in the photo!

What a strange year this has been. Who would have thought the whole world would be facing such a terrible time of trial with this covid 19 virus!

At first when we were told that everything had to be in 'lock down' we wondered if we would ever get back to some kind of normal. Our church buildings closed, our workshops cancelled, unable to meet up for fellowship and singing and dance forbidden! What were we to do?

Very soon the creativity in people began to emerge and many were able to get back to dancing but not how we did it before. We danced via Zoom, and some people refer to the amazing CDFB celebrations for the 30th anniversary in their reports. We also went outside!!!!

As we come to the end of 2020 we have discovered that through the lockdown and the use of zoom there have been many more people dancing than ever and we have connected across the world in a way we never would have thought possible... So a little positive thought to ponder on in what has been a hard time for many !



We asked a few Network members for their thoughts on this year and we have been overwhelmed by the response.

The Newsletter is longer than usual but do read these inspiring accounts and be encouraged. At the end is a fascinating testimony from Brig Baylis in the UK of her spiritual journey that she calls 'THE COCOON' .

***Marie***



## CREATIVITY THROUGH COVID!

We had this prophetic word of encouragement from **Heather Collett**:-

(written 1st September 2020)

*'God has told me today that dance comes with a cost. We are misunderstood. Often used only for special occasions in the church. Afraid to step out for fear of rejection. Fear of man. Dance is a personal act of prayer movement. Exposed, nothing hidden. As we dance God comes with us, He speaks through our movement in a language only Jesus can see. It is a hidden devoted prayer only He can read - yet Father God uses to communicate his Kingdom of love and healing to all who will come and taste and see the kindness of our God Yeshua. Let us use this time as dancers to rest in all he has for us to come. Nothing is wasted at this time. The land has to rest after the 7th year now we rest and reset.'*

'Marie I can only say you have held me up at the CDFB and your words brought me healing and help, thank you!'

*Heather*

This comment from **Emily** I saw on Facebook summed up what we were all feeling:

***'When you just have to go out and worship because the weather is too beautiful to miss!'***



**Penny Whalley** from South Africa wrote this to us in October:-

We are well and enjoying the sunshine. We have had an amazing amount of snow and rain this winter and the dams are full after the drought in the Cape, indeed we have cause to celebrate.

Our ministry of 'Windsong' has been very quiet during the lockdown. But coming out of that people are starting to move around [while still taking precautions] and are still dancing here, just more in their own homes and outside.



I am excited for this new season we are walking in, as I think we will be seeing new and innovative ways of expressing our love for the King. We are enjoying being able to meet again in small groups and we are learning not to take the simple things for granted. We are surrounded by the goodness of God and have much to celebrate.



**Irene Moore** from Australia also wrote to us in October:-

I am well despite a diagnosis of osteoporosis in my lower back but looking to Jesus for healing and taking steps to reverse the process through exercise, diet and prescribed drugs. I rejoice in the hope I have in Him.

I am still passionate about worshipping with flags although currently I use them mostly at home or in my prayer room. My Christian community are still meeting through zoom on Sundays so my living room becomes my worship space.



I can't help but wonder about the relevance of flags during the current corona circumstances and sense it could mean that expressive worship needs to be taken out into the open more in the future.

My own personal worship has remained a key avenue in finding solace and encouragement as well as knowing that God is sovereign and working out His perfect end time plan despite the circumstances.

**Sue Wheeler** from the UK:-

The CDFB zoom conference weekend was just awesome: as I have space in our home, a converted Chapel. I love having the chance to worship with others and due to various health issues, sitting in a chair and worshipping with the flags, ribbons and scarves works best for me!



**Janet Booth** a coordinator for the North West region of CDFB wrote to say she had been to Uganda with a team in February, just before the corona lockdown. They were ministering 'The Father's Heart conference' in several churches and Janet was teaching people to enjoy dancing with flags.



**Belma Vardy** emailed us from Canada - Belma has a very special ministry to the 'First Nation Peoples' of Canada. She travels to their reservations and ministers and teaches. Their response has been heart warming.



*She writes this: 'people on most of the reservations never allow their photo to be taken. Special permission has to be given. I wrote to the chief and all the families were contacted and it has taken this long to get their permission. I wish I could speak to you with regards to the background of the first nation peoples and what all this means to them. They've always been tossed aside and made to feel not important in society and this is still going on today and most hurtful and devastating to them.'*

Andrew and I add that we are very proud to have this lovely photo of Belma and the young people she had been teaching to move with flags in our Newsletter.

**Debby Ward** our local regional CDFB coordinator has a small group of dancers at her church in Minehead in the South West of the UK.

Minehead has a large beach and I joined them for a time of worship to beautiful music. It was so refreshing to dance (socially distanced but together) after the initial months of lockdown. A few weeks later we met up again in a very large garden which was just a joy!



A dance presentation which was put together during lockdown was the "UK Dance Blessing" compiled using over 200 dancers and shown on YouTube.

**Nicky Enticknap**, CDFB regional coordinator for Midlands West, sent us photos of her and her team dancing with ribbons for this presentation, in Leamington Spa.



**Heather Collett** from the UK, who sent the prophetic word included earlier, was also enthusiastic about the CDFB zoom conference, writing:-

"The conference was amazing - I could hardly believe it! We are preparing to take our flags out to a bandstand near my church on our first 'Healing Rivers' Outreach. There will be 5 or 6 of us dancing and sharing the Father's love.

Marie, you have been a real strength to me as I slowly move forward in what God wants for us. He is showing me to discern and lead with confidence through His Holy Spirit as we move on to the streets to dance and pray now the churches are shut."



*Like many of our UK dancers Heather enjoyed taking part in the 'UK Dance Blessing' video in June.*

**Judy Lam** from Singapore - we met Judy when I was asked to teach at a dance event in Singapore. Since then we have seen her lovely photos and dance ministry on Facebook. She sent these photos to us just before lockdown, when she and a friend were determined to



scale this mountain while they still could! She also explained on Facebook how she could still use her flags on her balcony, despite the constraints of the pandemic!



Continuing our theme of ***Creativity Through Covid***, in October our friend **Chris Harris** phoned me to ask us to make a Lion of Judah flag for her as she believed the Lord had given her a picture for a small group from her home Lydney (10,000 people) to prayer walk the mile long town centre street. She duly purchased the Lion flag from us (Kingdom Dance Resources) ..... She writes:-



*"Seven of us met including a 10 year old boy at 7 30 am. We read aloud Psalm 23 as a blessing over the town. I led the way with the red lion of Judah flag. We walked slowly, stopping to pray at significant places. Rachel scattered salt as we walked and Amy anointed door knobs with oil. It thrilled us when 10 year old Toby wanted to pray for the fire fighters outside the fire station! The weather had been very windy and wet so we prayed for a dry*

*spell and God answered our prayers! It was dry as we walked the mile through the town and only started to rain when we were on our way home! We all felt it very powerful and purposeful. I had a significant conversation later in the week with a neighbour that I see as a result of our intercession but I am hoping to hear of more fruit as time goes on!"*



**Sue Blow**, who has been a CDFB member almost since the beginning, let us know that she had also been witnessing with her flags, on the streets of her town during 'Hope for Exeter'.

**Gilly Bowen** from the UK again emailed us about the CDFB Zoom Conference:-

"I did enjoy the conference and my overriding reaction was appreciation of all the hard work involved. I do have a problem worshipping alone. I feel like an observer rather than a participator. During the conference I watched others worshipping from time to time, enjoying the swirling shining colours speeding across the screen, but I confess ... I'm just not there! (Gilly was one of our regulars at the Dance Week Andrew and I ran at the lovely Brunel Manor. Sadly the centre had to close as it did not survive the economics of the pandemic) She continues ..... I feel the loss of Brunel Manor acutely, as communal dancing, learning new steps and having fun with likeminded people are my way of connecting with God.



However I did make 2 small half circle Angel wings flags. They are my 'go to flags' perfect for indoor use. No broken antiques here! I also have met up with 2 other dancers for tambourine worship! I am choreographing tracks from 'Messianic Praise' and it was special to worship in person with others, and created connection at last to the Creator.





## DANCING THROUGH THE SAD TIMES

**Carol McDonald** from the UK wrote to me at the beginning of October - to say that one of the dancers in her Messianic group was very ill with Pneumonia and would we pray. So we joined our prayers with theirs but Carol reported that Sharron had been taken into hospital with covid and was not expected to recover. This is Carol's account of what happened:-

"Sadly Sharron died after just one week and in hospital and Suzanne, Maggie, David and me signed/danced to your wonderful choreography of 'As it is in Heaven' by Michael Smith. (Actually the original choreography was done by Jan Dyer and I (Marie) adapted it to teach to the Brunel and Bristol & West dancers!)

We were in the balcony behind the screen. It was very moving and I am in shock as Sharron was only 51yrs old. Something special happened as Sharron asked to be buried next to Patricia who was also from our dance group and had died 5 years ago. It just shows how important dance fellowship is! Patricia had longed to dance but could not because of a badly broken foot. While she was in Madeira it was healed after a prophetic word that she would dance. She moved to Stroud and at church met one of the dance group who brought her along to the workshops. Patricia and Sharron loved Israel, as we do, so when we danced we had the Israeli and Jerusalem flags behind us and Shofars were blown as the coffin went to the graveside."



**Bona Gerrie** from the UK also had some sad news:-



I enjoyed the CDFB zoom conference and as one of my friends had recently died of cancer I was pleased to get the 'Restoration flag' in the prophetic conference.

Something else exciting is that I have started level 3 Exercise, movement and Dance diploma - KFA Laban dance.

I had joined the local Keep Fit Association Dance class and was encouraged to train as a teacher! I should qualify next summer and as I felt led to do this course I do not know exactly how the Lord will use it yet.

**Sylvia Ratcliff**, another of our UK network members, had a very hard time when her husband was ill with cancer and she wrote to say she was now dancing with friends in a park after the death of her husband.



## Millennium Dance Group comes to life in Denmark

*In the lockdown Andrew and I had an order from Denmark for some worship flags - so we wrote and asked what they were being used for! We had this reply from **Susanne and Ruth**:-*

In the summer 2000 some women from Aarhus Valgmenighed (a charismatic Lutheran church), met. The theme for the evening was: *"Dancing for the Lord."* We had a longing for worship dance, and several had experienced the Lord drawing near, when dancing to worship music at home. We found inspiration in a book from the UK: *"Christian dance for those who can't but are willing to give it a try"*, by Carol Hathorne.

In the beginning we would put on some praise music and improvise. Today most dance evenings have a theme. They often consist of: prayer, songs of praise, warming up, dances where often using flags and large materials. Ranging from a playful atmosphere to solemn worship of the Trinity. We end our evenings with a refreshment and socializing.

Every half year we meet at our vision evening. We evaluate the past season and search God in silence and prayer to know what is on His heart in the season to come. Being 8 – 10 women in the group we carry different passions and giftings i.e. dancing with flags, meditative dance, prayer in movement.

We dance with flags in order to proclaim who God is and remind ourselves what identity, we have in Christ.

Colours and symbols on the flags convey different aspects of God's nature and character. We also use the flags at our services. When interceding for people with flags, we see God brings inner healing to people and a deep peace.



During the years we have established contacts and cooperation with Christian dancers and choreographers from abroad. Partnering with them has led to several dance workshops, as an inspiration for us as well as our dance network here in Denmark. Last year we had the joy of having Steven Turner and Andy Raine from UK at our Scandinavian Dance Conference. We hosted the AGM for ICDF Sweden, known as Psalto.

Please note the upcoming information on the Worldwide International Dance Conference in Sweden in 2022 at [www.icdf.com](http://www.icdf.com)

**Susanne Jensen and Ruth Overgaard Kristensen**



## ***The Cocoon... by Brig Baylis (UK)***

These glimpses of the last 3 years include quotations from my journal, written in *italics*. I write in my journal from time to time to help me process what's going on in my life, with no intention that anyone else will read it. My hope is that the details I've included may give you ideas for developing your own relationship with the Lord through using a journal and/or experimenting with movement, with and without flags.

During the summer of 2017, the Lord began shaking something in me, and I felt the need to pull back from some of my involvements. On 25th August I wrote: *"Today the yearning is very strong to draw back into a cocoon."* A cocoon is the place where metamorphosis takes place: where what has been, breaks down – carefully and deliberately. So far, it's done the job it was designed for, but now needs to be re-formed into something different, ready for what comes next. How long would I be in this cocoon?

Nothing seemed to be happening until the CDFB Annual Conference. On 15th October 2017 I wrote: *"During the closing session today, we were invited to listen to the Holy Spirit for our individual onward journey. I immediately wanted to put myself into a cocoon and see where that took me. My attention was drawn to a red flag. I knelt down with my face to the floor, the flag over me, tucked into a cocoon. Immediately I realised that this cocoon "phase" is because of God's love for me symbolised by the red flag; I am where I am because of his love, protected by the blood of Jesus.*

*"At first, it's a small, confined place. Then I find I'm breathing to the rhythm of God's heart. This is becoming increasingly spacious, a place to breathe deeply, to feel my wings strengthening, stretching. I'm being enlarged. Then find myself on my feet, the flag across my shoulders. A new mantle? I shrink from that. I feel anxious about being given responsibility. But as I hold the flag upright in front of my face and focus my attention on it, I can move with more confidence. My task is to focus on the flag – the mantle I've been given out of God's love*

*for me. That makes launching out or being given responsibility feel do-able, not threatening or difficult."*

But the only glimmer of the cocoon possibly beginning to split open, came in late 2018 with an invitation to lead a workshop as part of a CDFB Regional Day. It was the region for which Marie had been Co-ordinator for 20 years. So to lead something about using flags on such hallowed ground was special.

I knew I needed to do something unusual, given that many there would have attended flag workshops already. So we started by moving with our flags rolled up. My main reflection on the workshop reads *"There were tears in my eyes as I watched amazing creativity released"*.

But the cocoon remained intact - no sign of splitting.

Then in August 2019 I attended an inspirational summer school with Movement in Worship including all sorts of workshops. Plus an afternoon spent on a hilltop, interceding for the area; prayer and worship in Hove Park; and an incredibly rich outreach in a public garden alongside the route of the massive Brighton Pride parade. Many passers-by joined in our dancing, rhythm-making, hoola-hooping; had their faces painted; received prophetic words. Most commented on how peaceful the atmosphere was compared to the other side of the fence, where the parade was passing.

Exciting stuff! Will the cocoon split open soon?

My journal entry on 5th August 2019 describes one of the last sessions of the summer school: *"I'm crouched down, as though in sprinters' starting blocks, under starter's orders. Lord, I'm ready to break out of this cocoon. Someone puts blue fabric on my back like a cape - a mantle. After a while, I curl down into a cocoon. Over the next few minutes I can sense more fabric layers being laid over my back; the cocoon is getting heavier. I need to wait*



here. After a while the music changes and I hear the lyric "the Spirit is here, things are changing." I start to move my shoulders, intending to grow out of the cocoon so that the butterfly can emerge. But the music stops and it's the end of the session. I'm still in my cocoon...

*"I then look at the layers of fabric which have been laid over me: blue, purple, red, green - in that order. Wow! "Blue, purple, scarlet" is a phrase repeated often in Exodus to describe the yarns used to make the tabernacle, the special place of worship! And green: creation, life, healing, green pastures. What a remarkable cocoon! But how long am I to stay in it? How long does breaking down the old and reshaping the new take?"*

Then in August 2020 I was invited to dance as part of the monthly Reading Burn 24/7 event involving worshippers from different churches. This is a global worship movement - <https://www.burn24-7.com>. Reading Burn has been online since the first lockdown, with the tech team arranging a split



screen to enable live art to happen alongside the music, streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

Is the cocoon beginning to split, especially as dancing at Burn is now a monthly opportunity?

Reading is also part of the global "10 Days of Prayer" movement - <https://www.10days.net> (for Reading, see <https://www.10daysofprayer.info>). During September's "10 Days", the Reading team

introduced "Music for Healing": live instrumental music played outside Reading Minster Church each lunchtime. Different musicians playing in different genres. It hadn't occurred to me that dance or flags would be part of that, especially alongside classical music. But God had other ideas! There were times when his presence was tangible and I felt pulled into the music as if by a powerful magnet, compelled to dance.

On one of those days, a harpist was playing, and a number of quite disturbed people were sitting listening. I wrote: *"The presence of God was deeply impacting. It felt a very safe place in which to dance, and through my movements, increasingly draw peace from heaven, disseminating it to those around. I sensed I was touching heaven."*

*At one point, one of the disturbed guys (who admitted he'd had too much to drink) joined me. My experience with MiW enabled me to engage and encourage him. Another guy joined in, then a young boy. Afterwards, the first dancer commented "that was therapeutic". And a big bloke who'd been watching came to me and hugged me, saying "Thank you, that did me good".*

*At one point while I was dancing, I felt the need to express release from pain and bondage cos of the broken people who were present. I remember struggling from a low, bound-up place, to stronger movements, flexing wings like a bird finding freedom.*

*A friend commented afterwards "It was like someone coming out of a cocoon" !!!*

*Brig: "Have I talked to you about cocoons recently?"*

*Friend: "No, but God has, and to other creatives... "*

Maybe the cocoon is beginning to split.... Lord, fulfil your purpose.

### **Brig Baylis**

I'd love feedback/interaction on what I've written above. It'd be great to hear from you: [brigbaylis@gmail.com](mailto:brigbaylis@gmail.com)