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INTRODUCTION

In my book *Restoring Eden* I share my fundamental belief that we are the generation of believers called to the task of 'preparing the way of the Lord'. This has many implications: the preparation of a holy bride, the awakening of a slumbering church, the discipling of an immature church, the re-learning of the message of the 'gospel of the kingdom' as well as the gathering and equipping of a mighty spiritual army. These are those who understand their position, power and authority in Christ and who take their stand against the enemy's ancient strongholds so that we might see pockets of God's presence descend to earth establishing strongholds of His kingdom or 'mountains of the Lord' right across the face of the earth today. As we prepare ourselves to face increasingly testing days it is not our churches or refuges per se to which people will run for protection; they will come only if they detect that God Himself is there because it is His presence that is the true stronghold and protection:

"Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain."¹

Beginning in the Garden of Eden I teach concerning the kingdom of God, the urgency of the time in which we live, the various schemes the enemy uses against the church to try and prevent God's kingdom being established and how it is that his influence has become so deeply entrenched in our society over generations. I also share honestly the mistakes we have made and warn about deception, danger and distractions.

The strategy is simple and it begins with this: **if a united group of believers prayerfully identify the various footholds the enemy has gained in each community, 'stand in the gap' in repentance and then seek God's face in radical worship with humility of heart, we have His promise from scripture that He will hear our prayers and heal (restore) our land.**

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."²

This needs to be a corporate journey. Therefore my hope is to inspire you to envision others to come along with you. For this reason there is a whole chapter devoted to forming, training and equipping your own Community Prayer Cell as well as a practical group study guide at the conclusion of each chapter. The questions are especially designed to provide you with guide posts as you journey step-by-step along the way together. Finally, I share some very practical helps you may wish to consider working through as you set off on your own journey towards releasing your community through prayer, worship, research and spiritual warfare.

I believe it is important that those intending to lead a group involved in strategic prayer should read *Restoring Eden* in its entirety as this will not only teach and inform on the theology and background but will also equip the leader to confidently be able to teach others. I do not advocate people dabbling in spiritual warfare prayer without first gaining a

¹ Isaiah 4:5-6

² 2 Chronicles 7:14

good grasp of some solid biblical fundamentals. I am, however, realistic enough to know that not everyone will want to wade through *Restoring Eden*. Therefore my intention in this booklet is to simply skip what some might term 'the boring bits' and reproduce the section of the book entitled 'Practicalities'. This shortened version is intended for use as part of a Community Prayer Cell whose leader has either read *Restoring Eden* or attended a *Restoring Eden Prayer School*. It is not recommended that anyone should make this booklet their starting point.

RESEARCH

..... Getting going

In Restoring Eden I have laid a thorough background as to the process that must be worked through in order to see God come and make His habitation and heal our land. Based on the following verse it is a process that involves consecration, united prayer and the seeking of God's face in heart-felt worship:

*"If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves... and pray and seek my face and **turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**"¹*

In order to reap God's promise of answered prayer for the land and its people we also need to 'turn' in some way from our 'wicked ways'. This 'turning' is worked out in several different ways and involves such things as identificational repentance, prophetic and symbolic cleansing of the land, restitution and engaging in intercession that includes both travailing and strategic warfare prayer.

However, how do we know what to repent of? Why should we even do that? What and where is the land to prophetically cleanse? Why should it need to be cleansed? What restitution needs to be made? And what is it we are to engage in warfare over or how are we to do it? Our answer to these questions lies in carrying out appropriate research – either through seeking God for answers to questions in prayer or through confirming historical records. Good research brings concealed facts into the light and helps us interpret reality.

The need to see reality

Have a look at the pictures in Appendix 1.² What do you see? This simple demonstration shows us that we do not always see things as they really are. We cannot help but see them from our perspective because that is usually all we have. How, then, do we know what reality is?

What we hear can also be unreliable. We have all had a chuckle in playing Chinese Whispers when the most innocent message has returned to us completely distorted. The language we use creates our reality or perspective. For example, mine is female, rural, Anglo, West Country, Pentecostal, young[ish] middle-aged. If you were to put me in exactly the same context as a male, urban, Afro-Caribbean, ghetto inhabitant of downtown New York, then we would likely perceive and interpret our environment in very different ways! What I perceive as real and true would not necessarily be the same as what he saw. Whilst we would each interpret what we saw in different ways, we would both think we were right! This is what we call our 'world-view,' i.e. the way in which we each view and interpret our world. The longer we live within these boundaries, the more we assume that the way we view the world is the best and only way!

¹ 2 Chronicles 7:14.

² SALT All Ages, Scripture Union, April-June 1995, p.49.

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Have you ever crossed your eyes and tried to make sense of those strange 3D pictures that you know contain a hidden picture? It took me ages to be able to do it. I even briefly considered the possibility that they might be demonic! Then one day I cracked it. As I moved the page slowly away from my face, crossing my eyes for all they were worth, I saw it – hidden reality. Whether or not I could see it, the image was there. It was truth. The fact that I could not see it did not make it any less real. But in order to see it, I needed to gain the right perspective. This is especially true of the church's view of the supernatural. Many Bible-believing Christians, even some evangelical ones, consider what I have outlined in the previous chapter concerning the differing levels of unseen spiritual resistance in the heavenlies is anathema. They dismiss the reality of the spiritual battle, assuming either that reality only exists on the material plain or that we are not to attempt to grapple with what is there. The majority of the Old Testament provides a metaphor of the spiritual battle; God's people fighting to establish His Kingdom against the countless opposing territorial kings who were Israel's enemies. From our New Testament position 'in Messiah Jesus,' we are able to engage in the battle again; this time in the spiritual realm and from a secure place of victorious authority. The context of the verse from Ephesians I quoted earlier is clearly that of a spiritual battle. Why else should Paul exhort us to...

"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."³

Perhaps the devil's schemes only apply to our personal lives...? These verses could be applied only to our own struggles against the enemy coming as they do immediately before verse 12, but Paul then repeats himself almost word for word and goes on to expand the point he is making:

"Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests..."⁴

Contrary to popular belief standing is not a passive thing but something active and implies strength. How, then, do we stand? Through prayer, repentance, etc. It is those who do not acknowledge the work of the enemy who do not live in reality. The truth is that we are engaged in a spiritual battle of enormous proportions. If we are to be successful in seeing God's Kingdom reign established in our communities, then we need to be able to gain God's perspective on reality, which is what research helps us to establish.

The leading exponent of this research discipline is George Otis Jr. He made the *Transformations* videos⁵ and has a vast wealth of experience in researching and documenting areas all around the world where God is at work today bringing not only spiritual revival but also real community transformation. I commend his book *Informed Intercession*⁶ to you. Initially we found the book very helpful, but because of its contextualisation in urban North America, we quickly found its usefulness in the rural north of England to be limited. This is why, after many years of practical experience, my heart is to share with you the principles and lessons God has taught us. These can be replicated throughout the rural areas of the United Kingdom.

³ Ephesians 6:10-11.

⁴ Ephesians 6:13-18.

⁵ G. Otis, *Transformations*, op. cit.

⁶ G. Otis, *Informed Intercession*, Renew Books, Gospel Light, Ventura, 1999.

X-Ray Vision

In **2 Kings 6:8-22**, God wonderfully opened the eyes of Elisha's servant to enable him to 'see' hidden reality. The King of Aram was at war with Israel. During the night he surrounded the city of Dothan, where the King of Israel was residing, with his army as well as horses and chariots. Elisha's servant panicked, but God wonderfully opened his eyes to see the supernatural angelic army all around. The truth was that this heavenly army's strength and might far outweighed the human resources of the enemy.

For our communities, however, it is not only angels that are hidden realities, but many other spiritual entities. These could be things like death, depression, lust, hurt or ungodly spiritual covenants, all of which reveal hidden demonic strongholds at work, governing the behaviour and mind sets of the community.⁷ As we submit ourselves to God's leading, He provides the knowledge, which helps us to discern and separate out the different problems and discern their roots. In medical terms, God gives the *diagnosis* on what is spiritually wrong with the community.⁸ In the Greek language *diagnosis* is a composite word made up of two words: *dia* meaning 'through' and *gnosis* meaning 'knowledge'. Just as X-rays provide doctors with vital knowledge to assist them in making a correct diagnosis about some hidden medical reality, so research assists us in our spiritual diagnosis. We need God to give us His X-Ray perspective to see hidden reality. Daniel writes:

*"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. **He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.**"⁹*

God brings those things that are hidden in darkness out into the light. The detailed information that comes from research is the fuel that keeps stoking the fire of repentance and intercession. As facts are revealed concerning the invisible realm, these allow us to interpret prevailing social conditions, events and circumstances we see in the natural world of our communities.

Biblical basis for carrying out this type of research

Some believers question the biblical authenticity or need for carrying out any form of research, be it in prayer or historical. Others criticise it out-right, based on some of the perceived outlandish things they believe happen. Both these views owe themselves more to a misunderstanding of what this type of research actually is.

Research is simply asking God for His perspective on what is going on spiritually in a certain town, village, area or situation. In addition to the powerful scripture from Daniel already quoted, there are countless other scriptural precedents, some of which are listed below.

Sometimes we might be out walking around our territory. Whilst familiarising ourselves with it as Moses, Joshua and Nehemiah did, we might also expect to hear from God concerning the prevailing spiritual strongholds:¹⁰

⁷ G. Otis Informed Intercession, op. cit. p.81.

⁸ G. Otis Informed Intercession, op. cit. p.81.

⁹ Daniel 2:20-22.

¹⁰ G. Otis Informed Intercession, op. cit. pp.90-93.

- ❖ **Numbers 13:** Moses sent spies into Canaan to “*see what the land is like*” (verse 18). This reconnaissance mission took 40 days and included some detailed research. Of course, God knew only too well what Canaan was like, but He wanted the people to see the strongholds for themselves.
- ❖ **Joshua 18:** This is an account of a similar survey of a particular territory. Joshua sent out 21 men to “*make a survey of the land and to write a description of it*” (verse 4). He instructed them to write it down in seven parts, town by town (verses 8-9). On this basis, the land was then divided up among seven of the tribes.
- ❖ **Joshua 2:1:** Joshua sent two spies to survey Jericho.
- ❖ **Nehemiah 2:12-15:** Nehemiah conducted three days of research in Jerusalem prior to commencing the restoration of the city’s walls.
- ❖ **Acts 17:** Paul surveyed the city of Athens, its local sites and customs, with the result that: “*[he] was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols*” (verse 16).

At other times we carry out our research in prayer alone as David and Ezekiel did. The two passages below outline perhaps the best biblical descriptions of the insights to be gained and therefore also the benefits of prayer research. We will look here in greater detail at the second passage, leaving the first passage for later in this chapter.

- ❖ **1 Samuel 21:1-14:** There was a famine in the land of Israel and David “*sought the face of the Lord*” for the reason why. It was because of sin.
- ❖ **Ezekiel 8:** The prophet describes a disturbing vision he received concerning the spiritual state and activities in the temple in Jerusalem. Through this, God revealed to him the hidden spiritual reality which was causing His judgment upon the nation:

Verses 3-6: The prophet describes how he saw Israel carrying out ‘detestable acts’ in God’s house, where there was an idol that provoked God to jealousy.

Verses 7-8: He is instructed by the Spirit to dig through a hole in the wall in order to see what lay beyond it.

Verses 9-14: He is shocked to find the elders of Israel engaged in idolatrous and perverse worship (verses 7-11).

Verse 15: He sees women weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian fertility god.

Verse 16: Then God showed him the temple’s inner court, which had become the site of utter and complete desecration. Ezekiel saw twenty-five men bowing down to worship the sun there.

Ezekiel then carried the new understanding which came from this divine revelation into passionate intercession. During this time God gave him specific instructions, which when carried through, would see Israel released and set free. These instructions were:

- Prophetic revelation (11:5)
- Prophetic action (see 12:3-6)
- Preaching of repentance (14:6)¹¹

¹¹ G. Otis Informed Intercession, op. cit. p.93.

Ezekiel was given God's x-ray eyes – the ability to see the hidden reality that lurked beneath the spiritual surface of Israel. This is what research does for us too. Through prayer and practical research, we gain God's perspective on the spiritual reality of the unseen realms that affect the visible world of the here and now, in order that we might then engage in specific prayers to see specific breakthroughs.

How do we go about it?

Experience has taught us that there need to be at least three specific groups of people involved to make the two differing aspects of research effective. These are:

- ❖ **The Archive Team:** People willing to spend time searching for hidden historic information about the area or specific events. This research is carried out largely in libraries or museums, by reading books, articles, census reports, crime statistics, etc., or by searching the Internet. Sometimes it is necessary to interview people in order to glean information from their local knowledge or memories.
- ❖ **The Prayer Walking Team:** Those who 'read' the community by systematically traversing the land street by street, town by town. They follow God's on-the-spot leading to pray at certain locations and also prophetically cleanse the land where He shows it to be necessary.
- ❖ **The Community Prayer Cell:** Patient, disciplined people willing to commit extended periods of time to prayer. They pray for God's protection over key members of the core group and also seek God's leading, clarity and guidance. This may involve such things as the following:
 - Recording, sifting and prioritising of information gathered and revealed
 - Leads about people, places, spiritual strongholds, social concerns, etc.
 - Understanding of complex 'jigsaw pieces' and hidden meanings
 - Discerning of 'red herrings'
 - Wisdom in the drawing of boundary lines, locating the position of spiritual gateways, the naming of influencing spirits and discerning the extent of their influence within the 'city'
 - Biblical confirmation of certain pictures, words of knowledge, 'facts' or theories
 - Revelation concerning God's timing for tackling the spiritual powers and following that, His way forward.

We have operated from one Community Prayer Cell that meets for prayer and worship weekly. It has always been the largest of the three teams although we have found there is not a firm demarcation between researchers, prayer walkers or Community Prayer Cell members. All three teams have come together as one in the Prayer Cell. This has greatly assisted a free flow of information backwards and forwards between the three groups. Information gathered in the library or the town square feeds intercession whilst revelation given in the throne room of God often directs activity on the ground. However, it is important that each person knows where they fit and sticks to it.

For the first three years our Archive 'Team' was a bit of a misnomer. This was because it was not a team at all but largely the ministry of just one man. He felt called and was able to give large chunks of his time sitting in various libraries and simply asking God for revelation to know which books he was to read and why. As the group has grown, others have carried out further research especially on the Internet. The Prayer Walking Team has

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remained small, with no more than three people in it at any one time. However, because the task of researching and praying into the city has taken so many years, we have seen this team of three alter completely. Amazingly, as one has sensed the need to 'retire,' God has replaced them even before they have had to leave the group.

The key thing is that those involved in each team are definitely called by God to the task. If this is the case, then they will resolutely and reliably commit themselves to seeing the task through to the end.

Keep detailed records

At all times, it is of paramount importance to keep in mind the end purpose of why we are engaging in historical and prayer research, which is that we might then be able to 'turn' from our wicked ways in whatever way God requires. This will be through our engagement with such things as identificational repentance, prophetic and symbolic cleansing of the land, restitution and intercession that includes both travelling and strategic warfare prayer.

For this whole process to be as thoroughly systematic as possible, it is essential that everything God reveals is written down. When the teams first get going we can be lured into thinking that we will remember this or that fact. But our memories are unreliable and easily subject not only to forgetfulness but also to deception – it is surprisingly easy to convince ourselves that we had a certain 'word' or 'picture' but actually it was not quite as our memory recalls it! As more and more information is gathered, accurate record keeping quickly becomes the key to the project's success or failure.

If it were not for the records we have kept, we would easily have overlooked important things. It is, therefore, helpful if one person is designated to keep records. Ideally, this should be on a computer for ease of reproduction and the moving around of information but it is not essential. The key thing is that the person is literate, thorough and reliable.

Keep in view the bigger picture

We are involved in a process ministry, not an event. Each piece of information gathered is literally a very small part of a jigsaw. Often, it will not make sense when viewed alone. This is why the Prayer Cell is a 'body ministry'. No one person has the answer to every question or the interpretation of every picture or word. God sometimes gives the interpretation of something revealed to the Prayer Walking Team in the Prayer Cell and vice versa. Only as the process continues and more information is gathered and revealed, will the whole of what God is trying to show us become apparent. This is why record keeping is so vital.

Also, whilst we may be focused on ministry in the 'micro' of one town or village, God's perspective is always the 'macro'. He thinks globally. So sometimes what God speaks may appear to be 'out of turn' and not make sense immediately because we cannot see beyond our focus on the 'micro' situation. God may be stretching us to widen our horizons a little and consider instead the whole city, region or even the nation.

Nor should we be surprised if we find a Prayer Cell in another town, county or even nation dealing with exactly the same revealed spiritual roots as we are. We are never an isolated island. Because of the way our communities were initially established, we should not be surprised to find the same root factors at work in other communities and nations. For example, Witchcraft, freemasonry and its spiritual link with Islam [not readily evident in the rural areas of Britain] is a deeply-entrenched and ancient stronghold throughout the whole

world. We must always seek to see things in context because if we ignore the larger picture, we risk misinterpreting reality.

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

- ❖ Carry out a Biblical search of the Bible passages mentioned:
 - Numbers 13, Joshua 18, Joshua 2:1, Nehemiah 2:12-15, Acts 17, 1 Samuel 21:1-14, Ezekiel 8
- ❖ List the various consequences of research being carried out.
- ❖ Identify which of the three groups (Archive, Prayer Walking or Prayer Cell) you might fit into. Why do you place yourself in that group?
- ❖ Can you identify your Record Keeper? Is the person happy to take on this responsibility?

STEPS TO RELEASING YOUR COMMUNITY

..... The Practicalities

There are clearly definable steps we can take towards releasing our community for God's presence and Kingdom to come. Our experience has been shaped almost entirely in the rural areas of the north of England but these steps are general principles, which can be applied anywhere; in fact people are using these steps on other continents.

The initial steps cover a few important generalities that need to be discerned by the whole Community Prayer Cell before your various teams can be released and get going with their own particular responsibilities.

STEP 1 — DISCERN YOUR BOUNDARY

Realise you have a boundary

If you have ever stood and contemplated the extent of Hadrian's Wall, you will have realised that the Emperor Hadrian certainly believed that boundaries were important. Stretching seventy three miles from coast to coast across northern England, it is perhaps the best known frontier in the entire Roman Empire and for three hundred years was its north western boundary. The fact that it still stands today is a monument to the skill of those who built it. This is a physical boundary and we each live within physical boundaries: around our property, around our town or village and in other areas like our job, family and church life. Each one of these boundaries is designed to protect us and help us to know how far we can go in safety. Clearly defined boundaries enable us to determine what is our responsibility to guard and protect and what is that of our neighbours.

When we flout these boundaries we are trespassing on someone else's territory and expose ourselves to being harmed in some way. But boundaries not only bring restrictions, they also bring peace and freedom. Within our defined boundaries we are perfectly free to go about life in total safety, knowing we are protected within the border. When I worked in the bank I could lend money up to a certain limit. I had perfect freedom to operate up to my lending limit but if I tried to lend money above my limit, then I was in serious breach of the rules. Or if I was temporarily seconded to work in another branch and behaved as I would in my own branch, I was also in trouble. Why? My authority only extended to my own branch. I did not have the authority to lend money on someone else's territory; and if I went beyond my limit, I did not have the experience to ensure I was not making a mistake that might have had serious consequences for the bank's profits, reputation or my job! The boundaries were there for my protection.

As it is in the natural so it is also in the spiritual, for we all have spiritual boundaries as well. In chapter one, we learned that God has restored His authority to us in Messiah Jesus in order that we might influence the world to see a measure of His Kingdom established

“on earth as it is in heaven.”¹ This authority is something precious and holy, something to be honoured and handled carefully. It does not mean that we can each go ‘full throttle’ at the enemy’s camp wherever and whenever we feel like it. This would be both arrogant and foolish. The Christian life is not a free-for-all; rather, it has order and a head – Jesus.

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”²

The fullness of everything we have in Jesus, including our authority, must, in turn be submitted to the power and authority of Him. Whether we like it or not, we have spiritual boundaries. Just as the sheep outside the sheepfold is vulnerable to attack, so are we if we attempt to move outside our sphere of authority and influence. This means that we each need to discern and stay within our spiritual boundaries in order to be able to operate freely, not be harmed and achieve our goals. In terms of the ministry of a Community Prayer Cell, before we can effectively research and pray into any individual towns or villages it is vitally important that we first know the extent of our territory and therefore, also, our spiritual influence. We can glean some important insights from the story of Nehemiah, who understood the importance of boundaries.

Discerning the boundary of your territory–Nehemiah 2:11-16

Nehemiah was released from service in a foreign kingdom in order to return to Jerusalem - what should have been the seat of God’s Kingdom on earth at that time – in order to take some practical steps towards its restoration. Once he arrived, he wasted no time in assessing the full extent of the task before him. He took just a few people with him and carried out a painstakingly thorough survey of the whole city boundary by night on horseback. He had to glean the extent of the work and what was needed firsthand before he could share it with others and hope to envision them with the task of rebuilding the city walls. This casting of the vision is particularly true for the prayer leader. Whilst we may find it relatively easy to get a Community Prayer Cell started, people will not persevere if they cannot perceive where they are going and will get discouraged easily if the proposed task seems too enormous and unwieldy. The vision needs to be unfolded gradually and my advice is to start small geographically and then grow. Secure a small piece of land, then:

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.”³

How we discerned our boundary

In 2001, God worked miraculously to provide for us to buy a house on a historically important site almost at the eastern boundary of Cumbria and the head of the Eden Valley. This was the house seen in a dream and described to us by our Korean friend in 1998. From the time the purchase was agreed, I felt the Spirit direct me to invite people to come and pray with me on a daily basis at the head of the Valley. Every lunch time for three weeks, we sat in my car at a vantage point where we could see the whole Eden Valley spread out before us. We waited on God and He gave us a number of scriptures that we prophesied out over the land. But as we looked out at the beautiful valley reaching to the distant Lake District fells and on towards the Solway Firth and Scotland, we wondered aloud how we could possibly begin to pray strategically into such a vast area.

¹ Matthew 6:10.

² Colossians 2:9-10.

³ Isaiah 54:2-3.

Then one day God spoke just one word to us: “*Drive*”. So we did. When we set off I had no firm direction of where we were going, but together we followed the county boundary road ‘over the tops’ to Swaledale, returning to Cumbria via Birkdale, Mallerstang, Kirkby Stephen and then back to where we had started along the A66. We prayed and sang all the way! During the following week the Lord showed me from Nehemiah that we were actually carrying out a survey of our boundary. Together we sensed that if we continued to drive then He would show us its extent. So, on the next lunchtime, we returned to the point in Mallerstang, where we had finished the day before and simply followed the Lord’s directions again. We drove along tortuously narrow roads beside the high Howgill Fells as far as Tebay; we then turned onto a ‘B’ road heading directly towards the former county town of Westmorland, Appleby. From there we returned to the head of the Valley via Brough and the A66. When we plotted our route on the map, it formed a compact area, Upper Eden, within the larger Eden Valley. The furthest distance between any two points is approximately twenty five miles. We call it our ‘city’.

We are used to thinking of cities in terms of large areas of urban conurbation but literally the word in the Greek, *polis*⁴ means an enclosed or gated walled town of greater or lesser size - so we can equally have rural cities as well as urban ones!

Once we had travelled the extent of our very rural ‘city’, our working boundary had been clearly defined. We were able to plot it on a map and ask God for all the resources we needed to rebuild the city wall. In reality, the wall is built up as the intercessors place themselves metaphorically in the ‘gaps’ in repentance and prayer. This process took almost four years. As part of the initial phase, we also felt God led us into the following practical action:

- ❖ We bought the appropriate 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey maps and drew the boundary on the map. We then mounted this on the wall of our meeting room for easy reference. This clearly identified to everyone the area for which we had responsibility.
- ❖ We undertook a prayer drive around the entire boundary asking God to place His angels shoulder to shoulder everywhere that we set our feet [or tyre tracks!], declaring it to be holy ground

“...for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”⁵

- ❖ We asked God to establish Himself as the righteous boundary around our city

“And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,” declares the Lord, “and I will be its glory within.”⁶

- ❖ Then, over the following three years and following Abraham’s example, we painstakingly prayer walked the entire length and breadth of the territory - its boundary, gateways, high places, the river Eden and its major tributaries and all the towns and villages in between, praying God’s blessing into the land and upon the people:

“Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you.”⁷

⁴ Strong’s G4172.

⁵ Exodus 3:5.

⁶ Zechariah 2:5.

⁷ Genesis 13:17.

The extent of our spiritual influence

Nehemiah's Jerusalem had a very clearly identifiable boundary. But if the walls of the capital city were in ruins, then it is highly likely that the walls of the surrounding cities were also in a similar state. However, Nehemiah's mandate was only for Jerusalem; his calling was limited to the rebuilding of those particular city walls.

As we sat in the car at the head of the Valley, looking out towards the far distant Lakeland fells, we realised we could not re-build the spiritual walls of the whole Valley. It was an impossible task.

Once God had focused our attention on our small city, we then asked Him a question concerning our authority, as none of us were in positions that carried any obvious spiritual authority in the area. The ideal, obviously, was that the various church leaders in the 'city' should come together in unity to carry out the mandate of releasing the community but the reality of the situation on the ground back in 1999 was that that was just not possible:

"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none."⁸

As someone who values the biblical leadership and authority as I do, I did not want to be guilty of leading people into a dangerous spiritual area presumptuously, so we asked God on whose authority we were to carry out the calling He had given us. We received the following answers:

"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."⁹

"To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations."¹⁰

We took these scriptures to imply that because we are 'in Messiah Jesus', we have each already been given all the authority and ability we need to remove the strongholds of the enemy and influence the city for God's Kingdom. From the second scripture we went on to understand that if we persevered in prayer and saw our city released, God would then expand our boundary and territorial responsibility in some way, which is exactly what has happened.

What God has released is a Kingdom authority, not a particular church authority. We are all priests and citizens of the Kingdom as well as members of the city-wide 'horizontal church'. As such we carry the responsibility to build God's Kingdom in whatever way we are appointed and anointed to do. However, for our own protection and safety we need to ensure that we ourselves are people under authority;¹¹ people who are correctly submitted to God, our own spiritual oversight and to one another. We need to understand the limitations or extent of the calling He has given us, making every effort not to step out in ministry beyond the boundary of our city walls.

In 2005 and 2006, when God was graciously expanding our borders of influence by networking us with a number of other prayer leaders across the north, I learned a painful lesson, which if left unchecked, had the potential to destroy both the ministry and me. Wearing a different 'hat' altogether, I had the privilege at that time of serving an international ministry as a member of their national teaching team. So from time to time, I

⁸ Ezekiel 22:30.

⁹ Luke 10:19.

¹⁰ Revelation 2:26.

¹¹ Matthew 8:9; Luke 7:8.

travelled around the north of England and occasionally into Scotland. On these occasions, I always went out to minister under that ministry's authority and prayer cover.

When invitations began to come in for me to also travel around the region, sharing and teaching the insights and lessons written down in this book, it never occurred to me that I was going out on these occasions in a completely different manner. The ministry of HOPE, Houses of Prayer for Eden, was exactly that – a prayer ministry based in the Eden Valley. My ministry calling at that time was first and foremost to the Eden Valley. Consequently, so also was my spiritual authority. Because of the way God was expanding our connections across the region, I had presumed He had already expanded my authority as promised in the scripture above. This proved not to be the case, and through my own presumption, I inadvertently trespassed beyond my boundaries. The consequences were severe. I faced a painfully unpleasant and devastating series of severe witchcraft attacks, the climax of which left me feeling like I had been spiritually raped. Inside I was completely numb as if I had been beaten up and left for dead. After weeks of spiritual nothingness, I began to fast. After two weeks of fasting, I eventually broke through into worship and prayer, from which point the long and humbling process of repentance, consecration and restoration began to take place. This attack could have destroyed both the ministry and me and it was one of the most important lessons I have ever learned. For almost a year, I was forced to retreat inside my boundary for safety and protection until God released the permission to go to the 'nations', the different 'ethnos' groups beyond the Eden Valley. The instruction I received was very clear and specific:

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."¹²

The authority to minister outside of the boundary only came as God gave us the victory over various levels of spiritual oppression in the heavenlies. Please do not do what I did. Find out your boundary and be content to minister within it.

¹² Luke 24:49.