

CROSSING OVER

by Nicholas Szkiler and Sarah Winbow

as approved by Issachar Ministries Trustees and Team

It is right and fitting to begin this chapter by honouring Clifford and Monica Hill for their decades of faithful service to ministry. Nick first encountered Cliff at a meeting of 'Together for the Nation', a coalition of Christian ministries, meeting in Westminster in 2010. The prophetic nature of his ministry and its importance in 'sounding the alarm' to a nation seemingly careering towards a spiritual precipice - a nation that was increasingly ignoring God's laws and precepts which had been the foundation of Britain's past greatness and its leading role in modern history - was immediately obvious to Nick. He writes:

"It is a great step of faith on Cliff & Monica's behalf for me to have been entrusted with the challenge of steering the 'ship' of Issachar Ministries into the future; something I do not take lightly; a commission I feel totally inadequate for apart from the Lord's counsel, wisdom and guidance. When Joshua was called to take up the baton from Moses' leadership, he was not called to simply repeat what Moses had done but was given a completely different challenge. So, it is for me and my fellow trustees of Issachar Ministries."

Epochal Change

The past two years have brought about an epochal change in the world and there will be no return to the 'normality' we once knew. Cliff & Monica have faithfully carried out the commission God gave them, and they continue to write, minister and consolidate the achievements of the past in their 'Heritage Ministry' which seeks to preserve their legacy for future generations. The role of the new Issachar Ministries team is to do something Cliff and Monica were not required by God to do because the time was not right for it to happen - to enable the ministry to 'cross over' into a completely new season.

The Hebraic word for 'Hebrews' is *ivrim*. This literally means 'those who cross over'. On the eastern side of the Jordan the Hebrews were still a people being prepared; as they made the crossing over the Jordan their fundamental purpose changed; they were no longer a people being prepared, they were a people on mission, on task. Their purpose was to possess the land, to rout their enemies and to live in the blessings that flow only from being completely obedient to God. For us, this implies a change in perspective, in understanding and equipping, in order to live as those who actively take the enemy's ground and live victoriously as overcomers within a nation and world that is hostile to almost everything for which we stand. We are not called to be a passive or stationary people but those on the move; those who are taking the

necessary steps of faith to cross over and to implement God's will and purposes in a new season of history. We are to be a people called into action!

Current Context

When Cliff & Monica began their ministry, the world looked very different to today. The moral compass of our nation pointed to God as the foundation of our laws, education system, government, social order and family structure. The Christian faith sustained our nation through the horror and trials of two great wars during that century. There were widely accepted truths and moral standards that were certainties in much of the world, particularly in the church. Societal acceptance of God as foundational to Western civilisation began to be less evident during the 1960s, 70s and 80s and was no longer widespread by the end of the 20th Century.

At the very beginning of the 21st Century the nations were presented with a new kind of war in the aftermath of 9/11 - a 'war on terror'. This was a misnomer. Terrorism is a tactic and does not describe an enemy. Linguist George Lakoff put it this way: *"Terror cannot be destroyed by weapons or signing a peace treaty. A war on terror has no end."*¹

Western governments exploited the so-called 'war on terror' to pursue long-standing policy and military objectives, to restrict civil liberties, and in many cases to remove basic human rights. The 'extraordinary rendition' of Guantanamo inmates to CIA 'black sites' in Poland where waterboarding and extreme interrogation techniques were used are examples of this.

The outworking of Western government plans post 9/11 set the stage for the kind of sweeping global changes introduced in 2020 to address a new threat – a war on a virus. The implementation of controversial Covid-related rules, laws and tactics which threatened grave implications for the unvaccinated, represented a new level of state control and coercion. The use of behavioural science and nudge theory, inducing unwarranted fear in an unsuspecting population who believe in the benign nature of national government, has left our society defenceless against a propaganda onslaught delivered through heavily controlled mainstream and social media.

Writing in The Guardian in October 2020 former Supreme Court Judge Lord Sumption said: *"The British public has not even begun to understand the seriousness of what is happening to our country. Many, perhaps most of them don't care, and won't care until it is too late. They instinctively feel that the end justifies the means, the motto of every totalitarian government which has ever been ... The government has discovered the power of public fear to let it get its way."*²

¹ <https://bethelatwar.org/a-fraught-narrative-qualifying-the-war-on-terror/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2020/oct/27/Covid-measures-will-be-seen-as-monument-of-collective-hysteria-and-folly-says-ex-judge>

Many of those who have spiritual ears and eyes to understand the times and the seasons have a real sense of history repeating itself, particularly citing comparisons with the rise of totalitarianism in the 1930s. The level of state-endorsed brainwashing, with endorsement from all levels of society has ushered in an unquestioning compliance which is unprecedented in modern times.

Uncompromised Truth

The beginning of the 2020s introduced the world to a novel coronavirus called Covid-19. Government responses to this so-called pandemic were unprecedented and draconian. Most people would be shocked to discover that as early as 19th March 2020 Covid-19 was officially no longer considered to be a high consequence infectious disease (HCID) in the UK.³ Yet new phrases soon entered the popular vocabulary – ‘social distancing’, ‘lockdown’, ‘flattening the curve’, ‘un-vaxed’ and many more. We were treated to a daily media diet of fear and death statistics. In an unprecedented move, government statistics on mortality during two winters were added together to heighten public alarm.⁴

For those with no faith the finality of death is to be feared above anything else. Two years on it is clear that all-cause annual mortality in the UK was not exceptionally high in 2020/21 and those who succumbed to the disease were on average three years beyond the normal life expectancy.^{5 6}

As mortal fear, propagated by compliant paid media gripped the nation, what was particularly notable was that Western governments would brook no dissent, and allow no public policy discussion. The explanation the public were given was that ‘We must follow the science’. Of course, many eminent scientists were demonised and de-platformed for pointing out that governments were doing anything but following the science. One of the best examples would be the treatment of Dr. Mike Yeadon, Pfizer’s former Chief Scientific Officer for respiratory diseases and Vice President, a lifelong researcher and acknowledged expert who challenged the UK Government’s approach to combating Covid-19.^{7 8}

It was alleged that their own Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies’ team (SAGE)⁹, Government advisers and ‘nudge units’ were comprised of too many behavioural psychologists and not enough card-carrying immunologists. Certainly, almost every dire predication and proposed solution proved to be wrong and the health outcomes for nations like Sweden which did not adopt similar measures were

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/high-consequence-infectious-diseases-hcid>

⁴ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/Covid-19-daily-deaths/>

⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/averageageofthosewhohaddiedwithCovid19>

⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/deathsintheukfrom1990to2020>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Yeadon

⁸ <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/mike-yeadon-3818613>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies>

ultimately proved to be no different. However, the impact of Government responses to Covid-19 both financially and in terms of health outcomes for society is incalculable. Whatever our views on One World Government, the World Health Organisation, or Klaus Schwab's World Economic Forum and their 'Great Reset', something very clear was going on in terms of societal coercion and control beyond anything related to a respiratory disease.

Covid-19 was just the opening act in a new era of top-down government and authoritarian control. The move to 'Net Zero' Carbon emissions in order to protect the environment, 'Cancel Culture'¹⁰ 'Transhumanism'¹¹ and 'Digital Identities' to verify our status within a social credit system are all expressions of the 'New Normal'

As we contemplate the events of the past two years, one event more than any other should act as a prophetic warning of what we may soon face...

The Example of Canada

On 14th February 2022, Prime Minister Trudeau, a graduate of the World Economic Forum's young leaders programme, did something never seen before in a Western Parliamentary democracy. He cancelled the vehicle insurance and froze the bank accounts of peaceful protesters from the truck convoy which came to Ottawa to protest against his newly introduced vaccine mandate for all truckers crossing the US-Canada border. He did that by edict, invoking the 1988 Emergencies Act¹² which contains no provision for its use except when voted on in Parliament and in specific circumstances. Trudeau invoked these powers against those who opposed his policies by peaceful demonstration in a supposedly democratic country.¹³

Trudeau did this just as easily as in the following month Western powers froze the bank accounts and impounded the assets of those Russians believed to be aligned with Vladimir Putin in the war with Ukraine. Here in plain sight, we see what is ahead for those Christians who will and who must stand for truth and righteousness as God wages war on secular humanism and works out his end-time purposes.

¹⁰ Cancel culture or call-out culture is a contemporary phrase used to refer to a form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles – whether it be online, on social media, or in person. Those subject to this ostracism are said to have been "cancelled".

¹¹ Transhumanism is a philosophical and intellectual movement which advocates for the enhancement of the human condition by developing and making widely available sophisticated technologies that can greatly enhance longevity and cognition. It also predicts the inevitability of such technologies in the future.

¹² <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-4.5/page-1.html> National Emergency: 3 For the purposes of this Act, a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that (a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or (b) seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada.

¹³ <https://financialpost.com/fp-finance/banking/trudeau-gives-banks-power-to-freeze-funds-without-court-order-in-bid-to-choke-off-protest-funding>

New World Order

We are no longer waiting for the implementation of a New World Order; it is here although few people perceive it. Most of Western society still believes there will be a return to the 'normal' we once knew, yet the lessons of the 1930s and 40s lead us to conclude that the implementation of this globalist agenda has already brought fundamental changes to our way of life that will not be rescinded and may only intensify, leading to persecution for Jews, Christians and others who stand against it.

In the light of all of the above, it behoves Issachar Ministries carefully to weigh before God how the very shape, dynamic and mindset of the ministry might need to adapt in order for us to be able to respond to the challenges as well as become all God means and needs us to be in order best to serve his end-time purposes among his people and our nation.

The Banking System

The concept of programmable Central Bank Digital Currency introduces the practical means for a state not only to control access to the money we hold in banks and building societies, but also to control what type of purchases for which it may be used. In Britain this has taken a step closer to becoming a reality now that CBDC introduction is being examined by the Bank of England.¹⁴

It may not always be possible for us to use the existing banking systems which will at some point require us to be microchipped or take a mark of some sort in order to access our own money. To some this still seems an unlikely development, yet the means to use biometric technology to verify financial transactions via Wi-Fi or 4/5G already exists. Unnoticed by many, the Microsoft Corporation filed patent number WO2020060606 on March 26th, 2020. The patent was headed - CRYPTOCURRENCY SYSTEM USING BODY ACTIVITY DATA. An abstract quoted directly from the Patent reads:

“Human body activity associated with a task provided to a user may be used in a mining process of a cryptocurrency system. A server may provide a task to a device of a user which is communicatively coupled to the server. A sensor communicatively coupled to or comprised in the device of the user may sense body activity of the user. Body activity data may be generated based on the sensed body activity of the user. The cryptocurrency system communicatively coupled to the device of the user may verify if the body activity data satisfies one or more conditions set by the cryptocurrency system, and award cryptocurrency to the user whose body activity data is verified.”¹⁵

The potential implementation of the mark of the beast is now a real and present danger.

¹⁴ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/research/digital-currencies>

¹⁵ <https://patentscope.wipo.int/search/en/detail.jsf?docId=WO2020060606>

Gift-Aid

Christian charities are accustomed to having unrestricted access to money donated to them and the benefit of Gift Aid in order to fund their work. As the spirit of Babylon begins to be judged by God, there might well come a point where those who have unwittingly partnered with it through the Gift Aid scheme suddenly find themselves being required to pay back some of what it has been given. Refusal of such a demand could immediately see a charity forfeit its monetary resources and a form of persecution ensue.

Freedom of Speech

Issachar Ministries has always sought to be a standard for truth in the nation. Cliff and Monica have written many books and papers and have published many articles in *Prophecy Today* that have blown a trumpet of warning. They have never held back from stating the truth, but *Prophecy Today* as an online Christian magazine, could at some point in the future be sued for speaking out in truth. This could potentially lead to Issachar Ministries having its financial assets confiscated or lost completely. We need to be prepared for such control by finding other means of communicating with those who look to the ministry for guidance and support.

Food Supply – A New Type of Trading System?

The opening of the 3rd seal in Revelation 6 and the riding out of the black horse shows us that one of the consequences of God's weighing the nations on the scales of justice and finding us wanting will be great hunger and famine. If God's people cannot trade in the normal manner because we refuse to take the mark of the beast, then how can we possibly feed ourselves? Verse 6 implies that the cost of barley (a 2nd class grain) could be as much as a whole day's wages. The concept of storing wealth and developing a means of trade and exchange using verified stocks of grain is a concept under examination.

The present FIAT¹⁶ currency system is no longer underwritten by gold in the way it was until 1971 when U.S. President Nixon ordered an end to the convertibility of the United States Dollar into gold. Real currency value today is based on little more than confidence. Perhaps grain will be the new gold standard and an alternate trading system based on an essential verifiable commodity will be established by believers who have an understanding of the times. Certainly, moves to link our money to some form of passport or digital identity provide the worrying prospect of governments and

¹⁶ <https://cryptodefinitions.com/dictionary/flat/> The word 'fiat' is derived from Latin and can be translated as "it shall be done" or "let it be done." Fiat is defined as currency that is declared by a country's government to be legal tender. Unlike other historical currencies, which were backed by the value of a physical commodity, such as gold, or silver, the value of fiat is derived from its demand and supply as well the stability of the issuing government. The majority of paper currencies, such as the ones used to purchase everyday goods and services, are fiat currencies.

banks arbitrarily disconnecting us from access to money. This is exactly what happened, as already noted, during the Canadian Trucker protest in February 2022. Bank accounts were frozen, truck insurance was cancelled and their means of earning were removed.

The Lord's Assets, Not Ours

In Jesus' end-time discourse, Matthew 25:14-30, it shows clearly that a talent was a monetary unit of gold not a natural or spiritual gift. Luke 19:11-26 tells a very similar story, this time with monetary units of silver. In Haggai 2:6-9 the Lord clearly speaks of a final great shaking across the whole earth that will precede the return of Messiah Jesus. Verses 8-9 read *'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the Lord Almighty.* 'Is it possible that God is pointing us to consider very carefully in this season of shaking who the true owner (master) of our bank accounts and pension pots might be?

The Early Church radically disposed of their worldly assets and laid them at the apostles' feet. Is it possible that we too are being challenged to surrender the hold we have on our personal resources and place them completely at God's disposal whilst we still have control of them? An end-time trading system as well as other initiatives will still need financing, but it may not be possible for them to be paid for out of a ministry bank account as before. We have to face the possibility that if we do not wrestle with these concepts now, then as sweeping judgement decimates the world's economies and stock markets, we may end up like those who did nothing with the master's money and wake up one morning to find we have lost everything.

Persecution and Places of Refuge

Over the last twenty years God has been busy stirring the hearts of some of his children to prepare their homes and businesses as places of refuge and resource. There is a growing underground hidden network throughout the UK from the top of Shetland right down to Lands End in Cornwall. This is not something any human being is organising; it is a Sovereign work of God. Some of those involved believe these refuges are just for Jewish refugees, others are prepared to give refuge and shelter to anyone. Indeed, some are already providing refuge to fugitives fleeing the Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria. It is entirely possible that at some time in the near future we may be required to shelter one another.

As our economy is squeezed and tradeable commodities become increasingly expensive and scarce, if we are to be a blessing to others in the days ahead, then we must not put off getting ourselves practically prepared. God will never let us down. Scripture reveals that he fed the 5000 but there needed to be something available for God to multiply. We will always need to exercise our faith before we see him work in miracles and power. So, like the wise virgins, our practical preparations need to be done now before the days of darkness become overwhelming.

Being Community

One aspect of the preparation of places of refuge and resource is the emphasis God is placing on community. We need to explore together what community really means and wrestle with the uncomfortable aspects that will necessarily be thrown up to challenge our Greek-thinking individualism and 'what's mine is mine' society. We all know the old saying that 'fish goes off after three days' meaning that visitors can often outstay their welcome after such a short time.

How will we cope with having to share our homes with traumatised individuals who may appear rude or ungrateful, or whole families who cannot simply go home and leave us in peace after three days? The challenge is for us to become much more like the early church we read about in Acts 2: people so in love with Jesus and so filled with the Spirit that, living under severe persecution, their hearts are open, generous and compelled to go out into the streets not only to share the good news but also to lovingly and sacrificially serve and meet each other's practical needs.

Something we often fail to recognise is that the early church at this stage was not an organisation, it was a radical movement of God's people who understood the times in which they lived and knew either instinctively or by the Spirit what they (wider Israel) should do. This is what God means an Issachar People to be and to model in these end-times.

A Movement of People

Issachar is currently an organisation. It has structure that defines what the organisation does. It has leaders who manage, organise, issue policies, and manage finances. It has financial and other resources that enable ministry to happen both from itself and through others.

A movement is completely different. It carries an emotional heart, and its purpose is to incarnate the 'mission' of who its people are to be. It is an informal gathering, a cooperative coalition of like-minded people who are driven by a shared DNA, values, strategy and action. The early church turned its world upside down, so a movement that is driven not by people but by the Spirit of God can be a powerful catalyst for enormous societal change.

Leaders are simply there to see the current 'mission' achieve its goal. These people tend to emerge from within the movement as the spiritual gifts of individuals are discerned and put to use.

Ultimately, the movement itself is the leader that continues to drive it forward, not the leadership team. Those who are part of the movement are loyal to other individuals but above all they have a greater loyalty to a cause – the kingdom of God - which is larger than those individuals. E.g.: 1 Chronicles 12:38 where the Israelites came together determined to make David king.

The gathering and partnership of God's People should look like this:

Be a living organism (not an organisation).	Follow God's plan (not man's).
Be living and dynamic (not stagnant, dead).	Be primarily about relationship (not religion).
Follow the Holy Spirit (not rituals, traditions).	Be focused on heart issues in the Body (not structures, positions).
Be fluid and changing (not rigid, static, unbending).	Be characterised by anointed, powerful works (not dead works).
Have a pioneering spirit (not bound by conformity).	Be powerful, life-changing (not powerless, having a form of godliness).
Have decentralised control (not centralised).	Under God's control; doing things his way (not under man's control; doing things his way).
Be permeated by the Spirit of God (not by a spirit of religion).	Focus on anointing, function (not on titles, positions).
See maturity, character and lifestyle changes in disciples (not people trying to behave for appearances sake).	Be characterised by transparency, honesty, mutuality, interdependence and vulnerability (not people wearing masks, hiding, dishonesty, independence and self-protection).
Have disciples who know they are sons and daughters of the King of kings (not mere members).	Have servant leaders, facilitators of what God is doing (not autocratic authority figures).
Ministry that is open to everyone (not just professional clergy or a particular team).	Be motivated by God's love, mercy and compassion having his heart for those outside the 'family' (not motivated by duty and obligation).

A Catalyst For Change

The Early Church movement did not belong to one group of people, rather it was something universal that spontaneously erupted from a small group of praying people in a room in Jerusalem and was carried, by those affected, to influence and powerfully impact and change the whole known world at that time. We live in a time where God is massing his army and knitting his units together right across the world. He is acting Sovereignly to draw people together so that a diversity of giftings flow together under his anointing.

To limit what God wants to do to one organisation, Issachar Ministries for example, would be missing the point. We believe that it is entirely possible God might just use our tiny network, like the 120 or so disciples who humbly surrendered themselves wholeheartedly to God and obediently waited for him to do what he had promised, also to be a catalyst for change more widely among the Body of Christ in our nation. We

must not allow what is, or has been, to limit our perception or expectation of what may be.

Lifeboats

Covid restrictions have already changed the face of church and it will never return to how it was, nor should it. The old 'ship' is no longer 'seaworthy' for the strength of the 'stormy' seas that are ahead. What is needed is a completely different type of vessel altogether, something more akin to a lifeboat. Since its inception the lifeboat has never been a cruise liner, for entertainment or lecturing or teaching; it has never been a trading vessel or a trawler. It is an emergency vehicle with one task only: to rescue people in danger of perishing in the hope and expectation they will be saved.

Therefore, the lifeboat is built in an entirely different shape; something specially designed to ride over the waves at speed; something that is much smaller, agile not cumbersome and with much more sensitive steering. It is also thoroughly equipped for every eventuality. Its highly trained staff can not only do everything needed to give emergency first aid, they are also able to radio ahead - to call on others to get ready to receive those being brought ashore so they can be ready to respond to their next emergency.

Small Groups

Many of us who form part of Issachar Ministries have come out of mainstream expressions of church - not because we sit in judgement on the people concerned - but because God had placed within us a deep desire for something more than what we perceived. That something more is him; our hearts have longed to be allowed to spend time resting in his presence; to hear his voice and simply obey his instructions; to receive his heart for the poor and to be allowed to do something about it. Many of us have longed for the intimacy of true community over and above just belonging to a Sunday congregation; to be part of something that is lived out in everyday life, each day of the week, not a gathering on a Sunday morning which then has no bearing on the rest of the week.

The seemingly drastic action of stepping outside the 'boat' of mainstream church has caused many believers to feel misunderstood, judged and guilty which is exactly why we need to continue to gather together. The writer to the Hebrews puts it this way:

*'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.'*¹⁷

It is in gathering together that we are able to enjoy much needed fellowship, partake in the Lord's Supper, and share openly and honestly with one another. This builds

¹⁷ Hebrews 10:23-25.

intimacy and transparency in relationships; building one another up, listening to God corporately, using our gifts, to teach, disciple and pray. But this is a very different way of gathering than we have been used to. Jesus says to Nicodemus:

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”¹⁸

The Wind of the Spirit

This implies that everyone born of the Spirit is free to follow the promptings and direction of the ‘wind’ of the Spirit of God. When contemplating this imagery recently one friend had a picture of an autumn scene: the trees were bare and the ground covered in leaves. As the wind blew some of the leaves were blown into groups of two or three, others into heaps of slightly more whilst others danced around on their own for quite a while before being blown into an existing clump for a period of time.

This beautiful picture recreates very well the informal and simple *modus operandi* used in the earliest days of the Celtic church across Britain and now common in the underground church all over the world. The challenge is for us consciously to become less organised and structured - less meetings based - and more open to allowing the Holy Spirit to gather us according to his days, times and seasons. Part of this will be a return to gatherings around the Biblical feasts, not the Roman ones, and the simplicity of the Hebrew Shabbat; making room to spend time in his presence, listening to his voice and simply doing what he says. He will not fail to set passionate hearts ablaze.

As we stand on the cusp of the ‘storm’ and see the institutions in our nation increasingly shaken and crumbling we find our society has as much an uncertain future as that of 2nd-4th Century Celtic Britain. The ‘lifeboat’ God gave at that time was the incarnation of the glory and light of God through the believers. They did not fail in their challenge; the light they carried did not go out, in fact it burned consistently (like glowing coals) for over 600 years during which the British church grew phenomenally and impacted society whilst officially under persecution for much of that time.

God is offering us the opportunity to take up our own torches, lit from the glowing embers of who they were and the living vibrant faith they carried, into our own time and season. He is preparing us to see the Kingdom advance powerfully in a time of great adversity. Important questions emerge from that understanding.

- *Why it is that a church that is persecuted and underground cannot possibly have the same structure as one above ground?*
- *Is living in genuine ‘community’ really possible for God’s people today? How might that look in your locale?*

¹⁸ John 3:8.

A Faithful Remnant

The early Celtic church was only ever a remnant within a much larger society, but it was an incredibly important and significant one. In the 2nd-4th centuries it was an underground hidden movement that was so powerfully ablaze with the Spirit of God it impacted and changed whole communities. Despite persecution, the ruling powers of the day were powerless to extinguish the glowing flame that led to the transformation of society at that time. Eventually God used the foundation laid by this underground body of believers to be the plumb line for the whole fabric of future society from which our Judeo-Christian heritage, morality and values emerged.

God is now offering us that same opportunity: to become a powerful force of influence for his Kingdom in the reshaping and rebuilding of society in the 'storm' and whatever follows. But that rebuilding has to begin NOW; within a people who are willing to be wholly abandoned to him and his purposes: those who are fearless and willing to open their mouths and not be silent in the fight for righteousness and justice; who are willing to open their homes and use their God-given resources to rescue those adrift; to become believing communities that provide stability, support, security and refuge throughout the period of the 'storm'.

It is too late to prepare the 'lifeboat' when the 'storm' is at its height. It needs to be prepared, equipped, and resourced in advance. It follows that this change needs to happen under the leading of the Holy Spirit within a remnant people who are willing to be prepared and equipped, ready to meet the great challenges we will all face. Whilst there is most certainly a change in mind-set required concerning the nature and ministry of the Body, the change that is needed is more than just spiritual; it is extremely practical as well.

Noah

Please read the story of Noah in Genesis 6-8.

Noah was alert when God warned Him of the coming storm. In view of the mocking and indignity he must have faced it would surely have been far easier for him to simply ignore the warning or try to place it to the back of his mind as he got on with normal life, but he did not do that. The Bible says Noah did everything just as God commanded him¹⁹ and that obedience appears to have been unquestioning. His preparation was not a last-minute thing; on the contrary, it was carefully considered, thought through and God's instructions were followed to the letter to bring about the very detailed and costly practical preparations needed to save his family; those who became the foundation for a whole new society at the time.

- *Does your fellowship perceive that God could well be giving his church the greatest opportunity to demonstrate the gospel since WWII?*

¹⁹ Genesis 6:22.

- *How ready is the church in your town or village to respond to those whose lives are shaken or collapsing around them?*
- *How would you identify your fellowship of believers on the scale of 1-10 in moving towards carrying the simplicity of the Celtic flame?*
- *Consider Noah: what does the Ark represent to you? Have you ever thought of your home as a refuge and/or storehouse? Who might that be for?*

Transitioning - Joshua 3

Clearly the task that lies ahead for us is an enormous one. It will not be achieved quickly because it needs to be done carefully, reverently, and wholly in step with the Spirit of God. We do not have the blueprint for this, but our God does.

When Joshua and God's people crossed over the Jordan they were instructed as follows:

- v1 To get into position and simply sit tight waiting for further instructions.
- v2-3 To look for the signs and only step out when they saw them happening.
- v4 It was a new challenge. No-one knew the way, only God, because something like this had never happened before. They had to keep their eyes wholly on God's Ark.
- v4 They had to respect God's holy leading and presence among them. They were to keep their distance and not get close enough to touch the holy things of God.
- v5 They had to begin their new season with consecration. Setting themselves apart afresh to God, to his will and purposes. If they did this then they had the assurance that they would see God do amazing things for them.
- v8 They had to take a step of faith to place their feet into a river that was raging in flood and on any other day of the year would have swept them to their deaths.

The fierce anger of the flooded Jordan is a picture for us of the sheer tsunami of devastations that are already happening and are set to increase across the earth in the years immediately ahead of us.

For many years the pillars of society have been shaken, now we must anticipate a descent into chaos that literally wipes away like a raging flood what remains of our Judeo-Christian heritage, laws and standards. Ezekiel 22 teaches us there are five areas of sin that pollute the land. These are:

- Bloodshed verses 2-4, 6, 9, 12-13, 27
- Idolatry verses 3-4, 8-9, 26
- Social injustice verses 7, 9, 12-13, 25, 27-28
- Sexual immorality verses 10-11
- Broken covenant verses 6-12, 25-29

The millions of aborted children, the legalisation of witchcraft and the shallowness of the cult of celebrity along with the TV channels that teach a very different morality than that of the Bible, remind us daily that our society is corrupt and in a woeful state. We cannot expect God to help us and be on our side in the defeating of our enemies and the 'giants' in our land unless we are truly humble, repentant and acknowledging of our total dependence on him.

Our once proud nation which has turned its back on God for generations will be greatly humbled and when many will become desperate for relief from their suffering they will cry out to God. The nation and the church will require strong leadership and a loud prophetic voice. A movement of Issachar People has the potential to embody that voice and *Prophecy Today* has the ability to be a loudspeaker to the nation and the world, not only by the written word, but also through audio visual media.

Discernible Steps Forward

The task and the vision are enormous, and we cannot do it without God. As long as we do not presume that we know how to navigate the way forward and are willing to stay humble, submitted, and willing to allow God to lead, then we can be confident that he will.

This new phase of our journey begins with some important steps. These are:

1. Repentance – A Trumpet Call to the nation

Please read the whole of Joel 2. In summary this is a call from God for his children to issue a clarion call for either one sacred assembly or a series of regional gatherings calling the wider mainstream church to repentance – to rend our hearts before God - and to a consecration the depths of which we have never reached before. Issachar should be *“A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.”* (Matthew 3:3).

In 1 Samuel 1 we read how God stopped up Hannah's womb until she was provoked into prayer by her circumstances. If our desire is to see God sweep through our nation bringing many thousands into his Kingdom, then this must be preceded by serious sober sacrificial repentance and prayer.

- *Can we truly say we have renounced secret and shameful ways or are we still living daily with compromise (2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6) of some sort?*
- *Are we a people who reflect God's glory?*
- *Are we distinct and recognisable as belonging to God?*
- *There is a need to encourage the Body into greater degrees of purity and holiness – to become a people able to consider what it means to love God with ALL their heart, soul, mind and strength and to truly surrender EVERYTHING to Him.*

- *This clarion call is not intended for those who have already heard the message. It is to go out to a different constituency – those who have not heard. We have a responsibility to proclaim this message, whether people listen or they do not. We live in a time where God is massing his army and knitting his units together right across the world. He is acting Sovereignly to pull people together so that a diversity of giftings flow together under his anointing.*

2. Communication

One of the important lessons from our experience of the Coronavirus pandemic has been that we can no longer take for granted our historic right to meet and communicate with each other in person. Nor can we expect to be able to exercise free speech or trust established mainstream and social media to publish what would historically have been regarded as legitimate debate or the airing of opposing views. Platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have all exercised blatant censorship over the past two years, under the banner of 'breaching community guidelines'.

As a result, many believers have turned to new platforms like Brandnewtube, Odyssey and Rumble to host video and used smartphone Apps like Signal and Telegram with robust end-to-end encryption to send messages securely. Communicating with other believers may not in future be possible in the ways we have taken for granted. We may lose access to the internet; our cell phones may be disconnected and ministry websites may be hacked or subjected to DDS²⁰ attack if they publish Christian messages of which the authorities do not approve.

These are all real and present threats we need to carefully consider and find solutions for. Many years ago, a retired employee of GCHQ – the British government's intelligence and security organisation responsible for providing signals intelligence and information assurance to the government and armed forces of the United Kingdom - explained how he once sent a morse code signal right around the earth from Ascension Island using a tiny one watt of transmission power using shortwave radio. Perhaps we will have to look into the past to find answers for our future challenges, but these are matters we need to carefully weigh and consider under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, if we are to be a people prepared for the uncertain times ahead of us.

3. Preparing an Unshakeable People

How we will respond to and endure the increasing storms we will face will depend on the spiritual foundations we have in place. We need to have proved God's constant love and faithfulness through our personal storms now, so that when bigger storms hit, we will be able not only to stand strong ourselves but also reach out, offering the gospel of true hope to others. Not one of us can say with any certainty that we *WILL* stand under such immense testing; we hope that we will, but we may not. Faced with the seriousness of this we must be willing to take whatever steps we can to mature in the things of God. Theory, theology and head

²⁰ Distributed Denial of Service.

knowledge will not suffice. We will need much more than this. The day is coming when it will no longer be sufficient just to say the right things, sing the right songs or raise our hands at the right moment; we will need to truly *KNOW HIM* and have proved him faithful through our experience of him at work in our everyday lives.

There is an urgent need to:

- Equip people to put down deeper roots into their relationship with God.
- Enable believers to live as overcomers.

Teach what Kingdom values really are and how they challenge our lives. The Celts not only expected that believers might face 'red' martyrdom that involved being killed, but there was also an expectation that all believers would be brought to 'green' martyrdom i.e., the laying down of their lives from self before God as wholly his to use and direct as pleased him. This is both the beginning of true servanthood and the cost of true discipleship.

4. Reaching Out

Some of Issachar's existing small groups do not have evangelism on their agenda which means they are not making disciples.

Sometimes people are held back from sharing their faith by their own feelings of inadequacy, low self-worth or repeated negative cycles of thinking and behaviour.

There is a need to:

- Disciple the Body into maturity so that it stops going round in inward-looking circles and begins to look outwards and learn to love its neighbours as itself.
- Equip the Body so that everyone becomes a person living 'on mission' and understands how to express the gospel to someone else.
- Equip the small groups to reach their neighbours and friends.
- Effectively disciple new converts so that they, in turn, can also make disciples.
- Equip and resource the Body in effective means of intercessory prayer.

5. Practical Preparation

There is a need to:

- Equip the Body in practical preparations for the end-times.

The generations raised before the 1960s were taught a wide range of practical skills, from how to take care of themselves to cooking, personal hygiene, sewing, home DIY, basic first aid, gardening and animal husbandry. We now have two generations in our society who lack these, the most essential skills for surviving in much straitened times.

The modern education system has left people completely unprepared for the life circumstances we envisage. We must step into that space, or many will needlessly perish through lack of practical knowledge.

Battle Stations

A new phase of history has begun and we see the titanic struggle between good and evil unfolding before our eyes and with alarming speed. The book of Daniel and his experiences of the awesome power of God in a pagan nation should give us the confidence that even when all seems lost and the consequences of sin seem overwhelming, God reigns supreme. He will be with his people and his purposes will be fulfilled.

The battle we face is not for the faint of heart and will require a level of courage and commitment to our faith many of us have not experienced and never imagined before. We face an uncertain future in a rapidly changing world and there is much work to do. As we respond to this call, beginning with repentance and in prayer, we will be challenged about how we will use our time, our finances, the resources we have seen as our own.

This chapter began with the story of Joshua crossing over the Jordan River and a description of Britain's falling away from its godly heritage in the latter part of the 20th Century – a rapid decline from any semblance of being a God-fearing Christian nation. It is fitting to end with a scripture from Joshua 24:14-15 where the Covenant was renewed at Shechem:

*“Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.**”*

The last sentence serves as a reminder of the covenant we have made as the Lord urges us now to take our place in his great end-time army.