

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FOUNDING OF PROPHECY TODAY ONLINE

Prophecy Today online was born 10 years after the last issue of the printed magazine *Prophecy Today* was published. The Magazine had continued independently at Moggerhanger Park when PWM had closed down but moved to Scotland in 2004 and changed its name to SWORD as it now had more of an emphasis on biblical teaching rather than having a topical, prophetic edge. During that decade Cliff continued sending out his bimonthly 'Update Messages' with topical news and the Centre for Contemporary Ministry was regularly sending out topical Concept Papers along with their ministry news.

Background

In the five years from 2010 when we handed over the direction of the Centre for Contemporary Ministry to Tim Vince and the chair changed from Roger Whitehead to Charles Wright, CCM rapidly declined in its ministry activities as well as in its institutional status. Within 2½ years, CCM had no office, no staff, no newsletter, no money and not even a telephone number for contact with its supporters. A thriving ministry was destroyed as the development of historic buildings and commercialism took a major hold, With the collapse of CCM many of the erstwhile prayer partners and supporters transferred their allegiance to the one remaining founding ministry at Moggerhanger, the behind-the-scenes C and M Ministries which had been supporting all the ministries by looking after books and resources and continuing with international travel. This now took as its trading name Issachar Ministries and we Cliff and Monica led this more active work C and M / Issachar Ministries had been based from 2010 in a small office in the stable block at Moggerhanger Park, but we felt increasingly uncomfortable, being in close proximity to the house where we were no longer trustees, and it had been made clear that we were no longer welcome. Since 2012 we had been seeking the right location of any future ministry which was continuing to thrive on a national level outside of Moggerhanger Park and gradually lost links. Our parliamentary work with the Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group was particularly active. We wanted an office near our home and that of our office staff.

New Office Venue

After a number of abortive explorations, the little town of Sandy was the obvious location and in 2012 and 2013 we explored the possibility of joining with Sandy Baptist Church with whom we had good relationships. We planned to build a prefabricated extension in the grounds behind the Baptist Church Hall, and the plans got as far as the Council Planning Officer. We had engaged Bantree Buildings, constructors of mobile homes and school classrooms with whom we had worked in the past, to design and prepare an office in the space available intending to hand it over to the Baptist Church for their work when we no longer had a need for its use. Sadly, they were halfway through construction when they went bankrupt and all our plans had to be reconsidered.

We were, of course, very sad for this family firm whose owners we had known for several years, but we concluded that the Lord had firmly shut the door on our plans to build and locate alongside the Baptist Church. Instead, we began looking to rent office space which might be available locally and after looking at several, we settled on a large office space on the first floor in Shannon Court on Sandy High Street, within walking distance of a main line railway station, with a large free car park at the back which was absolutely ideal for our purposes. It provided space for all our office needs with six desks, a large storage space and an even larger space for a sitting area that could also be used for small meetings of up to 40 persons. We took out a six-year contract in 2014, moved in over the summer and welcomed our prayer partners to visit and celebrate with us on Saturday **2 September 2014**,

Prophetic Action

Issachar Ministries from 2010 - 2014 had been taking on an increasingly prophetic characteristic. In October 2014 a Prophetic Workshop was held at High Leigh Hoddesdon with a number of our prayer partners coming together, spreading before God the state of the nation, and seeking to understand the significance of world events in our time. The workshop produced a statement which was seen as a wake-up call to the church in the UK because it was discerned that the great shaking of the nations which we had been prophetically speaking about since the 1986 gathering at Mount Carmel and Jerusalem could now be seen on the horizon.

The statement said that the warnings we had been given in Israel would be fulfilled in the near future. In view of this we were doing two things of considerable significance. We were forming 'Prophetic Hubs' around the country which was a fulfilment of the 'watchman' role that had been successfully established back in the 80s and 90s in the Issachar Groups. These hubs were local

groups of Bible believing Christians who felt drawn together to share their insights and biblical understandings that were relevant to the changing situation we were witnessing in the nation.

The Announcement

Further action the ministry was taking was to establish the publication of the magazine *Prophecy Today* in a different form – not as a printed magazine but as an online publication available for all the world to see. This was announced in the November 2014 Issachar Ministries newsletter under the heading – “*Prophecy Today* coming back!”. It said,

“The announcement that Issachar Ministries’ trustees are to relaunch *Prophecy Today* as an on-line weekly magazine has received widespread and enthusiastic support, not only from our prayer partners, but from leaders of other ministries. For more than 20 years, in the 1980s and 90s and early 21st century, the magazine enjoyed considerable respect for its biblically-based analysis of contemporary events.

The trustees are currently bringing together an editorial board and making staff appointments in preparation for a launch early in 2015.”

The ‘response form’ showed how supporters could get involved in this significant new ministry outreach.

Staff Appointment

The announcement spoke of staff appointments. The first member of staff was already in the wings, ready to be brought on stage. It was Dr Frances Rabbitts whom we believed the Lord had wonderfully brought to our notice. We, Cliff and Monica, had been booked to speak at a meeting in Somerset by a group of intercessors who were interested in establishing a Prophetic Hub as well as receiving teaching on ‘Living in Babylon’ which was the title we were giving to much of our teaching at that time. Dr Peter Carruthers was working with the ministry in developing these Prophetic Hubs and he was booked to share in this weekend event. His presence at a packed meeting in Bagley Baptist Church at 10 o’clock on Saturday morning 25 October 2014 was a God ordained blessing.

A Significant Meeting

We ourselves had set off from our home in Cambridgeshire very early on that Saturday morning. We had been unable to travel there the previous day as we had only just flown in from Munich. We had made good progress down the A1 and along the M25 and we were nearing Bath on the M4 when we ran into a traffic jam caused by an overturned truck that was on fire.

We were stuck in that traffic jam for three hours before we could get off and wend our way through Bristol and out into Somerset to reach Bagley at 1.45 PM so that we could fulfil our promise to speak in the afternoon session. Peter had already spoken well in the morning and laid a good foundation for Prophetic Hubs and set the scene for the whole weekend. We both spoke at the afternoon and evening sessions and Cliff preached at the 10.30 morning service on Sunday.

Sunday Morning Service

The pianist at that service was Frances Rabbitts who had recently completed a doctorate with Exeter University and was seeking the Lord about her future. We told her about *Prophecy Today* and said we were looking for a Managing Editor who would be able to handle biblical subjects as well as contemporary news. This clearly spoke to her and we left her to discuss it with her family with whom she was still living and to seek the Lord in prayer.

Frances responded positively and over the next month we had a lot of interaction via email and telephone. Our ministry trustees had gone public with that announcement in the November newsletter and now they called all those interested in the new publication to come to a meeting at 10:30 am on **Tuesday, 2 December 2014** in the church Hall at Sandy Baptist Church with which we still had links.

The Editorial Board Formed

Peter Carruthers stayed with us overnight the previous day, many other who were interested made their own arrangements and Frances took a very early morning train from Bristol and arrived at 9:33 AM at Sandy station where Cliff met her and took her to the meeting where she was introduced. She took part in the establishing of the new Editorial Board of *Prophecy Today* online. Frances stayed overnight with us and spent the morning in our new office on Wednesday, 3rd December before catching an afternoon train back to London and onwards to Bristol where her mother met her. So began the more formal part of her association with the new online magazine.

The Launch of *Prophecy Today*

Frances then generously worked from home on a voluntary basis, sharing in the multitasking of preparations for the new online magazine. She liaised with Andy Page who was living in Weston Super Mare. He was engaged to create the website in close cooperation with Frances and other advisors on the newly formed Editorial Board. Eventually the great day came on **Saturday 28th March 2015** when we held a Prayer Day in the **Regents Hall Oxford Street London** with about 150 people from all over the country coming together, in preparation for the launch of the first issue of the weekly magazine which was planned to be on **Friday 3rd April 2015**.

Further information and reports of further developments will appear on both PT and our own websites.