

COMMENTARY

NEW NORMAL

# It's not too early to prepare for the underground church

**Exclusive: Scott Lively has a model for the future meant for 'like-minded remnant believers'**



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In my prophecy studies, I have come to believe the generation of the second coming will face circumstances very much like the generation of the first coming did. Whether or not the COVID-19 pestilence is a part of the Matthew 24 "beginning of birth pangs," the political climate is already starting to look a bit like the Roman military dictatorship of the time of the early church.

Here in America, the church is a leading target of government suppression of large gatherings, and I expect this to continue, even after the "lockdowns" have ended (if they ever do).

Even in the absence of official policy, a population almost fully cowed by fear-mongering about this disease will never fully trust large gatherings again. How many unreasoning sheeple will now operate by the unspoken maxim "Fellowship equals death"? More than a few, I suspect – at least until they can trade in their obsolete and inadequate "Full Armor of God" for the Bill Gates "Salvation of Mankind" vaccine in about 18 months.

Until then, the high-density, entertainment-oriented religious corporation model of Christian gathering will be shaky at best, and that's not necessarily a bad thing – though I love a good mass-gathering from time to time, especially for fellowship and worship in music.

The religious corporations will try to retain their members with high-tech distance-worshipping, but this shaking of the church will get many people thinking about smaller and more intimate family-style gatherings like the way the first century church operated, and that's a good thing. Instead of high-tech wizardry, they'll have a printed copy of the Bible in their hands again, and in the place of celebrity pastors telling them what to think, they'll have interactive Christian discussion among themselves, facilitated by the pastors and teachers in their groups.

At least, that's how First Century Bible Church will function. I launched it after the lockdown started, and we've yet to have a public gathering, but I believe it is a model for the future, and I welcome interaction with like-minded remnant believers. What I'm talking about is not just expanding the "house church" movement, but anticipating the need for an "underground church."

Probably sooner rather than later the Bride of Christ will have need of an "off the grid" communication and fellowship network that can't easily be identified and tracked.

On my second missionary tour of Russia, I got to experience an "underground" church network in action. This was 2007, long after glasnost and the purge of Soviet Communism from Russian society, but the (pre-Soviet) Orthodox Church had roared back to fill the vacuum as the primary cultural influence. While I respect the Russian Orthodox Church, it does have one glaring negative, which is the pursuit of "religious monopoly," and only a few powerful denominations were "grandfathered in" to ROC tolerance policies after Putin transitioned Russia from a wild-west gangsterland in the 1990s to a stable, law-based society in the '00s. The denomination I was working with was operating relatively freely per official government policy, but suffered some discrimination in some places. Plus, there was the phenomenon of holdover Soviet-types in some positions of power and some holdover policies on things like in-country travel.

Long story short, Anne and I were secretly shuttled all over the country for a couple of months from congregation to congregation, being handed off from car to car along the freeway in the middle of nowhere, from one group into the care of the next. And once, in a big Siberian city, the holdover Communist mayor forced the closure of my speaking venue at a big hotel the night before the event. These Christians were so well prepared by years of living under severe Soviet oppression they didn't even blink. In just 24 hours they had another venue lined up, and the crowd of over 1,500 people showed up at the new venue as if nothing had happened. I was told that the mayor's astonished staff members he sent in to monitor the event got saved.

We also met with an underground church couple in Cairo, Egypt, in 2003. Even though Christian groups are allowed to function there, evangelism is strictly forbidden, so the evangelical church is underground. These missionaries hid their activities from the government and said the hardest part of their job was convincing new believers not to change their official religion on their state ID cards from Muslim to Christian, because they could face severe persecution by the government and even murder by their relatives.

Even in the worst areas of lockdown abuses, America is still a far cry from Soviet Russia or Christian life under Islamic governments, but prophecy says worse is coming, sooner or later. The current lockdowns are a stark reminder that we are not immune to totalitarianism – and that the Marxist usurpers waging total war to take down Trump and kill the anti-globalist revolution are totalitarian by nature.

Isn't it just common sense to at least have contingency plans in place and a system for networking among believers who have decided they will NEVER take the mark of the beast, whenever that is implemented, and who will not be able to buy or sell without it?

At minimum we'll need an underground railroad for fleeing persecution and a "black market" bartering system to stay alive. And we'll need a means of both recognizing each other and ferreting out spies. I suggest the

underground church begin greeting each other with "Jesus is Lord," because "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

None of that can happen unless the remnant prepares for it in advance, and I invite you to join me in getting started now. If you'd like to be a part of this network, or if you'd like a sample of my book "The Prodigal Son Prophecy" (which outlines some of my theological conclusions on prophetic issues), send me an email including the personal confession "Jesus is Lord." Let me know specifically if you have or want to start a first century-style house church.

As we used to say in the Boy Scouts (which did not heed its own motto and got destroyed by the same people now targeting the church), Be Prepared.