



maranatha



The Beginnings

In the 1980's a group of Methodists came together to share their concerns about the churches as they were and what they might be. They shared their feelings with others and a statement was issued in a little booklet called 'The Future Church.' The response was staggering from the media and the floodgate opened, as many wrote to support the statement, **'We believe that the church is the living body of Christ. This body must, by definition, be a living and moving organism and it must be seen in this way by the world. If life and movement is not evident within our churches it will be more difficult for the world to believe in a living Christ'**. Response came from teenagers to octogenarians of all church backgrounds, but particularly Roman Catholics. There was a clear conviction that God was calling us to change our ways. Various discussions took place with Christians, drawn from almost every denomination and it was recognised that all had a profound desire to see the church emerge, in their day, with new life.

A conference was held at Luton Industrial College and this is now seen as where the Maranatha Community's foundations were laid. Acknowledging each person's commitment to their own church and denomination, they were led to form a loosely knit group of Christians who would walk together in prayer and who would benefit spiritually from the wealth of their various traditions. It was hoped that this initiative would strengthen and enrich local churches.

There was no blueprint from the start and no organisation. Everyone wanted this movement to belong entirely to the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. They waited to see where God was leading them and so the name 'Maranatha', which means 'Come Lord Jesus' emerged as the essential hallmark of the movement. Things began to happen. People grew in faith. There were healings and many were activated to take bold new initiatives both in the life of their church and in the Community. Many joined Maranatha. Anglicans, Baptists, Pentecostals, Quakers, Salvationists, United Reformed churches and other evangelicals. Many Christian leaders expressed their joy at what was happening and Mother Theresa of Calcutta said to the Community, 'If you pray together and stay together, then you will love one another as Jesus loves each one of you. Keep the joy of loving Jesus in your heart and share this joy with all you meet, especially the sick and suffering.'

Maranatha is not about theory; it's about experience. We are a Community of hope because the Lord will not fail those who trust in Him. He will lead us and through Him the face of the earth will be renewed. The Maranatha Community exists today in its present form because this is God's will for its members. What it will be in the future depends solely on the Holy Spirit.

*Extracts from 'ONE LORD, ONE PEOPLE' by Dennis Wrigley
(No longer in print)*