

SPOTLIGHT

News & Views for Local Groups, by Local Groups!



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Report from Silence of the Desert

"It wasn't what I was expecting". 'That's what you've said about every Maranatha retreat or conference you've been on' I was told by a friend. Maybe that's because it sums up very well what a Maranatha Weekend is all about - allowing God to do what He wants, being willing to listen to what He's saying and to allow the structure and content to fit in with His agenda.



"The Silence of the Desert" weekend at the beautiful Beachwood Court in Conwy was no different. I arrived just before tea on Friday evening looking forward to a weekend of mainly silence and quietness similar to the Light out of Darkness Retreat I had taken earlier in the year, but this weekend was different. Although there were periods of silence together, quite a bit of time made available to go off on one's own, and it was quieter than many other Maranatha weekends, there was opportunity to chat over meals and other times. There were a number of planned sessions on contemplative prayer, with excellent input from our two leaders Ann and Karin. In fact there was a good balance between learning about this kind of praying and actually doing it. The times spent worshipping together, and the early morning prayers, were also highlights.

For me the weekend was a time of affirmation to what God has been doing in me over the past months and a challenge to continue to meet him, both in silence alone, and as a member of his family. A good weekend!

Heather (from Manchester)

We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

BELFAST

May brought a wonderful experience in the conference 'From out of the courtroom into the Father's house'

It was an intense 3 days with lots of sharing and a joy to have 17 of us with 8 from Manchester including Allyn and Jude Benedict who were so kind and gentle., but it took an extra 2 weeks to realise what it meant for each of us.

We were challenged not to judge others without knowing the facts. Only God can judge - "Do not judge and you will not be judged" and "Take the speck out of your brother's eye - have you not seen the beam in your own eye?" We also need to stop judging ourselves and pray for the gift of right judgement for our own lives.

We so needed that spiritual boost to our Group!

Some of us have been given a 'hammering' in various ways and also the knowledge that our lives are changing and we need to be prepared for what God wants of us. News of a team coming over in August has given us new heart and we look forward to the visit.

Allyn and Jude really loved the countryside of Northern Ireland and are resolved to return one day.

Margaret Walker

Mike Kendrick's article and Pastor Asher's reply when Mike sent it on for his approval

In previous editions of 'Spotlight' we have provided information about the Maranatha Groups in Kampala and Jinja in Uganda. This article is about the Entebbe Group which started in 2004. This Group usually meets fortnightly at the Life Gospel Church which is on the main Entebbe Road between the Airport and Kampala. This is a very busy road but at either side of the road are very poor communities. The Group started as a result of a visit to the church by Rhona Marshall from the Macclesfield Maranatha Group. There is also a very strong link with Brian and Tuula from the Manchester Maranatha Group who have funded projects and Jim Tyron from the London Maranatha Group. I have also visited the Group on each of the three visits I have made to Uganda.

The Group is led by Pastor Asher and at the meetings they focus on Praise, Praying and Healing. They have taken on a number of initiatives:-

- * Early morning prayer meetings
- * Prayer walking in the community
- * Door to door visitation
- * A small nursery for children
- * Developing links with local Pastors

Pastor Asher has felt called to write a book for marriage preparation. It is intended that this will be used in local churches as no resource exists like this in Uganda. If you are interested in finding out more about this initiative and how you might help fund the publication of the book, then please contact me.

My abiding memory of visits to see Pastor Asher has been times of prayer and worship with the Group and Pastors as we have met under a Mango tree. 'God is good all the time, all the time God is good!' Mike

Dear my brother Michael. This is wonderful and it is wisdom. It's a Holy Spirit who has used you sincerely, to advise me I have been praying about this but God has done it thank you so much. Let me continue praying for you for God's guidance in every thing your doing to help the body of Christ, in Uganda, in UK and the whole world. I think you can now put it in the magazine, it is so nice. Yours Pastor Asher Kalema,

TAUNTON



The weekend in Plymouth was entitled "The plans and purposes of God for my life".

It quickly became apparent that this theme centred on our intimate relationship with God as our Father (Abba) and that the plans and purposes of God were all about us coming into a greater understanding of how much we are loved and how good God our Father is.

Allyn and Jude, ably assisted by Linda, Juan and Marianne, led the weekend in his own gentle and thoughtful manner, leaving ample space for each of us to listen and encounter God for ourselves.

In the time of sharing which followed the periods of silence, it was very evident that God had been at work at a deep level in the hearts of many individuals. We were reminded too, that fruit grows only as we remain in that deep place of union with the Lord.

We found it to be a rich time of fellowship with the Lord and with one another.

Richard & Heather Sampson

Encouraging News from the West Wiltshire Group

West Wiltshire Group is growing fast.

Each week it seems a new member arrives. Although it is rare for everyone to be present, we average around 16 in attendance at the moment. Leadership is shared among us and we meet the needs of those who long to Praise the Lord but find their own church worship somewhat lacking.

So we have a number of different churches represented and there is an ever growing sense of real fellowship and caring for one another.

Many of the members are elderly or out of work and there is little cash to spare, but whenever we can we send a cheque through to Maranatha.

We really praise the Lord for the way in which he has enabled us to discover our identity. We may not be exactly like other Maranatha groups but we still feel we have something special to offer those who come. Even on the months when attendance is very low because of illness or holidays we continue in faith and are always rewarded by the presence of the Lord and often a much needed message.

Thank you for the prayers on the months when it is our turn to be remembered. Please continue to pray as we seek the way forward through the Holy Spirit.

Every Blessing Mary Teed

Audrey Hepburn wrote when asked to share her "beauty tips."

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.

For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry.

For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her finger through it once a day.

For poise, walk with the knowledge that you never walk alone.

People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.

Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms.

Maranatha Eckington Group

Our meeting on the evening of the 20th April with nine members present included prayer, intercession and much praise.

We were then taken, a chapter at a time, through a Bible study of 'The Letter of James'.

We found this to be a powerful source of sound practical advice for to-day's world, leaving us with much to think about and discuss, with a particularly wonderful conclusion.

Quotable quote: "Christians may not see eye to eye
But they can walk arm in arm."

Maureen Charles

Maranatha in Plymouth

We have our Emmaus Walk once a year in August, and this year we met at the farm of Joyce and Basil two of our members.

This year we were looking at the story of the Prodigal Son, and as we sat in the lovely cosy Farm House we had fantastic views of the surrounding countryside such a reminder of Gods goodness to us.

Marianne led us and we read through the story, first the younger son, then the elder son, then the father, stopping in between to think and she helped us by enlarging our ways of looking at it.

We then focused and looked at the beautiful painting by Rembrandt of the Prodigal Son I had never seen this before but as Marianne pointed out that he had painted the father with different hands, one a fathers and one a mothers I was very touched and asked God to show me something fresh/new.



I was familiar with this story and for years had identified with the Elder son, being the eldest in my family growing up but somehow I sensed God had something different to show me.

After this we chose a partner and went out into the fields and walked together for a short while talking and sharing, we then prayed for each other and walked back in silence listening for anything God was saying. This was now a time of sharing and what a rich time it was so many different thoughts but for me I was so blessed.

When I asked God for something new he said You are the Mothers Hands, wow what a privilege and I knew straight away it was right and it felt comfortable, I work on the streets with abused women and some of them call me mum it was Gods confirmation and blessing.

After praying for each other Joyce produced some lovely home made goodies and a welcome cup of tea what a lovely rich blessed time we all had.

Every Blessing

Christine Clamp.

TODMORDEN

The rainbow is very precious to me.

When I moved house in May, I was prompted to make a Rainbow Garden in response to an icon I received from my friend in Scotland.

It is a picture of Christ on the cross surrounded by a rainbow. From his heart a light shines down to all the nations of the world represented by many more colours. My friend also was making a garden in the shape of a cross. The writing on this picture says 'Love one another as I have loved you, by this all will know you are MY disciples if you love one another.'

To me the rainbow is a sign of his promises (Gen 6) - to me personally. A few years ago I prayed for two miracles—mountains which needed to be moved for my son and my husband to be free to follow Christ fully. I am still standing on those promises he gave me. Though many difficulties have been overcome, there are still some which appear - and I say that again-they only appear to be obstacles. With God nothing is impossible. Look up how MANY TIMES THAT PHRASE IS REPEATED IN THE BIBLE.

The sign is my flourishing little rainbow garden.

Four of us have been meeting for prayer on second Fridays at lunchtime over the last few months but nothing so far has come of our request to Churches Together here to join us. We now no longer have a proper Group but would be grateful for your prayers as we seek the Lord as to the way forward.

I found great inspiration from the [Nottingham article in the May Spotlight](#). **THANK YOU ANN.**

Janet Waithaka

Editor: - Yes indeed Ann! There were many encouraging comments about your article.

Maranatha Trumpet Call – Eastleigh Region

Since our last update, we are pleased to confirm that the opportunity to engage with what the Lord Jesus is doing amongst our black brethren in the UK church has been extremely exciting!

A small contingent from our group were able to attend the **Festival of Life** event, 7pm to 6am at the EXCEL Centre in East London to join with 55,000, mainly Nigerian, believers for a night of intercession, worship and preaching / teaching. It was truly a blessing.

At the local level we have asked one of the local churches to be the focus for a bi-monthly visit of black Preachers to the local area to share their vision for the UK. Jonathan Oloyede of the Global Day of Prayer (London) Movement and Les Issacs (Head of Ascension Trust - Street Pastors) are to be followed by Ade Omooba later this year in continuing to bless the local area.

We continue to meet on a quarterly basis to pray for the UK. The State of the Nation initiative that Dennis Wrigley and approximately 80 other business, educational and church leaders are creating to act as a conduit to address both Houses of Parliament and the Church in the Nation is regularly supported in prayer. The sense that we have of interceding and seeing the hand of God move has strengthened the local churches who participate in the **Maranatha Trumpet Call** meetings.

We are also finding that the relationships between the churches are growing in joint initiatives for mission. The local regional churches joined together for a recent mission event called **QuobFest '09** at which seven of the local churches were committed in depth. We are very excited about the growing unity in the area, as Psalm 133 confirms that it is there that the Lord has 'commanded his blessing'!

Danny Stupple

WHO AM I ?

There is no one quite like you in all the world
Before anyone had ever thought of you, you were

in God's plan

His plan of creation

From the desire in the Father heart of God

He loved you into being

Body, mind and spirit He created you,
unique in every detail,

and let you enter into the world that would
become your growing place.

He welcomed you, watched and cared for you
Shared your first smiles and tears.

He provided and protected you in each stage of
your existence.

As you stretched and kicked and grew
everyone of your movements He noted
He was there when your early thoughts formed
the first words on your lips
co-ordinating senses and sound, and He never
left you.

All your fears and pains, your joys and delights
are kept in His memory.

Not one day of your life has escaped from His
love for you.

You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Are you not happy with His handiwork?

He has placed so much beauty within you to
discover

so much potential for love and to be loved.

He has sown seeds of goodness and purity
tenderness and humility in your heart.

Allow them to grow, to take root and mature.

His gift of life to you is rich in abundance.

Every limb of your body He chose
every organ is especially for you

He made the colour of your eyes
and determined the number of hairs on your
head.

Even the blood in your veins - all the cells in your
body - are of His making, but more so

He has given you a personality - a temperament -
your senses, emotions and intellect,

understanding and reason

such talents and gifts and the freedom to choose
and He is ready to give you so much more

whenever you are ready to receive

He says, 'Come, especially if you are unhappy
come, let Me hold you and show you and teach
you and make you whole'

For your pain is His pain as your joy is His
and His delight is to see you fulfilled,

to see you become that perfect being
that one day you shall surely be.

His plan for you goes on to the end of time'

It holds within it the upward climb -
your pilgrim journey

of coming and going and turning around
of cleansing, forgiving, purifying,
the suffering of Jesus, the cross and the dying,
the living and rising and sanctifying.

Karin Castle

Karin is a member of the Coventry Maranatha Group