

THE MARANATHA COMMUNITY PRESENTS:

# SPOTLIGHT

News & Views for Local Groups, by Local Groups!



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Editor: Matthew Doherty, Address: 1 Clover Court, Brigg North Lincolnshire DN20 8FE Telephone: 01652:655408 E- MAIL: matthewdoherty@talktalk.net

## Hope In North East Cheshire



In November 2009, 39 churches came together with the aim of inspiring hope in the communities of North East Cheshire. Five mission groups were established and it is from the group entitled “To respond to human need by loving service” that the Hope Centre Project emerged.



Premises in Park Green, Macclesfield, formerly leased by Wesley Owen, were identified. With financial and other support from the Stewardship Trust and the various churches and their members, a substantial refurbishment was completed and the Hope Centre was opened (by the Mayor of Macclesfield) in June 2011.

The premises function as a coffee shop and a Christian bookshop selling books CD'S and Trade Craft, but there is wider mission viz.

*“The Hope Church exists to provide a means by which the churches of Macclesfield and the surrounding area can in a practical and unimposing manner reach out to the people of the town with hope and compassion”*

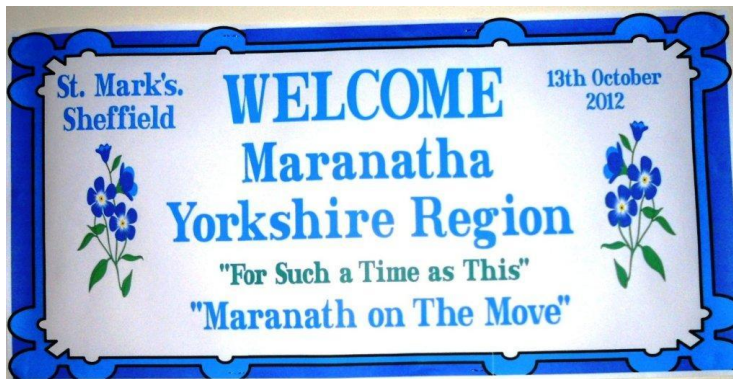
**More information can be obtained regarding the facility and its contining development on**

<http://www.hopecentremacclesfield.org.uk>



We praise God for all that has so been achieved in His name. There appear now to be 42 churches involved and prayer has been requested that they continue to grow in unity and fellowship.

In such circumstances, how apt it is that members of the local Maranatha group – with their message of unity renewal and healing – should themselves use a room in the centre!



A Maranatha leaflet says “We are **ONE** in Christ. We pray together as **ONE**. We praise together as **ONE**. We witness together as **ONE**. We work together as **ONE**”. The annual Yorkshire Regional Meeting is a tangible demonstration of this unity, as members of widely differing traditions come together in one accord, affirming the central truths of the Gospel.

This year’s meeting was held (as usual) at **St Mark’s church, Malin Bridge, Sheffield on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October**. Special guests were (from Manchester) Dennis Wrigley and Jim Heneghan and (from Texas via Manchester) John Dean (whom many will remember from First Sunday). This was the last time many of us met our beloved brother in Christ, Peter Haughey

After a time of praise and prayer, Dennis gave an update on developments within the Community’s work. More and more people of influence were looking to the Community in this time of escalating crisis. It was so important to identify and equip those who were able to assist in the Community’s response. It was encouraging that new life was being breathed into the church by Christians from overseas, by new Christians who had been “at the very bottom of the bucket” and by a younger generation of Christians who were themselves beginning “to shake the foundations”. John, in his vision of fire in the streets, also referred to these young people. Others were to be “the banks of the river”. This was a time of great expectation.

We also spent time sharing with each other as to what was happening in and around our own Maranatha groups. As Elizabeth Crewe (Harrogate) put it, we are seeking “to grow closer to God and closer to each other.” We were pleased to hear that the Wakefield Group is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We heard of links which are being forged in East Yorkshire where there is no Maranatha Group.

St. Marks is a wonderful place to meet not simply because of the warmth of welcome from Pat, Mark, Ruth and Paul or the new facilities (which were reported upon an earlier Spotlight edition). The Church’s heart for the local community is also an inspiration.

There is for instance a group of youngsters who meet on Tuesdays who are hungry to hear the Word of God and who are being equipped to meet the challenges of a hostile world. The Thursday Club (for 5 to 8 years olds; food, games, crafts and story time) was set up some years ago at the request of a child. Until quite recently there were 30 to 40 children involved but now there are only a few boys. It is significant that they know nothing of the Bible.

The counter attraction appears to be the after school clubs at Dyke Lane Primary (opposite the Church). The school has a new head teacher and Pat is seeking a meeting. With this, with other links into the locality and with the next stage of refurbishments that is proposed, Pat is putting her trust in God “every inch of the way.”

## Weekend at Bawtry Hall – Equipping the Saints

By Ann Lynch

At the recent weekend at Bawtry Hall we were reminded that Jesus told his disciples to take nothing for the journey and looked at how much excess baggage most of us are carrying. We later considered what it means to be a true follower of Jesus, our identity as a much loved child of God, discernment of our own mission in life, whether or not we should accept it, how we are being equipped as part of our personal journey.

Chris, one of the Maranatha members who made this journey wrote:-

**I would just like to write a short note of thanks to all who helped and supported the retreat ‘Equipping the Saints’ at Bawtry Hall on the weekend of the 19<sup>th</sup> October.**

I always so enjoy these special times away with Maranatha but I have to say that this week-end by far exceeded all my expectations. The balance between worship, teaching, fellowship and our own quiet times was for me perfect.

It was so good to have the opportunity to take a fresh look at our journey of faith, it’s a shame we don’t do it more often. The Lord helped us to see this journey in a brand new light from His perspective, not ours, which was so encouraging. He advised, suggested and revealed to us the equipping for the next part of the journey....thank you Lord.

The Holy Spirit had his way and had his say ... that was the best part!

Thanks to everyone for their wonderful fellowship.

**Prophecy “The Heart”:-**

Whilst in prayer I vividly heard in my spirit words from **Isaiah 54**. **‘Enlarge your house, build on additions, spread out your home, strengthen your stakes for you will soon be bursting at the seams.’**

I’d read this many times before, but this time it was different I knew without a doubt that God was talking about the **heart**.

**In Ezekiel** we read that God said he would **change our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh**. Since the minute we placed our hearts into his hands, they have become under major construction.

He is enlarging, deepening and widening our hearts to make room for his purest of love to grow, he is building on additions, all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which is the evidence of God’s nature and character growing in us. He’s pulling down partitions and barriers of sin and unforgiveness; he’s sweeping out the rubble of selfishness, lukewarmness and indifference. He’s strengthening and building the stakes of perseverance and steadfastness, so that we are ready to withstand any storm in the coming days ahead.

Does it make sense now why we are going through such heavy burdens of building work, why things seem to be such a mess at times?

God’s word says, ‘Dear friends do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange was happening to you, but rejoice that you participate in the suffering of Christ so, that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen ... but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.’

So let us take courage when trials leave us feeling battered and bruised, knowing that we are undergoing God’s finest creation within us, **the creation of the heart of Jesus** which will last in you and me for eternity!



## Peter Haughey

(27<sup>th</sup> December 1935 – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012)



Over many years, Peter Haughey played a very active part in the life of the Maranatha Community. He was to be seen at most Maranatha residential conferences and gatherings where he faithfully carried out essential administrative work. He would enthusiastically arrange the conference room, bringing flowers and beautifully crafted posters. He would arrange the bookstall and would be there to offer a warm welcome all who came. He attended the original National Representatives' meetings diligently and always made a positive contribution. Having formed a local Maranatha group in Wakefield, which he loved so much, he took a leading part in co-ordinating the Maranatha groups in Yorkshire and we remember with great joy his contributions at the last regional meeting little more than three weeks ago. In many respects he was an ambassador for the vision of Maranatha. He passionately believed in the three words given to the Community – Unity, Renewal and Healing and would frequently distribute Maranatha prayers such as 'Shalom' to people he met and to local churches. He loved every opportunity to share his faith, but this was always in a humble and non-intrusive manner. He was always imaginative and gave great priority to expressing gratitude individually to all who helped in any events, never seeking anything for himself.

**A supplementary Spotlight will be issued, celebrating Peter's life.**

### Mabel Hopkins

By Dennis Wrigley

Mabel Hopkins, from almost the beginning of the Maranatha Community, was a stalwart supporter of our work and vision. Over the years her quiet devotion and wisdom has been an inspiration to many. She had a tender, caring disposition and, with Arthur her husband, was an immense inspiration to me as Leader of the Community. In her typically quiet and knowing way she was particularly attentive to the detail of individuals' needs and, over the years, I regularly received cards on my birthday and at times of illness. I believe God has mightily honoured her prayers. We thank the Lord for her faithfulness, her gentleness, and commitment to this Community and to so many.

### Pause For Thought

By Robert Wilson

#### Goodness.



**May Goodness and Mercy follow you all the days  
of your life  
And may you dwell in the house of the Lord.**

## News From Entebbe Maranatha Group.....Uganda.

By Jim Tryon

I was pleased to be able to spend a morning with the thriving Entebbe Maranatha Group in Kisubi, a village about 7 miles from Entebbe airport on 20th September this year. I was making a short 11 day visit to Uganda and the Entebbe group visit was a "must" on my programme schedule.

Arriving at the Life Gospel Church on the main Entebbe - Kampala road, I found a very keen group of Christians already seated around a long table where they had been since 7.30am for their daily prayer meeting. It was then 10am!



I was given a great welcome and I knew most of them by sight, (and one or two by name!). We enjoyed praying together and reminiscing about previous visits. They also brought out the keyboard that I had been able to pass on to them a few years ago, and we sang one or two songs including, *"This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it!"* At this point I noticed a number of pupils standing at the door from the little primary school that has been set up by Pastor Asher and his wife next to the church. So we welcomed them in and had a lovely time singing one or two Christian songs.

After coffee and refreshments, I was shown the school with the children now back in their classes, as you will see from the pictures.

Now it is only some 3 years since the church had to move from its original site about 200 yards away to its present position adjacent to the main road. However, Pastor Asher and his members have been advised that the government have decided to widen the Entebbe-Kampala road with a dual carriage way, commencing in Kisubi.



The future position of Life Gospel Church is dependant on the amount of compensation that the government is willing to pay. Pastor Asher is assured that they will get adequate compensation, but they are naturally concerned about the disruption that will be caused in the process of moving to another site, particularly as there is now a three class Primary School involved as well as the church building.

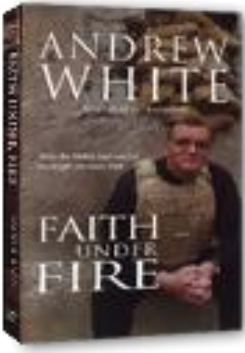
It will be very interesting to see how things develop and it will be wonderful if it all works out for God's benefit. We must therefore pray that He will resolve all of their problems and overrule all decision-making, both by the church members and the local government officers



It is amazing and wonderful how Life Gospel Church has been blessed by the Lord over quite a short period, and we are certain that he will want the good work to continue.

**Please remember Entebbe Maranatha Group in your prayers.**

## Peace On Earth And Goodwill To All Men



This doesn't seem to apply to countries like Iraq where there has been so much sectarian violence. Yet in **Baghdad** there is a church (**St. George's**) where there is to be found a limitless oasis of hope. In **Canon Andrew White's** congregation there are Orthodox, Chaldeans and Catholics, Assyrians, Evangelical and Charismatics, thousands of people who are open to every tradition (although they are very firm about the non-negotiable truths of their faith). He tells us in his book "**Faith under Fire**"; this is a church full of God's love the happiest he has ever served in.

Many came (including of course non Christians) because of the groceries and the clinics; \$175,000 have to be raised each month to provide for all their needs. But they stay for a different reason. Despite the terrible things which keep happening, they know that "**the Lord is here and His Spirit is with us**"

How many of us would be encouraged by testimonies in this book of the visible presence of angels and of the miraculous power and healing presence of the Holy Spirit! Within the book there is a quotation from Simon Guilledband regarding his experiences in Burundi

*"I know that Jesus was all I needed when He was all I had left"*

As that precious congregation in Baghdad have demonstrated **God's perfect love drives out fear.**

Especially pertinent to the winter edition of Spotlight, Canon Andrew informed the children of the church that he was going to tell them about Bethlehem, where he had lived and where Jesus had come first. A little boy put up his hand and said

*"Abuna, Abuna (Father, Father) Jesus did not go first to Bethlehem! He came here to Iraq – He was in the flames with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego"*

Canon Andrew himself is often separated from his family suffers from MS and is in great personal danger, He says

*"The heat of the fire is intense here but so is the joy of the Lord".*

He is called by the Lord to build up **relationships** with all sections of the community; and he knows that he can never breach the downward spiral of violence only by working with "nice" people. The Holy Spirit leads him to take **risks** in who he meets, where he meets and what he asks them to do for him.

Also, essential in peacemaking is the provision of **relief** to those caught in the middle of conflict, who are often suffering terminally as a result of injury or bereavement, unemployment or destitution.

He knows that there can be no **reconciliation** without the other 3 R's.

*"For me there is one further factor that secular agencies cannot understand: the role of the Almighty in the process. The guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in peacemaking can often cut to the heart of the most complex issues and find a way through. When on our own we cannot achieve everything, with Him all things become possible".*

All of the charismatic gifts (**1 Corinthians 12**) come into play (as they do in the life of the Baghdad church). In addition the **Coventry Litany of Reconciliation** – often prayed by Canon Andrew when at the Cathedral – powerfully focuses on forgiveness.

**It begins:** *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*

**It ends:** *"Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgives you"*