

SPOTLIGHT

News & Views for Local Groups, by Local Groups!



Issue 32–Winter 2013/2014 (December, January and February)

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A WEEKEND AND A SILENT RETREAT RUN BY MARANATHA IN 2013.

By Robert Wilson

I have had the privilege of attending the weekend at Bawtry Hall in July, the theme being *“Rising up as Eagles”* and the silent retreat *“Light out of Darkness”* at Loreto Centre, Llandudno in September.

So what did I gain? For me they were both life changing experiences. It was amazing how they complemented each other, though they were so very different. My Loving Father came and spoke with me through the teaching, worship, quiet times, and prayer for healing at Bawtry, while at the Loreto Centre I learnt how to really listen to God, and hear his voice in everything.



A few words about *“Rising up as Eagles”* first. The theme was based on **(Isaiah 40 v 31.)** *But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like Eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.*

Through the truly blessed worship led by Paul, and the encouragement given by our leaders Rhona, Richard, and others, I came home finding myself wanting to soar for our Gracious God, just like an Eagle. Jesus wants me to believe in myself like I believe in him, and he believes in me. Jesus The Bread of Life sees how hungry I am. **(John 6 v 56)** I need to stop wanting to be in control and reject my selfish pride, Be humble **(1 Peter 5 v 6-7)** I am thirsty for more and more of him **(John 7 v 37-38.)** As I spend time with him and let his living word speak to me, He teaches me how to live as he intends.



I went on the silent retreat *“Light out of Darkness”* with my heart full of expectation that God was going to change me even more. First He taught me about the need to discipline my tongue in the silence. Learning to listen for his loving voice speaking into my heart is a mind blowing experience, as he revealed his great love for me in the depths of my heart. A love that is sacrificial, everlasting, unchanging, unconditional, inseparable, and perfect, because God Himself is Love. In the silence and through His word my loving Father spoke to me about being my hiding place, my Rock of refuge, my hope, my Joy to praise, my strength, my defence, and my future. **(Psalm 71 v 1, 3, 5, 8, 14.)** My most grateful and loving thanks go to Mo and Robert our leaders for their lovingly prepared teaching, and to all those attended for the special bond which grew between us as we responded to God’s Love. I would recommend these retreats to anyone.

YORKSHIRE GATHERING AT SHEFFIELD

By Mike Doherty

On 14th September, Maranatha members had gathered at St Marks, Sheffield for a Regional Meeting. I was not present – being at the Yorkshire Prayer Gathering, York – but did attend a further gathering, held at St Marks, on 12th October.

This had been arranged by the Yorkshire Pillars and brought together members from South and West Yorkshire and also North Lincolnshire. We were very much as one – at one with each other and also with those who were on the same day attending the Saints in the Stadium Prayer Day in St. Helens.

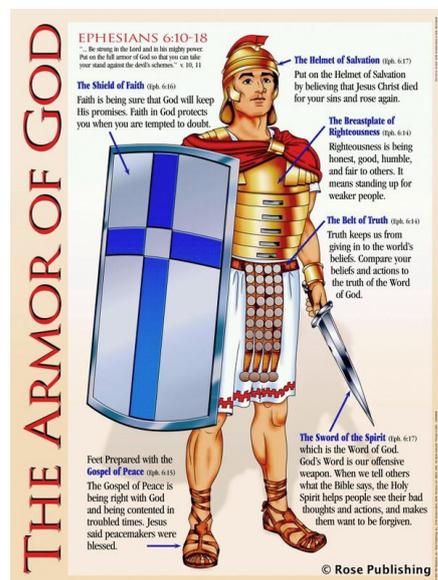
We were very conscious of our position as a nation. What would God say about our nation? And of those of us who are His?



After a time of praise and adoration, Janet (Huddersfield) brought us teaching on our relationship with Israel (His firstborn) and on how we can learn from our Hebraic roots. More than that, the covenant in **Deuteronomy 29, 9-15** was not only with Jesus but also with the Gentiles who were present and indeed “*with those who are not standing here today*”. It was incredible to think that in God’s mind all believers were at the foot of that mountain. In a covenant of grace, like a marriage covenant, there is appropriate behavior and a way to walk which is not burdensome but which gives life. Jesus the Jewish Rabbi and our Lord, didn’t do away with the Torah (“*Teachings*”). On the contrary, He put us on the path to discovering their true meaning.

We prayed for the peace of Jerusalem and that we should be properly aligned to God’s purposes in this respect. We moved on to pray for individuals and for our nation.

There were those present who had an especially strong burden (“*an avalanche*”) for people who to their knowledge were damaged, struggling and suffering. In addition, we were all very aware that, beyond family and local concerns, darkness was widespread across the nation. We prayed against the spirit of Ephraim (the tribe who turned back on the day of battle) and that we may be beacons of light shining in the darkness.



Colin (Leeds) reminded us of a prophecy given to Maranatha which exhorted us to speak in the name of the Lord into the oppression of this nation – not least to pray for the young, who were being seduced from the truth and who will build a truly Godless society unless they are prayed for in His name. Colin gave a presentation on **Ephesians 6. 10-20**. This was based on a 16th century book entitled “*The Christian in Complete Armour*”. St Paul continuously spoke fearlessly of Christ in spite of the chains; might God accomplish His plan through each of us!

We received encouragement through testimonies showing that Jesus is not only the Beginning and the End but also the Middle! We ended with prayer for healing. God blessed us this day with the kind of fellowship which seems unique to Maranatha meetings, where people from a range of backgrounds come together in joyful submission to the Lord and to each other. We often see the words “All welcome” on church notices; here there was more than a welcome, more than a common purpose, rather complete acceptance.

It was a day of refreshing and healing and one which we could leave with a renewed sense of purpose to fulfill our God-given callings. In my case, I was reminded of the song which ended the Yorkshire Prayer Conference:

*“The Lord has given us a land of good things
I will press in and make them mine
I’ll know His power, His glory
And in His Kingdom I’ll shine
With high praises of God in our mouths
And a two-edge sword in our hand
We’ll march right in the victory side
Right into Canaan’s land”*

BREAD FOR THE BODY



Many of our readers will know Allyn Benedict through his teaching at the Ark or in other ways. Spotlight has reported in the past (Issue 26) on his website. This site www.breadforthebody.com has now been redesigned and launched.

The new site is more interactive. Among other things, it is possible to write a comment, communicate with Allyn personally, or subscribe to receive e-mail notification of new posts. In addition, there is a Facebook page (being developed slowly).

Allyn requests that if you believe that Bread for the Body is of value, would you let others know. This 'bread' can only nourish the body of Christ if it goes into that body.

Many of the resources are good not only for personal use but also for small groups. For instance, the Bible Studies are, or will be, accompanied by devotional material for individual or group use. "*Out of the Courtroom, into the Father's house*" is set up as an 11 week small group course with in depth devotional material. The short reflections/teachings ("Fresh Bread" posts) could function well for study, sharing and prayer in a group too.

There are also resources available on the site other than teaching/ reflections. There is a new and very participatory form of Sunday morning intercessions; also if you are looking for an in-depth prayer of intercession for yourself, your small group or your church, you might try "*Prayer for a Christian Community*"

Allyn is celebrating (in his own heart) this relaunch by posting a series of reflections on 'Love'

Why Not visit the site?



CONWY GROUP VISIT FLIXTON

By Carol Hewitt



Nine members of the Conwy Maranatha group travelled the 80 miles from North Wales to Flixton on 26th September to visit the Maranatha headquarters.

On arrival we were made very welcome by the volunteers in the café where we enjoyed a refreshing drink and look around.

We then joined Charles next door in the prayer room for midday prayers (which they kindly delayed a little for us) followed by him giving us a more informative tour of the office premises.

We then made our way the short distance to The Ark where Marie was waiting (with delicious soup!) to entertain us to a bring and share lunch. We lingered long and happily over an enjoyable lunch enjoying wonderful fellowship.

Marie shared about how she, Andrew her husband (who went to be with the Lord three years ago) and Linda purchased The Ark together having realised that the Lord had given them the same vision. An opportunity was also given for each of us to share about our journey with the Lord and Maranatha. When we finally dragged ourselves away from the joyous fellowship around the table Marie gave us a guided tour of The Ark which was far beyond any of our expectations. What a wonderful home and place of healing!



Thank you all in Flixton for making our day so enjoyable and well worthwhile.

MARANATHA IN MALAWI

By Heather Williams



Although it is eighteen months since a Maranatha team has visited Malawi we have been keeping in contact with many of our brothers and sisters there.

Father Namba a Catholic priest in Phalombe in the South East of Malawi is a Maranatha member. While caring for very many parishes in the area he also oversees a faith based organization (FBO) seeking to support the elderly, orphans and those with aids. We have been able to send some money to help. Below is an extract from a recent e-mail:

“We did the distribution of Fertilizer to the members and they are happy with all your help rendered to them. The only challenge this year is like that of last year, which is Hunger. It has affected over one Million people and the FBO members have not been spared. There will be acute food shortage this year due to heavy rains which swept away the crops while still in the fields. As we urged you last year if you will have resources with the help of the Almighty God let us this year also engage in the exercise of buying maize flour and distributing to them on monthly basis, otherwise, this year there is a danger we will lose some members due to hunger related illnesses. This will come about because some of the members are on Anti retro viral therapy due to HIV/AIDS which requires them to eat balanced diet food.”

We have also been able to arrange for Moses, someone we have known from both visits, to get some Bibles in Chichawa to give to a number of local pastors he supports. Moses works for the Evangelical Alliance in Malawi south west of Blantyre.

We have kept in touch with an Anglian vicar Charles Masina whose parish is in a poor area of Blantyre. A couple of the young people from his church became Maranatha members though it has been difficult to keep in touch with them. We sent some money to help them in building a house for rent on the church grounds.

Pastor Damson with a growing number of churches, Francis Mijiga who has a lively music group of young people at St Michael’s and All Saints the largest Presbyterian Church in Blantyre, Bishop Mark and CREDOM, an outreach to isolated villages outside Blantyre, are just some of the many brothers and sisters we have in Malawi.



We are now at the point of beginning to plan a third trip to Malawi. There will be a General Election in the country in May so please pray this goes off quietly, and for the leader of God’s choice to be elected. President Joyce Banda became President just 18 months ago after the sudden death of the ruling President. She is a Christian and seeking to get rid of corruption – do pray for her. Because of the elections **we are planning the next visit at the end of September / beginning of October 2014** – definite dates are not settled yet. If you think God may be nudging you to become involved by praying, by giving or by being part of the team to go please get in touch with Heather Williams

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Father Namba was involved in a head on car accident on Saturday 12th October. He suffered serious facial injury and his right eye has been badly damaged. Please pray for his full recovery.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

By Robert Wilson

Peace Perfect Peace

(Jesus said)

“Peace I leave with you;
My Peace I give to you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.”

John 14:27

