



Issue 2

July / August
2005

"... where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20 KJV)

Leanyer Christian Fellowship
(Darwin, Northern Territory)

Thank you for the copy of "Gathered Together" and the accompanying letter.

I thoroughly enjoyed their reading and commend you both on this new venture. I believe you have already found a commendable balance between the newsy and the thought provoking. And what a wonderful thing it is for believers to be "gathered together" whether it be face to face in a Church situation or via such a newsletter as that which you folk have so effectively put together. Of course the most marvellous "gathering together" of all will be in the Time to Come when we as one body respond to that trumpet sound.

... Our situation continues well with five regulars meeting weekly in our home from 9am to midday. We call ourselves the "Leanyer Christian Fellowship" (Leanyer being the suburb in which we are located). The service, which goes for about 75 minutes, is based around the Anglican Prayer Book, though there is provision for extemporary prayer. Our songs/hymns tend to be in the old Gospel revival tradition (eg "Blessed Assurance", "He Hideth my Soul", "Softly and Tenderly", "Saved by Grace", "Just As I Am" and the like). Spiritual food is then provided for us by Joe Focht via CD-Rom. Joe is the senior pastor at Calvary Chapel, Philadelphia USA and his preaching is excellent - a wonderful Bible expositor who truly takes Word of God as His Word. His Church's website is worth a look: <<http://www.ccphilly.org/home/default.asp>>. Following the conclusion of the service proper we fellowship over coffee and biscuits, discussing the deeper things of Scripture until it's time for our friends to depart for lunch. We are sensing that the reactive phase in our Church life is now passed and that we are to look to being proactive in our own right. To this purpose we are waiting on the Lord as to what He would have us do.

Again my sincere congratulations for a job well done.

Your brother in Christ,

Rob Porteous

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Rev Dr. Phil Marshall

(‘The Reforming Alliance’ executive member and former ‘strand 2’ coordinator)

I have just read the "Gathering Together". It gave me a great 'peace in the Lord' to read of your news and care for all who have left the UCA over R84.

May God bless your work that you do in His name!!! May people be encouraged looking to the future with hope.

Phil

Rev. Dr. Gordon Watson

(‘The Reforming Alliance’ executive member and ‘strand 3’ coordinator)

Pleased to hear of developments in Canberra.

I think you are doing well and your newsletter shows that you are not sitting on your hands.

Your knowledge of ... congregations (churches) that have left the UCA will be of great importance after the next Assembly when I expect that R84 will be reaffirmed with all its malignant consequences. There will be many people looking to your experience for help and advice about setting up their own cause. ... to have a group who have recently parted from the UCA, who are familiar with the issues, will be of great help to people as they seek to find their way. ...

Best wishes
Gordon

CATANI COMMUNITY CHURCH

(West Gippsland, Victoria.)

Thank you very much for the newsletter, Gathered Together. It is encouraging to hear what others are doing.

One of the members of our house Church, Dot Goodman, spoke to June. (A lady from the Canberra Christian Fellowship in the Methodist tradition, we think.) Dot was encouraged and inspired to share our story with you and Gathered Together readers. ...

Kindest regards
Diane Brown
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CATANI COMMUNITY CHURCH (West Gippsland, Victoria.)

July 7th 2005

Greetings Fellow Believers,

We were pleased and encouraged to receive your newsletter. Like so many others we did not make the decision lightly to leave our local church. Where we had been a visible witness to the rural community, some Sundays we competed with the microphones of Horse Shows and Footy matches held just next door. The small town of Catani consists of a dozen or so houses, the local hall, modern Sporting Club rooms at the recreation ground, and the now empty Uniting Church (and once a very good school now gone, progress they call it.)

Sadly the church building (now empty) and the land it is built on, was donated by local residents many years ago, for the use of the community. At that time Presbyterian Services were being held in the area, so it became known as the Catani Presbyterian Church.

An entry in the first minutes stated that the church could be used free of charge by other denominations, providing services were held at another time of the day. Of course this building became the property of the Uniting Church. With our resignation from the U.C.A. we lost the right to worship in the building we had lovingly cared for, some of us for approximately 40 years, one member even longer. The entry in the Church minutes does not have any legal significance, we are told.

Back in 1977 we thought it reasonable to unite together, the Christian thing to do, as in a country area we all worked in together anyway. Our congregation was a fairly even mix of Methodist and Presbyterian folk and some others. As you will remember it was with some sadness and heart ache that we gave up our beloved traditions in good faith like most others at the time of Union.

Now once again we had a decision to make. When the news came over the radio of the decision made by the U.C.A. (Resolution 84), we felt so hurt, betrayed and ashamed, that we were part of a Church that was openly disregarding God's word in the Scriptures, and causing pain to God our Father by sending a wrong message to the people outside our Church.

Our congregation consisted of 26 members, most regular attendants. One family soon left to join a Baptist church. We like others held many meetings, took votes, and considered various options for our future. We were more fortunate than some, in that, "All the believers were of the same mind." Acts 4:32.

So from April 1st 2004 we separated ourselves from the U.C.A. to become the Catani Community Church. We were all very aware for this to work, it meant being totally committed. Could we do it? All we could do was trust in God, and place our church in his hands.

Then things started to happen, a new family joined us, taking the place of the one that left. This has happened many times over the years in our church. God has always sent someone to fill the gap. Four

homes were offered to hold our church services. Two homes with an electric organ, and two keyboards to use. We had two organists. Then a suburban church offered us 40 Australian Hymn Books as they had updated. Next a Christian friend was contacted by St Vincent DePaul's Opportunity shop. Could we use an overhead projector, a large box of chorus transparencies and a communion set? Later they had an electric organ that needed a home, so now we have lovely music to sing to in each home. We have the use of a lectern, and with a dozen extra chairs we have purchased, we move from house to house each month.

"YES GOD IS GOOD IN ALL HIS WAYS"

"WHO WILL BRING US THE MESSAGE?"

We started by forming a Worship committee. The worship is led by a capable husband & wife team. Another person is in charge of the Sunday School, we are fortunate to have 9 children in our group. The children receive a message during the first part of our church service, then go into the kitchen or another room for activities and further instruction by one of our members rostered for Sunday School on that day.

Our first services were run by some of our capable leaders, we are now blessed to have three preachers coming to us each month on a regular basis, one being a past minister of ours who has also left the U.C.A.

Most of our members are happy to read the scripture readings in church and participate in prayers, so we are very fortunate. The Sundays we don't have a visiting preacher, we have a sharing service, these have gone very well.

We meet for worship each Sunday at 11am. A basket lunch is held the days we have visiting preachers and a cuppa other days. These are great days of fellowship, the warmth and sharing that has grown within our group over the past 15 months has been far more than we imagined possible.

'TO GOD BE THE GLORY, GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE'.

A prayer meeting is held on Monday or Tuesday evening and a Cell group meets on Wed. evenings.

We celebrated our first Anniversary at a Christian Youth camp called Mill Valley Ranch. We were able to use a little old church that had been moved there from out in the country, complete with the text on the wall, put there who knows how many years ago. Each of the folk who had spoken to us over the year joined us, and took part in the celebration. A lovely time of fellowship.

We have received great support from the Warragul Community Church, and advice on how to go about setting up a new Church, they have also supplied us with speakers.

In March we arranged for a bus to go to one of the Franklin Graham Meetings held in Melbourne, the bus was driven by a member, who works for the bus services, he volunteered his services free, some others joined us and we almost filled the bus.

We hope you will be encouraged to hear of our journey so far, and pray God will bless all others who have stepped out in faith as we have done.

House Church member D. G.



**Catani Community Church
at worship in a lounge
room**

CUNNAMULLA (Queensland)

It has been a fantastic time over the past two months. Many blessings and a few oops! Walking by faith is very interesting.

Ministry with the blokes.

... many great things had happened amongst the young people but it never lasted. As they went back to their home environment the Christian values would not be upheld. ... The gift that God has given me is to get alongside these guys. Looking for intersection points to empower these fellows with the Gospel. ... It is a long term process but it is encouraging to see the blokes happy to hang out with us and together.

Café Church

Over the past few weeks we have opened the café to do church on Saturday afternoons from 2pm to 7pm. It has been very exciting to see the different people that the Lord is bringing in.

... It is comforting to know that God knows exactly what is needed to see His kingdom come to this part of Outback QLD.

United Christian Fellowships. (UCF)

... We have a time of worship and preaching and teaching, concluding with a dinner together. It could be a pot luck or a B.B.Q. Most everyone brings something to share. We have had a number of guest speakers travel to Cunnamulla and that has been a real blessing.

... We have a few young people that think being a Christian is boring and for old women! I think we have burst every bubble of their *mis*-conceived ideas. From Mission pilots to Christian hot rod clubs. They have seen it!

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(from the **Reachout** newsletter)

Next Issue

We already have some material for the next issue but would welcome more contributions.

Thanks to those who have sent us information about their activities to print and share.

Contributions can be e-mailed to Ian Denton (iancd@yahoo.com) or sent to 64 Blacket St., Downer 2602, A.C.T..

We will email or post out each issue which can then be copied for the people within the recipient groups.

Please include the best contact information for your group so people who are travelling can get in touch if they are staying close by.

ID

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