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June 2004  
Issue 5

# The Next Step



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## Why We Are Here

It has been suggested that we provide a brief summary of events that led to the creation of this congregation.

Most of us have, over the last year in particular, been unhappy with a number of decisions and actions of the denomination from which we have come. The issue that aroused a great deal of debate and discontent and led to renewed focus on other areas of concern as well, was the denomination's decision to permit practising homosexual people to take on leadership positions within the church. To us that conflicts directly with Biblical teaching and should not be allowed.

Despite the turmoil within the denomination, church leaders appeared to downplayed the concerns of so many members and took insufficient action to address the concerns. As a result there have been thousands of people across the country who have moved to congregations of other denominations where they felt God's Word was better taught and applied. Many ministers have also left the denomination or retired. In some cases entire congregations have left.

In our particular case, some people have resigned from the denomination, others have left although retaining membership until they find a new church to join, while others have just ceased attending church or in some cases continued on as before but with an uneasiness about the denomination's direction.

We felt the need for a form of support group for the many people who were hurting and felt displaced by the decisions and actions of the denomination that had been their spiritual home for, in quite a few cases, a great many years. That support group grew from just an idea, to this congregation which now brings us together to worship God on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month.

We do not know if this congregation will exist for just a short time while each of us discovers and adopts a new church home, or if it will become our church home and grow and develop under God's leadership.

While we have departed from our old denomination, it is important to remember that there are a large number of good and faithful people still within that church. There are many who are working within that church to correct the things we believe to be wrong. We should continue to uphold ALL God's people, wherever they worship in our prayers.

Ian Denton

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## Looking Forward

I have summarised the events that led to the creation of our congregation. It is good to know how our congregation came to exist, but if all we are is a protest against the bad decisions of others or if we just seek to continue on comfortably as we were before 'all the fuss', then I believe we won't be doing what God wants of us.

I want to be part of an 'alive' congregation: a congregation that is keen to learn more of God; a congregation that applies God's teaching to their lives; a congregation that is working to share the good news of God's love and salvation with the community it is part of.

To be 'alive' we don't have to suddenly start singing choruses or to become 'modern'. Neither do we have to replay those things that have enriched the Church in the past. We need to be us. God knows us. He knows our abilities and interests and he knows the community we are part of. If we are willing to live Godly lives and look for opportunities to share what we know of God with others, I'm sure God will bless us and provide those opportunities.

I believe we have an exciting future ahead of us.

ICD

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## Methodist Tradition

For the sake of having a name, we have called ourselves "A Christian Fellowship in the Methodist tradition" until we come up with some other name that we are happy with.

I understand 'A Christian Fellowship' to mean followers of Christ who meet together, support each other and share in praise and worship. It is harder to determine what is meant by 'in the Methodist tradition'.

The Methodist Church of Australasia was absorbed into the Uniting Church in Australia back in 1977. If our Methodist tradition is just a warm fuzzy feeling triggered by memories of the past, I would argue we should be looking to discover much more of what Methodism was all about.

The early Methodists were organised into class meetings and church discipline was quite strict so that standards of Christian teaching and Christian living would be maintained. The early Methodists were also very evangelical and sought out opportunities to share the faith they had embraced. Our experience of Methodism, while descended from those roots, was of a church still dynamic but with perhaps the enthusiasm and zeal of its early years blunted a little by time. I wouldn't expect our Methodist tradition to mirror exactly the methods and practises of the original Methodists, although I would hope their commitment to God and their eagerness to make Him known to others would be part of our lives.

Methodists became known for their joyfulness, their assurance of salvation through Christ and their singing. It is often said Methodism was 'born in song' and of course Charles Wesley was a prolific hymn writer and many of his hymns are still very well known and regularly sung today.

John Wesley was not content with a superficial faith. He studied his Bible diligently, he sought to live his life God's way and he made it his mission to tell others of what he knew of God, travelling all around the UK in the process and preaching to thousands. We can learn a lot from John Wesley and other early Methodists. The importance they placed on their faith and the committed lives they led is something that we can take from our Methodist heritage and with which we can enrich the Christian Church as a whole. ICD

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A Christian Fellowship  
in the Methodist tradition

**Join us to Worship God**

5-00pm, Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2004  
Preacher: Dr. E. Dennis  
We meet at the  
Campbell Gospel Chapel,  
Chauvel St., Campbell  
ON EVERY 4TH SUNDAY AT 5-00PM

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### Preachers

We are grateful to Rev. Abraham Tang for preaching at our 27 June service.

Dr. E. Dennis will preach on 25 July

Rev. Ron Peters will preach on 22 August

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