

U.S. – Midwest

The U.S. Midwest consists of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. We group them geographically in what follows, beginning in the north with North Dakota, working our way south to Kansas, then step over to Missouri and back north to Minnesota, then east to Wisconsin and down to Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and end with Michigan.

North Dakota

In 1883, Henry and Emma Goff moved their family from Herefordshire, England to farm about 20 miles northeast of Langdon on the eastern side of North Dakota and not far from the Canadian border. They had been saved a few years prior to this. Henry was a staunch Church of England man, whereas Emma had been raised by two aunts who were in fellowship in assemblies in England. Soon after arriving, the Goffs initiated a community project to build a church building on their property at which any itinerant preacher could preach. Emma, who had known many of the brethren leaders in England, soon became dissatisfied with this arrangement.

The Goff's second son, Alfred, had been saved under the preaching of Henry Craik, the colleague of George Müller in Bristol, before the family moved to North Dakota. Fleming May of Ontario came to the area to visit his brother, and became good friends with Alfred. He took Alfred with him to preach the Gospel, mainly in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba. With Fleming May, the Goffs started a Sunday School and prayer meeting in their home, and in 1887, a group of six began to Break Bread there. This may be the first assembly testimony in North Dakota.

In 1888, Emma Goff heard that the fiery preacher John Grimason was working in the prairie states and invited him to come to their area. Several were saved as a result of his preaching, and the small assembly became established. This assembly was identified with the village of Bealieu near Walhalla, five miles from the border of Manitoba.

A few miles northwest of Langdon, in the Woodbridge area, near what is now the town of Sarles, another little group of Christians gathered to Remember the Lord in one of their homes. These families had come from Ontario. The Loynes and Hazlitt families were among these, and became acquainted with the Goffs. Some of them would drive the 50 miles by wagon to visit the Goffs, and the two assemblies became closely tied. John Grimason and Alfred Goff held Gospel meetings in the Woodbridge area in 1900, and many were saved, including the Hazlitt girls, one of whom, Fanny, married B.B. Goff. They soon moved to Oregon (see Oregon).

At about that time, others of the extended Goff family began to move west. When Alfred and Henry Goff died (Alfred died at the age of 35), the two assemblies lasted only a short while longer. Thus the current assemblies in North Dakota are not derived from these early works.

In the late 1890s, Charles Hoehler, an immigrant from Germany, had been hired to help at the Goff farm, and through the influence of the Goffs, was saved. About the turn of the century, he moved to Iowa and was influential in the early development of assembly testimonies in northern Iowa (see Iowa).

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The assembly in Harvey in the central part of the state had its beginning in 1922 in rooms above the Pioneer Mercantile store, and became known as the Harvey Gospel Hall. Mrs. A. N. Beiseker had visited in Minneapolis that year and heard Paul Roder speak at one of the assemblies. An invitation was given him to come to Harvey for Gospel meetings. Harold Harper responded, coming and holding meetings in the English Congregational Church on 9th and Adams. Harold Harper and August Hasse came several times to have meetings, and a good number were saved.

Fred Bischke, Harry Sommer, Ludwig Huber, and Fred Liebelt were those who had most to do with the establishment of the assembly. The Gospel Hall in the Pioneer building flourished for a time, with up to 100 in the Sunday School and 30 or more believers for Breaking of Bread services each Lord's Day morning; Gospel services were held on Sunday evenings. Among those active in leadership have been Fred and Alvin Bischke, Fred Liebelt, J.J. Reimer, Virgil Sommer, Arland Frost, and Marvin Mertz. In early fellowship, in addition to those already mentioned, were members of the Beiseker, Zweigle, Graser, Stein, McCarthy, Billigmeier, Spielberger, Schroeder, Fiskum, Revell, Wolf, Harris, Steinhaus, and Adams families.

Because of the steep stairs going up to the room above the store, the Christians purchased a building on 8th Street in July 1944, and remodeled and enlarged it to suit the needs of the assembly. The assembly is still at that location and is now known as the Harvey Gospel Chapel. Many speakers have visited the Harvey assembly, among them Neil Fraser, Edward Dillon, Ben Tuininga, and Alfred Gibbs, in addition to Harold Harper and August Hasse. About a dozen people attend the assembly.

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The Hurdsfield Gospel Hall, south of Harvey, existed for many years. The hall was damaged by a tornado in July 1953. The brethren quickly built a new auditorium, and repaired and remodeled the old building into Sunday school quarters and furnace and utility room. By 1977, it was called the Hurdsfield Gospel Chapel. The assembly ceased in the early 1990s.

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The assembly which meets now at Southwest Bible Chapel in Valley City in the southeastern part of the state was started in about 1930 by Paul Clark and his father. Paul Clark's parents, Henry and Ella Clark, had moved with their family to Valley City in 1925 to operate a grocery store after a lifetime of farming. They were affiliated then with Baptists but had friends in 'exclusive' assemblies in Minnesota. In about 1930, they formed a small assembly, meeting in their apartment at the rear of the grocery-store, and probably affiliated with the 'exclusive' assemblies in Minnesota. Orval and Edna McConoughey and Oscar Peterson came out of the

Baptist Church to meet with the Clarks, followed soon by others. When the elder Clarks died, their apartment home was converted to a one-room Valley City Gospel Hall. Later, a building nearer downtown Valley City was rented for the assembly, and connections with the 'exclusive' brethren were broken.

An assembly preacher, John Farquharson from Canada, held Gospel meetings at the Gospel Hall in 1935. After that, he and F.W. Swartz from Detroit went to the northern part of the state to preach the Gospel wherever they were accepted. They preached in school houses and the homes of Will Conn and Henry Halvorson near the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. Many people were saved in these meetings, including members of the Fauske, Noakes, Turneir, and Keif families. In 1936, Paul Clark followed up on John Farquharson's work in the Turtle Mountain area. Paul Clark held meetings at Crary, and for a time the Crary Assembly met.

In about 1932, a small assembly was formed in an old church building in the tiny town of Hurd, about 60 miles west of the Turtle Mountain area. The Hurd Assembly essentially consisted of the Schoenig family and Otto Anderson from Lansford, the Cools from Newburg, and Ayars from Russell. John Farquharson also had meetings in the Lansford area in the northern part of the state. The August Schoenigs, Ray Cools, Ollie Varco, and Otto Anderson responded to these meetings. In inclement weather the Hurd Assembly met in the August Schoenig home and later moved to that home. The assembly ceased functioning in the mid 1940s.

Several from these families in the northern part of the state joined the assembly at Valley City over the years, and others continued to sponsor meetings in their homes for assembly preachers from Canada. Hector Alves from the west coast held meetings in Inkster. After that, the families of Don Hulst and the Wagars met for Bible study, but an assembly was not formed.

The Valley City Gospel Hall changed its name to Southwest Bible Chapel and introduced a piano after World War II, which caused a few people to leave. In 1966, the assembly sponsored a two-week evangelistic campaign, in which many were saved.

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A home assembly met in the home of Robert Hewitt in Grand Forks for many years, beginning perhaps in the 1960s. Wes and Gladys Kosin, missionaries to the Shoshone Indians in Wyoming, would spend their summers in Grand Forks, where Mr. Kosin taught linguistics at the University of North Dakota, and they helped out at the assembly. The Grand Forks Assembly discontinued in the mid 1980s. From the mid to late 1980s, a small home assembly, the Bismarck Bible Chapel, met in Bismarck, the state capital, with Mike Kopp, Brian Young, and David Bartlett as elders. In the town of Washburn north of Bismarck, the Washburn Bible Church was formed as an assembly in the late 1980s, and continues.

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Meadow Ridge Bible Chapel is the largest assembly in North Dakota. Paul Hipps had been in the Zion Christian Assembly in Sheboygan, WI and moved to the Fargo area in about 1970. He and his family, with Myron and Jean Losey who were Methodists, and Ron and Glenna

Weidmann who were Baptists, began a Bible study as a follow up to a Billy Graham crusade in the Fargo area. The Hipps began to share New Testament assembly principles with them, which were quickly embraced. The group began Remembering the Lord at the old YWCA building in Fargo, and called their meeting simply An Assembly of Christian Brethren at the beginning.

At about this time, John Dabill, who had been in an 'exclusive' assembly in Minnesota, met one of the sisters in a Bible book store. He joined with those in the new Fargo assembly and had a passion for equipping the Christians there with books of the brethren writers.

The Hipps moved to St. Louis in the early 1970s, but preachers such as Ben Tuininga and William MacDonald came and ministered the Word. At that time, Mr. MacDonald was president of Emmaus Bible School, and Mr. Tuininga taught Greek there, although his principal interest was in preaching throughout North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri. Jean Tuininga led ladies' meetings when she and her husband were in the area.

The assembly operated a coffee house ministry in the early days. These were the days of the 'Jesus People,' to whom the ministry was principally directed. Several were saved in this outreach.

In the early 1980s, the Christians built their present chapel at 2198 Second Avenue E., calling it Meadow Ridge Bible Chapel. The elders have included Frank Brown, Kevin Brown, Gary Clark, Mark Wagar, and Myron Martinson. A feature of the assembly is that they retain the 'open platform' idea in the main Bible teaching time on Sunday mornings. This was taught by A.N. O'Brien from Duluth, and Ben Tuininga was a strong proponent of the open platform. Boyd Nicholson and John Phillips are among those who have preached at the assembly.

Teaming up with assemblies in Baudette, MN; Virginia, MN; and some in the Minneapolis area, the Christians at Meadow Ridge virtually rebuilt Story Book Lodge in Minnesota, making it a premier Bible Camp. They help staff the Box T Ranch, near Bismarck, each summer. The Meadow Ridge assembly holds a Bible Conference each year and sponsors Youth Conferences. In the last few years, spearheaded by Gary Clark and Myron Martinson, they have organized week-long Gospel campaigns to nearby cities, such as the 1998 campaign in Grand Forks where fifty young people gave a week to blanket the city with Gospel witnessing in conjunction with nightly evangelistic meetings in the Grand Forks civic center. The assembly has consistently had about 100 in fellowship throughout the years, and has commended missionaries to the Lord's work in Bolivia.

Sources:

Questionnaire Responses

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History of the Forest Grove (OR) Assembly, by R. Goff, 1965, revised 1976

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South Dakota

South Dakota and North Dakota, are predominantly Lutheran and Catholic, and their people are primarily German and Norwegian. It is a region where endurance counts.

Assemblies in South Dakota have historically been difficult to establish and maintain. The Drummonds Bible Chapel in the small town of that name was formed in the late 1970s but lasted only a few years. In the early 1990s, Tim Jordison established the Sioux Falls Assembly. Two or three families joined with his family, but the work lasted only a few years. David and Kathy Possing started an assembly in the little town of Pickstown. They Remembered the Lord in their home, as the Pickstown Assembly, but were not able to persuade any others to work with them for very long. Both the Jordisons and Possings have since moved out of state, and no assemblies are currently known to exist in South Dakota. While living in Pickstown, David Possing had a good ministry at the prison facility in Yankton, some 70 miles away.

Sources:

Conversations with several Christians

Nebraska

The assembly known today as Keystone Bible Chapel in Omaha began in perhaps the late 1890s or early 1900s. It was likely started by one or more of the traveling evangelists of the time, possibly Alexander Broadfoot, who was then working in western Iowa. The parents of Arthur B. Rodgers, Sr. were among the first in the assembly, as was a Mrs. Olbert. Don Charles was in the assembly in the period around 1909.

Known in the earliest days as Omaha Gospel Mission on 26th Street between Douglas and Farnham Streets, the assembly moved in about 1915 to 813 North 40th Street. In 1920 the Christians moved into their new building at 45th and Hamilton Street and changed the name to Omaha Gospel Hall (but it was often called the Hamilton Street Gospel Hall). At some point, the designation Omaha Gospel Chapel came into use. In 1970, the assembly moved to 7840 Maple Street, calling their new meeting place Keystone Bible Chapel.

By 1920, the assembly was well established with about 60 in fellowship. At that time it was the only assembly in the city, and even in the state except for small works in farming communities in the western part of the state. However, the Omaha assembly had frequent fellowship with assemblies in Iowa and Kansas City, and was visited regularly by the itinerant preachers. Legal documents show that W.A. Bradford, I.M. Roman, and J.A. Shopen were among the leaders in the 1920s.

The assembly did not have designated elders in the 1920s, but leadership was provided by O.M. Nelson and Price Patterson in addition to the three just mentioned. It would appear that Arthur B. Rodgers Sr. was the most influential man in the assembly for many years. After service in the army during World War I, he became an itinerant preacher but lived in Omaha most of the time and considered the Omaha Gospel Hall as his home assembly. In spite of his travels, he maintained a strong voice in the affairs of the assembly until his passing in 1961.

In the mid 1920s, Ken Baird moved to Omaha from Greenfield, IA and his gifts were used. Willard Rodgers began taking an active part by about 1930 when in his late twenties. In 1932, Glen Plowman arrived and developed into a good preacher. James Gilbert came into the assembly at about the same time and became a definite leader. Others in the assembly in its early days include the families of Phil Olbert, Harry Hamilton, Bill Jones, Don Flat, Henry Peterson, Les Kent, Waldron Scott, Floyd Weaver, Wes Fox, Lyle Rockhold, and Earnie Rockhold.

In the decades of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, the assembly was very active. Besides a full slate of Sunday and week-night activities at the Hall, the assembly did hospital visitation every Sunday afternoon and held street meetings on Saturday nights in nearby towns. They held annual Bible Conferences almost every year from 1909. In the early days, the conference had an open platform, with as many as 20 speakers participating.

Keystone has commended a worker to Burundi. About 120 adults and children attend Keystone

Bible Chapel today.

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In about 1962, the Grandview Gospel Chapel in Omaha began as a friendly hive-off from the Omaha Gospel Chapel, and resulted from children's meetings being held in the neighborhood. The family of Willard Rodgers was instrumental in its founding. The assembly had an effective children's work during its short lifetime. In the late 1960s, leadership conflicts caused the Grandview Assembly to disband and sell its building.

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Another hive-off of the Keystone Bible Chapel is the Council Bluffs Bible Chapel in Council Bluffs, IA, established in about 1980 (see Iowa).

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Northwest Bible Fellowship in Omaha was established around 1980, and purchased the building formerly occupied by the Grandview Gospel Chapel. William Fear is one of the leading men at Northwest.

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Hollywood Heights Chapel in Lincoln was established in the 1950s. Although a few assembly people lived in Lincoln prior to that, not until Ralph Swanson from Sioux City, IA moved there and built a chapel did the assembly begin. Andy Joye moved to Lincoln from Omaha and helped in the work, which continues today.

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The brethren were active in central Nebraska in the late 1800s, but information is sparse. A family history relates that J.A. Dahlgren and a Mr. Wahlstrom preached in the area. We quote: "These two men were real Bible scholars and held meetings wherever they went. They had spring and fall conferences and would have one certain place to meet. Folk would come from far and wide to hear the word of God. J.A. Dahlgren spent many a day and night in the Maline home. Mr. Dahlgren was a painter and paper hanger by trade. . . Mr. Dahlgren was a very kind man. He was a man that was a true friend and was respected and loved by many friends." The Gustaf Malines and others were converted under the ministry of these men and an assembly was likely begun, but its location in the early days is not known – likely the Maline home or a rural schoolhouse near Gothenburg or Cozad. Gustaf Maline is remembered to have preached at the Gothenburg Free Mission church when its pastor was unavailable. There is no 'open' assembly in the area at this time.

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In about the 1920s, John Horn moved to Imperial, a small town in the southwestern corner of Nebraska, where he was instrumental in starting the Imperial Gospel Hall. Don and Harold McCormick farmed near Imperial and with their families joined that fellowship, along with the families of Floyd Miller, George Long, and Ken Hayward. Several of these families moved many years later to Colorado and joined the assemblies there. This assembly has since disbanded.

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The Palisade Gospel Hall developed at about the same time in the small town of Palisade not far away. Dan McCormick was the leader for many years, followed by Ray D. Ridlen. The Palisade Gospel Hall continues to meet though small.

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Sources:

Conversations with Christians

Kansas

Atchison is situated on the Missouri River, about fifty miles northwest of Kansas City. In the fall of 1901, Mr. and Mrs. John V. Davis and Mrs. Will Tietge began meeting regularly on the first day of each week to Remember the Lord, the beginning of the Atchison Gospel Hall, KS. Some years later their number had doubled, and the six began to pray definitely for the Lord to send His servants to labor in the field. Several Kansas City brethren took up the challenge and consistently visited this city to supply the needed help. Several brothers from the Troost Avenue Gospel Hall in Kansas City, MO went to Atchison on the third Sunday of every month to minister to and encourage the fledgling assembly while it was still meeting in the various homes of the believers. Among these were Wayne Matthews and Ralph Littlefield.

The first series of nightly meetings to be held by the assembly in Atchison was in 1936 when John and David Horn preached to large crowds in a schoolhouse at the edge of town and several were saved. That summer the Horn brothers returned for tent meetings, and the interest increased. In the fall of 1937 the assembly added a regular prayer meeting to its testimony. Jack Charles frequently came to help. Special meetings were again held in the homes and in two different schoolhouses across the Missouri River. Arthur Rodgers gave valuable help in one of the schoolhouses and also at various times in Atchison.

In February 1938 the assembly opened the Gospel Hall, an unpretentious rented building on a prominent street. For six years it served as a place of blessing. Many in the neighborhood attended the meetings and frequently the capacity of the building was taxed. Several itinerant preachers visited and gave special meetings, and also helped at the annual Easter Conferences; among these were David and John Horn, David Lawrence, Arthur Rodgers, E. G. Matthews, and Leonard Sheldrake.

During this time the Lord added to the number one by one, and the old rented building became overcrowded and was otherwise inadequate. When another group of people purchased the building, the assembly met for several months in the Masonic Hall, which had already been used for two conferences. Plans were undertaken for constructing a chapel. A corner lot was provided in a residential district where there was no other church building. In April 1944, the new hall was opened with a prayer meeting. Eight months later, the basement facilities were used for the first time at an all-day meeting, and in 1945 the fifth annual conference was the first to be held in the new building. John Horn and his wife moved to the city and remained there until the Lord took them home. It was at the Atchison Easter Conference in 1961 that Arthur Rodgers passed into the presence of the Lord. The assembly continued until about 1977.

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In 1950 or 1951, five families who lived on the Kansas side of the line between Missouri and Kansas hived off from the Troost Avenue Gospel Hall to form an assembly in the Overland Park area of Kansas City, KS. William and Ruth Hayward, and Wayne and Ruth Matthews were those who lived there, and when three other families moved to the area, the decision was made to start an assembly. Some of the early families, besides the Haywards and Matthews, were those of

Russ and Doris Farwell, Lloyd Staley, and Robert Buelick and his mother. Among those who came a little later were the families of Jim Petersen, Harry Sommerville, and John Schultheiss, followed by Duncan Sommerville.

The assembly has occupied the same building – Overland Park Chapel – at 64th and Floyd since its inception. At its largest, in the 1960s, about 200 people were in fellowship. A division in the early 1970s caused a serious decline in numbers, but today about 75 are in fellowship. Leaders in past years include Harry Sommerville, Duncan Sommerville, Gifford Knapp, Truman Page, Harlan Baldwin, Glenn Lee, and Russ Farwell. Don Herrington, Ray Miller, and Nelson Cook are among the leadership today.

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The first assembly in Wichita was started by Will Thomas, a full-time evangelist from Wales. A document written by Mr. Thomas in 1929 is extant, referring to this assembly. After his early death in 1931, his widow and two small daughters moved back to Perry, where a small assembly existed at that time. The Wichita Assembly struggled after that, but is said to be the beginning of subsequent brethren testimony in the area.

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Leonard Lindsted was commended to full-time service in 1939 by the Fernwood Gospel Chapel in Chicago. Encouraged to come to Wichita by the Myron Lakes', Leonard Lindsted and Tom McCullagh pitched a tent on the Meridian School ground in August 1941. The Lord blessed with fruit and they made contact with other Christians. By October 1941 Leonard had moved his family to Wichita. The Christians met as an assembly in a rented store on West Maple until the war started in December 1941.

At that time, the Lindsteds moved to Goessel, 35 miles north of Wichita. During this time Leonard held Bible studies in Newton, Canton, and in his own home. In the summer he had tent meetings in many Kansas towns with Joe Balsan, Ben Parmer, and other workers.

Under the leadership of Leonard Lindsted and Dean Jensen, the Wichita assembly was incorporated in April 1946 and met at the East Kellogg Gospel Chapel at 1933 E. Kellogg. The incorporators were Charles Cissel, Dean Jensen, and Bert Brower.

Dean Jensen urged William Horn, then at Drake University in Iowa, to move to Wichita to help out at the Wichita assembly. Bill Horn came in July 1948 and with the Lindsteds again started Bible studies in Wichita, using the Charles Cissel home on North Grove. They soon moved the studies to the Labor Temple downtown to accommodate the people.

Street meetings in Wichita and surrounding communities several evenings a week were held until legal restriction closed them down. Tent meetings continued and special Gospel meetings continued through the following years, and the assembly continued to grow.

In 1971, the construction of Highway 54 forced the church to move, and a new South Emporia Bible Chapel was erected at 2100 South Emporia. Soon after the new chapel was built, Leonard Lindsted's son, Robert, returned to Wichita from Vermont to take a position at Wichita State University. Many college students were saved and brought into the fellowship of the assembly. Leonard and Robert, with the help of the South Emporia meeting, started a "Pioneer House" where young men could live and also attend special Bible classes in the evenings. These classes were designed to train them to be Christian leaders and speakers.

Several workers were commended to the Lord's service by the South Emporia Bible Chapel, to Thailand, Immanuel Mission in Arizona, and to local ministry.

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After about a dozen years, some believers in the assembly at South Emporia hived off to start a new work on the east side of the city. They also began a school, which at the beginning had quite small classes. Robert Lindsted had moved to the northeast side of Wichita and the assembly began in his home and was incorporated in 1982. The number multiplied and in 1983, Sunrise Bible Chapel was built. The Sunrise school has been quite successful, with about 750 students enrolled at this time.

The Sunrise meeting divided in the mid 1990s. Most of the believers relocated nearby to Northside Bible Chapel in Kechi in 1996. The assembly has continued to grow at Northside, and has an active children's program. In active leadership in the assembly over the years have been Leonard Lindsted, Dean Jensen, William Horn, Louie Becker, and Robert Lindsted. Randy Horn and Will Nuse are the current elders at Northside, which has also recognized several deacons. About 200 adults and children attend Northside.

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The other group from the former Sunrise Bible Chapel started in May 1996 in the home of Troy and Mary Jane Campbell. The believers moved to another home after a few months, then rented the Bel Aire Rec Center for almost a year. They now meet as Believers' Bible Chapel at the Sunrise Christian Academy. This assembly has commended Robert Linsted for local ministry, has sponsored several part-time mission trips involving some 50 individuals, and has commended workers to full-time missionary work abroad. Believers' Bible Chapel has about 150 adults and children in attendance.

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The assembly at South Emporia Bible Chapel remained in their building for a time after the hive-off to Sunrise took place. Some couples living on Wichita's west side began meeting in a home for mid-week prayer and Bible study in 1981. Dan Linsted was one of the leaders. The Eddie Buchannan family and Darold Peters family were among this group. Land was purchased but no building was erected. The group gradually disbanded and by 1990 most had returned to South Emporia Bible Chapel.

Overcrowding in the South Emporia chapel induced the assembly to erect a building on the land

that had been purchased on the west side. Pending completion, the assembly met in rented space in a mall. In 1995, they moved into the new building and changed their name to Westside Bible Chapel. The present elders at Westside are Eddie Buchanan, Arnold Burkle, Duane Denny, and Whitney Reader. Average attendance is around 100.

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A small racially mixed meeting began fellowshipping in August 1963 and incorporated in 1966 as Grace Bible Chapel in Wichita. The incorporators were Donald Govan, Duane Denny, and D. Wayne Becker. This meeting continued until January 1981 when the Govan family moved to Jackson, MS to work with Voice of Calvary Ministries. Their daughter and son-in-law moved to California to work with World Impact, and Carol Denny was commended to the work at Immanuel Mission in Arizona. The South Emporia assembly continued the commendation of Carol and her husband Rick Khol after Grace Bible Chapel closed.

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Richard Burson was a Baptist preacher working in Salina in the late 1930s and early 1940s. While he was helping some widows clean out their attic, he found old copies of *Help and Food*, published by Loizeaux Brothers, which he read, learning the principles of a New Testament church.

In about 1943, he moved to the city of Hutchinson, southwest of Salina, and took the pastorate of a newly formed Baptist church at 4th and Main. He set up a bookstore in the front of the building, had the services in a middle room, and had living quarters in the rear of the building.

In 1945, Lawrence Littlefield, who was then stationed at the Hutchinson Naval Air Station, and his wife Betty, found the bookstore. Conversations with Mr. Burson about the New Testament church ensued, and Mr. Burson became eager to change his church to the New Testament pattern. He contacted Loizeaux Brothers in New York City for help, and they in turn contacted Ralph Littlefield of Kansas City, who had already been informed by his son Lawrence. Ralph Littlefield spent much time in discussion with Richard Burson. Leonard Linstead and Tom McCoullagh also gave advice, and soon the Hutchinson Bible Hall was a reality at 4th and Main. Later the name was changed to Hutchinson Gospel Chapel to avoid confusion with the local Jehovah Witnesses hall.

Some of the families left to join a nearby Baptist group after the change. The remaining four or five families moved to an old funeral home at 228 W. 2nd. There Richard Burson set up a print shop, in addition to the book store and an apartment and meeting rooms for the assembly. After a few more years, the Christians rented a building on East 2nd Street, and later purchased a building at 212 N. Lorraine. Six families were then in the assembly, but felt that God was leading them to start a Sunday School with a bus for transportation.

In the late 1960s, the assembly, still small, purchased the Presbyterian building at 6th and Elm. In

the 1970s, the families in the Hutchinson Gospel Chapel moved into that building, where it still meets today at 334 E. Sixth Street. Growth began at about that time, until today the assembly is the second largest in the state, with about 180 adults and children.

Those in active leadership over the years include Richard Burson, Leslie Jantz, Orville Hopper, Jim Gardner, Lowell Ramsey, Lane Scott, Billy Asberry, John Meinzinger, William Newcome, Darell Valdois, Steve Burson, John Bloom, Wayne Dudley, and Duane Schmidt. Workers have been commended by the assembly to Peru, Mexico, Immanuel Mission in Arizona, and to Kansas Bible Camp.

Hutchinson Gospel Chapel is closely associated with the work at the Kansas Bible Camp in Stafford, some 40 miles to the west, which Richard Burson started in 1946 and was the director for many years. Following Mr. Burson, John Bloom became director of the camp, and after him, John Denny.

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Near the Nebraska border, north of Salina and Wichita, is the town of Belleville. In about 1915, the Belleville Meeting was started by a Mr. Bachelor and Carss Nesmith, both of them business men. The small group of three or four families met in the second floor of a retail establishment. A little later, Eldon Baird moved to the area from Iowa and helped with the young people. Others who joined with the group were the families of Carl Ball, Charles Wilson, and Willie Hay. The assembly disbanded in about 1935 following the deaths of Messrs. Bachelor and Nesmith.

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By the time the Belleville Meeting ceased, Eldon Baird had married and moved to nearby Concordia. He, with Charles Wilson and Ed Korkill began Remembering the Lord in the Korkill home in Concordia. Soon they rented an old church building for their meetings, calling it the Concordia Gospel Hall. These three men did the preaching on Sunday mornings, and also had Sunday evening Gospel meetings. John and David Horn, Jack Charles, John Walden, and Arthur Rodgers are remembered as preaching at the Concordia Gospel Hall. The meeting, however, was short-lived, disbanding in the early 1940s.

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The history of the Coal Creek Gospel Hall stretches back to the 1880s, when three men – one of them Alex O'Brien – started meeting for prayer in the rural Coal Creek school house, south of Lawrence. Some time after this, Mr. O'Brien began pastoring at a church in nearby Perry, but soon realized he was not saved. He was brought into contact with brethren from Kansas City and was later saved through the truth of Acts 13:38.

The O'Brien family farm was near the Coal Creek School House, and Alex O'Brien pitched a Gospel tent on the family farm in about 1903. During three weeks of meetings, some of the O'Brien family were saved, including Alex's brother James and his wife Edith. Soon after that, a few Christians began Breaking Bread in the farm home. They enjoyed fellowship with other small gatherings in Perry, Garnett, and Kansas City.

In 1918 and 1919, Charles Leonard held meetings in the Coal Creek School House, and several were saved. In 1921, the Remembrance Meeting began to be held there. In 1920 and 1922, Oliver Smith held meetings in the neighborhood, with many professing Christ. Ira Hird and many of his family were saved at about this time. Other evangelists who came were William Grierson, Will White, Charles Stow, Arthur Rodgers, John Horn, J.O. Brown, and Ernest Washington.

The Coal Creek School was closed in 1947, but the assembly continued to meet at the school house. The building later became known as the Coal Creek Gospel Hall. When a tornado destroyed the building in 1977, the Christians rented the American Legion hall in nearby Baldwin City until 1981, when they built their own hall on the crest of Baldwin Hill, north of town.

James O'Brien was a true shepherd of the Coal Creek assembly through the early years. With his passing, his son-in-law, Ed Rockhold led the assembly until 1950. At that time, the O'Briens and Rockholds became associated with the Lawrence Bible Chapel. Those engaged in shepherding the assembly in more recent years include Delbert Hird, LeRoy Olmstead, David Olmstead, Peter Naber, Curtis Naber, and Daniel Stewart. An unusual outreach of the assembly is to Russian-speaking families who attend the Sunday School and the Gospel meetings at the Coal Creek Gospel Hall each Lord's Day. The messages are translated into Russian by some of the Russian visitors. Mr. Caleb Baker's chart *The Two Roads and The Two Destinies* has been printed in matching English and Russian and are on display in the hall. About 50 adults and children attend these meetings.

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Those who gathered in Garnett were George DeWolf, E.N. Miller, Will Craig, Harry McAfee, Walter McAfee, John Thomas, Wilbur Thomas, and Sam Thomas. The Garnett Assembly met last in the home of Sam and Emily Thomas.

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Oliver Smith started the Perry Assembly in about 1920 in the town of Perry, 13 miles north of Lawrence. The Christians gathered in the home of Charles Bradford. Conferences were held at Perry for several years. With Mr. Bradford were Mr. Jennings, his son Tracy, Fred Lakin, and Mr. Liggett. Will Thomas' widow and daughters, one of whom later became Mrs. Gordon Wakefield, were in fellowship there from the early 1930s.

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The Lawrence Bible Chapel in the university town of Lawrence just west of Kansas City, was begun in 1944 as a home meeting, first in the home of Jack and Mary Marquette, and later in William Sommerville's house. It began as a result of gasoline rationing during World War II. Gordon Wakefield attended there after being saved at the University of Kansas in 1950. From 1951 to 1984, the assembly met at 1001 Kentucky in Lawrence, and in 1984 moved to its present location at 505 Monterey Way. The principal people involved in the start-up were Jack

Marquette, Lawrence Littlefield, and Arthur Hird and their families. Those in leadership over the years include William Sommerville, Pete Youngberg, Ron Nadvornik, Dave Drelory, John Scollon, Don Schonberg, Russ Farwell, Terry Morgan, Larry Sherraden, and Dean Jordan. The assembly has commended several to the Lord's work abroad. About 230 adults and youngsters attend Lawrence Bible Chapel, which is the largest assembly in the state.

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The Baldwin City Gospel Chapel, south of Lawrence, was established in 1967 by Ray Jones and Ed Rockhold. Not a hive-off from another assembly, it met first in a home at 819 Indiana Street. The Gospel Chapel has commended workers to service at the Turkey Hill Bible Ranch Camp in Missouri and Immanuel Mission in Arizona. It sponsors an annual open Bible Conference. The assembly has about 40 adults and young people in fellowship.

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The Topeka Gospel Chapel began in the Charles Bradford home in 1948, and later met in the home of Lloyd and Betty Walterick. The assembly moved into a newly built facility in 1958, where it resides today, at 5010 SW 20th Terrace. The Bradford, Leishman, and William Korkill families were those chiefly instrumental in the start-up. Also active in leadership have been Ted and Gene Everhart, Jim Stewart, and Jim Springer. About 25 adults and children attend the assembly today.

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Osage City is south of Topeka. Gospel meetings were held there by John Walden, followed by J.O. Brown. The Osage City Assembly was formed as a result and met in the home of Paul and Mattie Lauback for several years.

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Alexander (Sandy) Broadfoot from Iowa came to Kansas in the period 1910 to 1917 to visit and hold Gospel meetings in schoolhouses in the area south of Abilene in mid Kansas. The Bonnacord schoolhouse was one of these. Many were saved. Mr. Broadfoot instructed Robert Robson and others about the Lord's Supper and plural leadership, and an assembly was begun. The Christians met first in the large home of Alexander McBoyle and took the name Bonnacord Assembly. For many years, the Christians met in homes; Bible Conferences were held in tents. In 1918, the assembly built Grace and Truth Gospel Hall on donated property in the Holland area, which is still the assembly's location some eight miles south of Abilene. One of the leading men in the assembly at that time was Frank Nicholson. Some of the early families to fellowship at the Hall were the Roggendorffs, Gruens, Millers, Emigs, and Jurys, in addition to the Deerdorffs, McBoyles, Nicholsons, and Robsons. In the 1930s, the assembly changed the name to Grace and Truth Gospel Chapel.

In 1942, Jay Walden of Minneapolis was in the army at nearby Fort Riley. He fellowshipped at Grace and Truth, and was a great help in the assembly. Other men who came to the Chapel from their military bases were Ed Kellner, Toby Bocker, Marvin Studnika, and David Silver. Joe and Jan Gummel came during the Desert Storm conflict. Orville Robson was the long-time

correspondent for the assembly; he and his wife Lois were known for their hospitality. Elders at Grace and Truth have included Orville Robson, Menno Dyck, Keith Engle, Kenneth King, and Jerry Lahr.

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When Gordon Wakefield was stationed at Fort Riley near Manhattan in the 1950s, he started an assembly which initially met in his home, then moved to a rented room in downtown Manhattan. This Manhattan Assembly consisted mostly of soldiers stationed at Fort Riley and students at Kansas State University. It lasted only about three years.

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An outreach of Grace and Truth Gospel Hall to an area south of the town of Carlton resulted in a group of believers meeting in the Elm Springs school house. Frank Nicholson from Grace and Truth held gospel meetings in the mid or late 1920s in area schoolhouses east of Roxbury. Interest grew and home Bible studies began. The Elm Springs school, a little way northeast of Roxbury, was the first meeting place for the new assembly. Others from Grace and Truth who came to help were Robert Robson and Dan Emig. Ed Buchenau and John Walden were among others who came to minister the word.

In 1937, a plot of ground a mile south of the school was donated to the assembly; lumber from a building in Carlton was used to build a meeting place on the property. The assembly Christians called it the Elm Springs Bible Hall. The assembly numbered about 60 at its largest. An annual three-day October Bible Conference was a highlight. Migration of farmers to the larger towns in the 1950s and 1960s caused a declining attendance at Elm Springs Bible Hall, and it disbanded in the late 1970s.

Some of the speakers at the Conferences sponsored by the two assemblies were Harry Ironside, George MacKenzie, Tom Carroll, Walter Wilson, Ed Bucheneau, Leonard Lindsted, Tom McCullagh, O.E. McGee, and Richard Burson. Missionary work was important to the believers at the two assemblies. They supported work among the Navajo Indians at Immanuel Mission in Arizona, making many trips there with supplies and co-commending workers for that work. Others commended include Kenneth Engle to the work in the Phillippines in 1951, and Kevin and Eloise Dyer to the Southeast Asia Literature Crusades in 1959.

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Sunset Bible Chapel in Salina, not far from Abilene, has connections to the work in Lawrence. Four men and three women now with Sunset were in Lawrence and attending Bible studies in the home of William and Marie Sommerville in the 1950s. Gordon Wakefield, Richard Burson, Paul Little, and Alice Kitchen were frequent in attendance at these meetings. George Easter was one of those attending these studies, and when he moved to Wichita in 1957, he was encouraged to give help at Grace and Truth Gospel Chapel south of Abilene. When Mr. Easter moved to Salina in about 1960, Richard Burson and John Walden encouraged him to begin a work there. He and others began with Sunday evening and midweek meetings, while still in fellowship at Abilene. Several couples from the Elm Springs Bible Hall met with them, and after two years, some 50

were meeting in Salina, about the same number as at Abilene.

The assembly was officially formed in 1969, and known simply as The Chapel. The assembly met alternately in the Easter home and Marvin Johnson home. After several years, they rented space in a school building while accumulating a building fund, and in 1979 built the Sunset Bible Chapel at 760 Hancock, which they occupy now.

Elders at the beginning were Marvin Johnson, Everett Johnson, Dale Becker, Lawton Owen, and George Easter. These with their wives, and Earl and Alberta Blair, and Dave and Karen Smith, have continued in active roles in the assembly. Paul and Greg Johnson and Chuck Thornburg have been added to the leadership. The assembly has commended and co-commended workers to ministry in East Europe, Ireland, St. Lucia and St. Thomas, and Immanuel Mission in Arizona. Others have received short term commendations to Kansas Bible Camp and elsewhere.

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In 1916 or 1917, J. E. (Ned) Brown, a wheat farmer then 60 years old, moved from Long Island in north_central Kansas to the area of Kanorado, a small town on the Kansas_Colorado border. Ned Brown had his roots in Iowa where he had helped establish the Berea Gospel Hall; when he moved to Long Island, his first concern was to begin a meeting in that town. So when he moved to his new farm a few miles from Kanorado, he directed his strong evangelistic concern toward planting a new work in that area also. Soon after arriving, he started an assembly that became known as the Kanorado Gospel Hall and which met initially at the Graybill school house north of Kanorado. A good preacher, he held Gospel meetings at several different school houses in western Kansas and eastern Colorado.

Ned Brown knew of two young men from central Kansas and hired them not so much to help out on his farm, as to help him in the evangelistic work. These were David and John Horn. Their pattern was to work in the fields during the day and preach at night. They both were soon full_time Gospel workers.

Many souls were saved in those years at the school house meetings and at tent meetings. Soon the assembly meeting at the Graybill school house was big enough to warrant its own building, and with volunteer labor built a chapel in about 1923 in the country northeast of Kanorado. They called it the Kanorado Gospel Hall. On a neighbor's land adjacent to the Gospel Hall, the Christians would put up a large tent for their annual Bible Conferences, and a smaller tent where the farmers would bring produce and beef as an added attraction.

The Kanorado meeting grew rapidly, and numbered about 200 by 1929, remarkably large for a church out in the country. The Kanorado meeting had an oversight but not recognized elders.

Ned Brown took in another young man after the Horns left. This was John Walden. While living with the Browns, John helped with the farm work, but preaching God's Word became most important to him. Shortly after John Walden and Nan DuBauge were married in 1931, they moved to Denver and then Colorado Springs. John Walden was one of the leading brothers

among the assemblies in Colorado during his years of ministry.

John and David Horn frequently traveled and preached. They were the principal carriers of the Gospel into western Kansas and eastern Colorado. During their first series of meetings at the Happy Hollow school house in 1928, Ben F. Parmer, then 11 years old, was saved, with other members of his family. The Parmer family joined with the Kanorado meeting. After a few years Ben Parmer was teaching a boy's Sunday School class there and sharing in the Gospel on Sunday nights.

Traveling preachers who came to the Kanorado Gospel Hall and to other assemblies in the area for special meetings included C.W. Ross, Don Charles, Jack Charles, Leonard Linsted, and Richard Burson.

The Dust Bowl of the 1930s caused much hardship; this together with the general state of the economy due to the Great Depression induced many farming families to move off the farms to the towns and cities along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. There they affiliated with existing assemblies and had a considerable influence. The Nohr, Stevens, Turner, and Ted and Ed Anderson families were among those active at Kanorado who moved west and became active in new and existing assemblies along the Front Range. The remaining Kanorado brethren moved their meeting to Goodland, Kansas, a few miles east of Kanorado, in the late 1950s. The meeting dwindled and was dissolved in the early 1980s, after about 60 years of existence which had seen multitudes of people saved and strengthened.

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The Garden City Assembly has recently been established in the town of Garden City, toward the west side of the state.

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Letters of Interest, June 1945, p. 12; September 1947, p. 22

Missouri

Caleb J. Baker had become a prosperous tent and awning maker following the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. But before that, he had been saved and had developed a passion for the Gospel. In perhaps 1879, he met Donald Ross, who had set up a Gospel tent near Mr. Baker's place of business in Chicago, and soon became associated with him. An assembly met to Remember the Lord in that tent, and Mr. Baker and several of his employees soon were in fellowship in that assembly.

In the 1880s, Donald Ross started westward. After being in Kansas City for a time, he encouraged C.J. Baker to relocate there because he recognized it as a logical center for reaching out to the southwest and west.

Deciding to separate from his business partner and move to Kansas City, Mr. Baker invited several of his Christian employees to move with him, chosen for their ability to help establish an assembly. The first assembly in Kansas City, MO, began the day after the group arrived, and met in the main room of the new canvas factory for several months. After that, they met successively in a number of rented places, usually above a store, sometimes on the third floor. Mr. Baker did not approve of buying a place and thought the assembly should never stay in one place more than about two years. He envisioned the assembly as a roving Gospel outreach, moving among neighborhoods. During his lifetime, Mr. Baker supplied tents, not only to the evangelists who engaged in pioneer work, but to missionaries around the world.

Mr. Baker was indefatigable and the assembly was active. Mrs. George Rendall, one of those brought from Chicago, was an excellent Sunday School teacher for the assembly. C.J. Baker instituted street meetings and started a Christmas Bible Conference, much like the Thanksgiving Conference initiated in Chicago by Donald Ross. C.J. Baker's grandson, William Baker Sommerville, remembers it thus:

"...[the] conferences always lasted three days and sometimes four. The preaching services lasted at least an hour and a half in the morning, two hours or more in the afternoon, and an hour and a half again in the evening. The people all ate together, at least for the noon and supper meals. And there was a great deal of 'conferring' in the conferences which had nothing to do with the preaching services. There was a great deal of discussion among the elders of the various assemblies regarding their problems, whether theological or practical. It was a very great unifying exercise among the people in the assemblies in various parts of the country.... I don't know that I ever heard about Santa Claus when I was very little. And since we were always at meetings on Christmas day, ... Christmas to me as a small boy meant Conference. And this meant meeting interesting people, hearing interesting things, seeing things. It was the big point of my life in those days..."

The Christians met for a time at 14th and Main Streets. Eventually they desired more comfortable accommodations and began renting church buildings; the first of these seems to

have been an old building at 16th & Holmes. After that they rented a church building at 31st and Charlotte. In the first decade of the 1900s, the assembly had about 150 people in it. In 1906 or 1907, Mr. Baker and his associates invited C.W. Ross, Donald Ross' son, to move to Kansas City, labor among them, and make it a center for his ministries.

Finally, in 1918, the Christians constructed their own building on Troost Avenue at 28th, which became well known as the Troost Avenue Gospel Hall. It was one of the leading assemblies in the area for many years. Assemblies in Spruce Hill, MO; Overland Park, KS; and Kansas City, KS are descendants of the Troost Avenue Gospel Hall. The Troost Avenue Christians opened the Servicemen's Canteen during World War II. Troost Avenue Gospel Hall disbanded in the early 1980s.

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Spruce Hill Bible Chapel at 11501 E. Bannister Road began in 1962 as a hive-off from Troost Avenue Gospel Hall. Those responsible for its establishment were Lawrence and Betty Littlefield, John and Betty Littlefield, John and Barbara Schultheis, Robert Beulick, and Viva and Ewart Gunn. For the first year, the assembly met in the home of Lawrence and Betty Littlefield. Then John and Betty Littlefield donated a small acreage adjoining their home for the construction of Spruce Hill Bible Chapel.

George and Gloria Martin joined the fellowship at Spruce Hill about a year after the chapel was completed, and have been pillars in the assembly. Those active in leadership over the years include George Martin, Ross Ragland, Lawrence Littlefield, Robert Cowan, and James Robertson. About 65 adults and young people are in Spruce Hill Bible Chapel. The assembly has commended workers to the Lord's service.

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The roots of the Bible Chapel in St. Louis, on the opposite side of the state from Kansas City, go back to 1873 when a 31-year-old James Campbell arrived in the city from Scotland and preached the Gospel. Several were saved in these meetings, including Mr. Donald O. Macleod. Mr. Campbell also instructed the believers in the principles of the New Testament church. Mr. Campbell went from there to St. Charles, MN, but returned to St. Louis in 1879 with Donald Munroe for more Gospel effort. They found a group meeting for Bible study in various homes and encouraged them to begin Remembering the Lord, which they did in the home of John Kerr. Others from various denominations joined with them, and the believers continued to meet for some time in that home as the South Side Assembly. They later moved into an old rock building in the 3000 block of Pine Street.

In 1895, the surnames of some of those meeting as the South Side Assembly were Brown, Bothwell, Buss, Couser, Dyke, Hughes, Macleod, Morey, and White.

At about that time, Mr. Buss left the assembly to form another, which met in a building at the corner of Florissant and O'Bear. This meeting lasted only a short time. In November 1901, the

South Side Assembly moved to Jefferson and Pestatozzi Streets in South St. Louis.

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In 1902, tent meetings were held by brethren Currens and Camp from Chicago, at which many were saved, including members of the Henrich, Masek, James, and Todd families. These Christians immediately formed an assembly which met in the rented Power House at 7th and Lami Streets, then shortly moved to the Shaving Shop on 2nd and Sidney Streets. This structure had wood shavings on the floor, wrapping paper over the rafters, and home-made wood benches. This assembly later moved to a storefront at McNair and Lynch Streets, then met in various homes. Messrs. Edward Allan and I.R. Dean were in fellowship there, as was Mr. Buss, who however left again and formed an assembly meeting at Newhouse and Blair. In 1910, Mr. Buss built Bible Hall on Finney Avenue. Some time after that, a group left Bible Hall to form the North Side Assembly.

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So in 1906 there were three groups, the South Side Assembly at Jefferson and Pestatozzi, the unnamed group at McNair and Lynch, and the group that followed Mr. Buss. Mr. Allan of the McNair group went to see Mr. Macleod of South Side to discuss a merger. This was agreed upon, and the merger took place at the end of 1906. The merged group, still called South Side Assembly, met in a large number of places in St. Louis over the next two decades. In 1926, the assembly moved to 5021 Morganford Road, rented it for many years, then purchased and remodeled it in 1940. This was known as the South Side Gospel Hall. Other family names during these years are Thiel, Horst, Suess, Luethge, Judd, Newkum, Ostertag, Bonham, Richardson, Blackshaw, and Miller.

When Morganford Road was to be widened, the assembly built and moved into the South Side Bible Chapel on Leona Avenue at Bowen. The assembly now calls its building simply Bible Chapel. In 1973, the assembly started the Victory Christian School in this building for children from kindergarten through 1st grade. In 1982, the Christians purchased a school building on Musick Road, which is the present location for the assembly and the Victory Christian School, which now teaches kindergarten through 12th grade with around 200 students.

The assembly commended O. Morey as a medical doctor to Africa in the early 1900s; he worked with F.S. Arnot. Others have been commended for ministry in the U.S.

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Prior to the establishment of the present Maplewood Bible Chapel in St. Louis, a small group of exercised Christians from the Bible Hall and the South Side Assembly met for prayer and fellowship in various homes. The group first met in 1921 at the home of Mr. Reister, 2119 Alameda, with 30 present, but soon moved to a rented room at 7016 Manchester. In mid 1922, a lot at 7138 Southwest Ave was purchased; within a few months, a basement was finished enough to hold meetings there; an above-ground auditorium was not completed until 1930.

During the 1920s, the Maplewood Gospel Hall, as it was then called, held evangelistic tent meetings on an adjacent lot, with many visiting preachers. In the 1930s and 1940s, street meetings were common and held in St. Louis, Maplewood, Webster, and East St. Louis, IL. A Young Men's Prayer and Bible Study was started in collaboration with other assemblies. A yearly Young People's area-wide Conference and a bi-yearly area-wide Sunday School Teachers Conference were begun.

In 1935, Maplewood Gospel Hall published the *Exhorter* and a Chorus book. Radio ministries have included a KSTL Family Bible Hour and a broadcast by the young people of the assembly. Bible studies for Jewish friends were held in homes. Messianic Forum on Pine Street in downtown St. Louis was held weekly in May 1948. *Palabras Fideles (Spanish Faithful Words)* was started by Carl Ostertag. The assembly has commended many people to the Lord's work at home and to countries such as Ecuador, Peru, Korea, southeast Asia, and Ireland

In 1949, several assemblies – Maplewood, South Side, Kossouth, and Bible Hall – began the Masokobi Bible Camp for children. Now called Dayspring Bible Camp, the facility was purchased by the St. Louis assemblies in 1987.

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The assembly meeting at the Richmond Heights Gospel Hall in the St. Louis area seems to have begun in the 1920s, assisted in its early days by Maplewood Gospel Hall. The Christians have changed the name of their meeting place twice while staying at the same location – 7902 Dale Avenue. In the mid 1980s, the name became Richmond Heights Gospel Chapel, and in 1994 The Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Leaders have included David Woods, Donovan Case, Marvin Curry, Joseph Crenshaw, Harold Spiller, and Untra Northern. Mr. Northern was commended by the assembly to the Lord's work in 1982.

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Emmaus Bible Chapel in St. Louis began in 1956 and has been at the same location in the Ferguson area since that time. George Nelson, Donald Walter, Frederick St. Clair, and Harvey Decker were those involved in its formation. George Nelson, E.T. Mauger, and Lester Collins have been among the leaders. The assembly has commended workers to the Lord's vineyard in Ecuador, Phillipines, and Italy.

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Grace Bible Chapel in St. Louis was formed in 1986 by the merger of two home assemblies meeting in the southwest part of metropolitan St. Louis – the Moriah Assembly and Believers Church. Moriah was started in 1979, and Believers Church was formed in 1984.

The Moriah Assembly in St. Louis was started by John and Sue Callan and Lee and Shirley Holtgrewe, none of whom were present at the time of the merger in 1986. Believers Church in St. Louis was begun by Jim and Karen Frankel, Randy and Donna Gruber, and Joe and Mary Vogl. The primary leaders at Grace Bible Chapel have been Jim Frankel, Randy Gruber, Mark

Keller, Dave Kozeny, Steve Leary, Brian Railey, Jim Robertson, Cordell Schulten, and Joe Vogl.

Grace Bible Church has rented and met in several facilities since its inception. Since 1990, the Christians have met at Parkway Northeast Middle School at the intersection of Ladue Road and Interstate 270. The assembly now has about 100 adults and youngsters associated with it.

Grace Bible Chapel has commended Cordell Schulten as a resident worker in the assembly. Other commendations have been to Set Free Ministries of Missouri and to Japan.

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A store front on St. Louis Street in Springfield, in the southwest part of the state, was the first home in 1933 of the Southeast Gospel Hall. John Elliot and Tom Cullaghough were the principal people involved in the start-up. The assembly moved to its present location at 1051 South Crutcher in Springfield in about 1936, and later became the Southeast Gospel Chapel. Those in leadership over the years include John Elliot, Carl Carey, Charles Brooks, Mark Newberry, Lewis Bigbee, Robert McWade, Don Thompson, Walter Cary, Ross Ragland, and Wendell Kerr. The assembly has commended workers to itinerant ministry in the U.S. About 45 adults and young people attend Southeast Gospel Chapel.

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Jefferson City Bible Chapel began in 1978 on Industrial Drive in Jefferson City, in the middle of the state, and moved to its present location at 2804 Sue Drive in 1996. James Allan, Stephen J. Allan, Stephen R. Allan, Alan Braun, Curtis Cox, Tim Rockhold, and Tim Adkerson were the principals involved in the start-up, and have served as the leaders of the assembly. Stephen R. Allan has been commended by the assembly to full-time work at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp near Vienna.

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Brookfield is a small town in the northern part of Missouri. A Bible study that started in 1974 in the home of Bill and Georgeanna Howell in nearby St. Catharine developed into the Brookfield Christian Fellowship, which was officially incorporated in 1977. The men of the assembly built a chapel in Brookfield in 1984 at 409 S. State Street, which the assembly still occupies.

Besides the Howells, those involved in the start-up of the assembly were Jack and Sharon Anderson, and Mary Brammen and her daughter Ann. Leadership has been vested in B.D. Howell, Herb Huck, Rod Libby, Jon Mendenhall, and Bruce Haley. William R. Howell was commended to the Lord's work as Camp Director of Story Book Lodge as well as other ministries. Tom Brammer has been commended to work in the assembly. Brookfield Christian Fellowship also commended others to the Lord's service in Russia. It now has about 130 adults and youngsters in attendance.

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Hazelwood Christian Fellowship Assembly Church started in April 1998, meeting at 126 Flora in Hazelwood, having split off from an independent Bible church in which women held positions

of authority. Clarence E. Jackson, Ron Smith, and Jimmy Russell are those who began the new assembly and are the leaders. About 35 adults and children comprise the assembly.

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Questionnaire Responses

Reminiscences about Our Family, by William Baker Sommerville, 1978.

Letters of Interest, January 1982, p. 18

IOWA

The assemblies in Iowa started from two different sources. The coal mines in southern Iowa attracted miners from the British Isles and other parts of Europe. The coal there was not of the best quality, but was used by railroads and by people for fuel during the winters. These miners were a tough group, living in many instances from paycheck to paycheck, but many were devoted Christians and preached the Gospel. They and their families would meet in the local Miner's Hall or a lodge hall, and often had a large Sunday School work.

Itinerant preachers, primarily from Ireland and Scotland and other parts, were the other source of assembly influence. These carried the Gospel to the farmers in the northern and western sections of the state, preaching in pitched tents and rural school houses, sometimes staying for weeks at a time, and establishing small assemblies before they moved on.

Northern Iowa

Assembly testimony in northern Iowa began in November 1891 with a visit of John Blair from Ireland, to his sister who lived near the village of Dunkerton. While there, he held meetings in a school house, where several were saved. Mr. Blair made other visits in 1893 and in 1895, holding meetings in a school house and a church building in Dunkerton. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dunkerton were greatly blessed at these meetings and it was in their home that an assembly – the original Dunkerton Gospel Hall – was begun in about 1893. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Nesbit were saved and Remembered the Lord with the Dunkertons and Mr. Blair.

Following John Blair's pioneer efforts, others came to help and encourage the little gathering. In about 1896, Mr. E. G. Matthews, a businessman, began coming to Dunkerton for weekends where he could Remember the Lord and give help in the Gospel. A number were saved at a special Gospel effort conducted by Messrs. Bultmann, Lockwood, and Matthews in the Town Hall in 1896.

In 1898, a meeting to Remember the Lord was begun in the Matthews home in the city of Waterloo. C.W. Ross came to Waterloo with his tent for several summers. Messrs. Marcus, O'Brien, Broadfoot, and others helped in those days of pioneering. The result was that a large assembly developed in Waterloo and many assemblies were started in the surrounding districts.

The Christians met in other homes besides the Matthews home, and rented public buildings, among which were a funeral home at East Fifth and Mulberry Street, and an upstairs room on Commercial Street. In 1921, the brethren felt led to build a permanent building and purchased a lot at the corner of Western Avenue and Pleasant Street in Waterloo. The building is known as the Western Avenue Gospel Hall but is often called the Waterloo Gospel Hall. The first meetings to Remember the Lord there were in 1922.

The Dunkerton and Waterloo meetings were only fifteen miles apart and were closely associated

in the early gospel efforts. The Dunkerton meeting joined with the Waterloo assembly in about 1922, when automobiles came into general use. The work was strengthened by the moving of the Leask family from Mason City in northern Iowa, and the Charles Herman family from Manchester, east of Waterloo. The help of young men who had good voices for street work was sought, and Jack Charles, Donald Charles, Tom Olson, and others responded. Thousands heard the Gospel in the open air in Waterloo.

Leaders in the Waterloo assembly in the early years were E.G. Matthews, Fred Lakin, William Leask, Glen Holloperter, Ray Nesbit, and Cliff Smith. Recent leaders include Richard Orr, Dilmer Stickfort, Ronnie Wessells, and Fred Cirksena..

About 38 adults are in fellowship now, with 13 children in the Sunday School. The Waterloo assembly became Oliver Smith's home assembly, and he was commended to the Lord's work by the assembly. Mrs. Mable Gillette has been commended to the work in Ireland.

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In the 1890s, Charles Hoehler, an immigrant from Germany, had been hired to help at the Goff farm in North Dakota, and was saved through the influence of the Goffs. In late 1895, Mr. Hoehler came to the Dubuque area looking for a place to hold Gospel meetings. He found a school house, and at those meetings, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Herman and Mrs. John Haltmeyer were saved.

The Hermans later moved to Manchester, and after that to a farm near Waterloo, adjacent to a dairy farm owned by Oliver Smith. They presented Christ to the young farmer, and in about 1913 he too joined the ranks of the saved.

Oliver Smith soon became so engrossed in Gospel activity that he gave up farming and devoted all his time to the Lord's work. Many in the country districts around Waterloo were reached through his efforts. Oliver Smith became the towering figure among the assemblies of northern Iowa. Largely through his obedience to the Lord, several good-sized assemblies were established in northern and northeast Iowa. A feature story in the *Des Moines Tribune* in 1935 estimated that one thousand persons had been saved through Oliver Smith's evangelistic efforts.

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In 1916, Oliver Smith, then still a farmer, hurt his hand badly in a corn sheller. While recuperating, he went to the village of Clayton on the Mississippi River, six miles north of Garnavillo, where he preached twice. At the end of that year, he returned to Clayton with John Dahlgard, and preached through the following year, with many professing salvation. Among those saved were Henry Ramsey and Susie Ricker.

An assembly of believers was formed at Clayton in August of 1918, meeting at their Clayton Gospel Hall. One of the eventual leaders of the Clayton assembly was Ed Ostoff, saved under the witness of Oliver Smith. The assembly continued until 1951, when Ed Ostoff died. At that time the remaining believers joined with those at Garnavillo.

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Susie Ricker worked as a hired girl for Mrs. Fred Kramer in Garnavillo, and Oliver Smith went in 1919 to that village to meet with her. This led to Gospel meetings in Garnavillo in June 1919, and soon Mrs. Kramer, Mrs. John Dehn, and Mrs. Louis Brandt were saved, among others. In July 1921, six believers from the Garnavillo area – Elmer and Laura Brandt, Tillie Kramer, Louis and Nettie Tischhauser, and Amanda Brandt – Broke Bread for the first time, meeting in Elmer Brandt's home. Louis Brandt, later to become an active preacher, was not saved until about 1922.

For a time they met in various homes; in the spring of 1922 they were able to meet in the West Side school house. A building fund for constructing a Gospel Hall was started in 1924, and in 1930 the believers built and met for the first time in the Garnavillo Gospel Hall.

The Christians at Garnavillo were diligent in the spread of the Gospel to surrounding areas. The brethren held street meetings and sponsored tent meeting for evangelists. The first Bible Conference at Garnavillo was in 1936 and has been an annual event since then. The Gospel Hall was enlarged in 1949 and again in 1983, at which time the number of adults and children associated with the assembly was about 100. Louis Brandt, Henry Wahls, and Joel Portman have been commended to ministry by the Garnavillo assembly.

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During the years 1913 to 1920, a number of men – Charles Hoehler, Tom Olson, A.N. O'Brien, Fed Hillis, William Grierson, Oliver Smith, W.W. White, and others – preached in the Manchester area and many souls were saved. In the spring of 1920, Messrs. Hillis and Grierson began a series of Gospel meetings in the North Manchester Union Church building, and continued for six weeks. It was while this series of meetings was in progress that 13 believers gathered for the first time, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Tharp to Remember the Lord. The Christians continued to meet in various homes, in the North Manchester Church building, and at one time above one of the business establishments in downtown Manchester. In 1929, the brethren purchased a lot at the corner of Union and Wayne Streets and built the Manchester Gospel Hall, where the assembly met until 1990, at which time they moved into their new hall. Some 55 are in fellowship in the Manchester assembly, with 25 to 30 children..

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Stout is a small town west of Cedar Falls and Waterloo. It was to that town that Oliver Smith, Lloyd Smith, and Ward O'Neil came for street meetings in the summer of 1922. The response was good, and some local men – Herman Brandt, Alrich Brandt, and George Meyer – urged them to return for more meetings. Many were saved in these tent meetings which extended through the fall. As winter approached, Mr. Ubbie Reiter offered the use of an old church building that he had purchased. The meetings lasted about 14 months in Stout and nearby Parkersburg, during which time about 100 souls were saved.

In July 1923, about 30 believers gathered in assembly capacity to Remember the Lord. The assembly continued in the old building until 1937. At that time, the Christians tore it down and

built the present Stout Gospel Hall on the same site. In 1979, an addition was built onto the south side of the hall. Several improvements have been made to provide for wheelchair accessibility.

Since 1926, a two-day Bible Conference and Thanksgiving Day meeting have been held annually. The Meyer and Stickfort families have played leading roles in the assembly over the years. Among the many who have ministered at the Stout assembly are Eric McCollough, Leonard deBuhr, Albert Hull, and Gavis Goff. About 100 adults are in fellowship at the Stout Gospel Hall.

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In the summer of 1925, while holding tent meetings in Aplington, Oliver Smith secured permission to use a United Brethren church building in nearby Hitesville for Gospel meetings. The meetings began in March 1926 and continued for nearly a year with much fruit. Farmers, business men, and people from all walks came under conviction of sin, and over 70 were saved. Two wives of the trustees of the church – Mrs. Leona Christopherson and Mrs. Ed Uhlenhopp – were the first saved in these meetings. They were followed by Chauncey Yost, Lawrence Christopherson, August Brinkman and his parents, Bert Street, Walter Eltjes, and a host of others.

When the meetings concluded, the young believers came together on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings for Bible readings, prayer, singing, and fellowship. When Mr. Smith knew this, he came and taught them truths about the Church. In October 1927, these believers, about 55 of them, first sat down around the Lord's Table. The believers purchased the building that had been used for the Gospel meetings, and this became the Hitesville Gospel Hall. The building has been enlarged and improved several times since then.

The first Hitesville Bible Conference was held in 1931, and has been a continuing feature of the assembly. Open-air preaching in surrounding towns was common in the early days. In the 1930s, the small town consisted of just a few homes; today, Hitesville has just a cemetery and the Gospel Hall. About 75 are in fellowship, plus Sunday School children.

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Aredale, 15 miles northwest of Hitesville, has a population of about 100. In 1928, Harm Harms and George Uhlenhopp secured use of the Aredale town hall and presented the Gospel, with some interest shown. Chauncey Yost moved onto a farm south of Aredale in 1930, and continued spreading the good news of Jesus Christ in the area. In 1931, Oliver Smith put up his tent for Gospel meetings. Many were saved in this period, and in September of that year, 35 were baptized.

In the fall of 1933, several believers in Aredale came together to Remember the Lord. About seven couples and several single people constituted the assembly meeting at Aredale Gospel Hall in its early days. About 35 others have entered the fellowship since that time. The small Gospel Hall has been improved through the years, and is still at its original location in Aredale. The assembly has grown recently through the addition of 15 people from the Hampton area.

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Cylinder is a small town on Highway 18, 60 miles west of Mason City. Marlo Olson was born and grew up there, and had been converted during Gospel meetings at the Garnavillo Gospel Hall. He took employment in Washington, DC after graduating from college, but kept in touch with Oliver Smith by letter, urging him to go to Cylinder to preach. Mr. Smith came in the summer of 1933 for two weeks of meetings with fruit being seen. He returned several times through the summer and fall for more work in the Gospel. A letter written from Cylinder by Mr. Smith to Marlo Olson mentions 27 having been saved since the summer meetings.

Mr. Smith returned to Cylinder in March 1934 for Gospel meetings, and again in May, this time accompanied by Louis Brandt from Garnavillo. At that time, about 10 local believers, with some 40 from other assemblies, sat down together to partake of the Lord's Supper. That first meeting was in the Odd Fellows Hall. After that, the meetings were held mostly in the Olson family home. The assembly increased to about 30 believers in fellowship at one point, but now consists of about a dozen. In 1967, the present Cylinder Gospel Hall was built.

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Hampton is a sizeable town south of Mason City. Henry and Mary Wohlenhaus and their daughter Rose moved there from Lyman, IA where they had been saved in meetings at the Lyman Gospel Hall. After coming to Hampton, they and the Malones fellowshipped at the Hiteville assembly, some 23 miles away.

In 1933, Oliver Smith rased the Gospel tent in Hampton and continued with meetings for five weeks, with other brothers sharing the ministry. About 12 persons were saved in those meetings. The baptized believers formed an assembly at Hampton in 1934, meeting initially in the home of the Wohlenhaus and Malone families. Soon they rented rooms over a grocery store, where they continued until 1941, when they moved into their newly completed Hampton Gospel Hall, with 20 then in fellowship. Oliver Smith and William Warke conducted meetings at Hampton in the early days of the assembly, and many others since then. About 30 believers are in fellowship there now.

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Mason City is the business center of North Central Iowa. In the late teens and early 1920s, the Gospel was brought into the area by men such as E.G. Matthews and Mr. Robertson, followed by Samuel Keller, Oliver Smith, A.T. Stewart, and Samuel Hamilton. In 1932, Elgie Jamison and William Warke pitched a tent which drew large crowds, with several saved.

In September 1934, sixteen believers first gathered in Remembrance of the Lord, meeting in a rented basement on 4th and North Federal. Later they met in the YMCA and YWCA buildings. In 1952, an old church building was purchased by the assembly and became the Mason City Gospel Hall; it was sold in 1967 and another purchased on Maple Drive, the present home of the assembly of about 25 believers.

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West Union lies northeast of Waterloo and west of Garnavillo. Louis Brandt, Hy Wahls, William Warke and others pitched their tent in several localities in the area from 1941 through 1947 with some fruit and much opposition. The Christians from the Garnavillo assembly supported these meetings. Among those saved during this period were Gene and William Brainard, William's wife Doris, Melvin Nutting, and his mother, Lester and Leta Crain, and Mrs. Lila Barnhouse. The first baptism was in 1945 and more followed soon. In March 1947, the West Union Christians met for the first time as an assembly in the Crain home.

They met from home to home for a while, then purchased the Freiden School at auction and moved it onto a lot at the end of East Elm Street, still the location of the West Union Gospel Hall. Forty two believers were in fellowship in 1985.

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The city of Cedar Falls borders Waterloo. Oliver Smith and others had Gospel series' there several times beginning in 1941, in which many professed salvation. In 1962, a church building was purchased by the local believers, who included several in fellowship at the Waterloo and Stout assemblies. In February of 1963, Eric McCullough and William Warke began a series in the Gospel at this location. When several more were saved, the believers felt this to be God's seal of approval for their desire to plant an assembly in that city. About 45 local believers Remembered the Lord for the first time as the Cedar Falls assembly in July of that year.

Since then, more have been saved and in 1985, about 60 were in fellowship, worshipping at the Cedar Falls Gospel Hall. Some 75 to 80 attend the assembly now, and expansion of the Hall is planned. The Waterloo and Cedar Falls assemblies jointly sponsor an annual Bible Conference, the two Gospel Halls being less than 10 miles apart.

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By 1956, the Western Avenue Gospel Hall in Waterloo had grown to the point where either a hive-off or an enlarged building was needed. The decision was made to forego remodeling and establish a Sunday School outreach in the Alabar Hills area of Waterloo. Thus a Sunday School work began in that district at the Black Hawk school in August 1956. At an April 1957 meeting of Western Avenue Gospel Hall, the decision was made to begin Breaking of Bread at the school and to form the Downing Avenue Gospel Chapel in Waterloo . The Western Avenue Christians helped with the purchase of a lot, and by January 1958 the new chapel was finished and the first meeting there was held.

Howard Dunkerton and Henry Anderson were the principals in forming the new assembly. Wendell Lockhard and the Ahreholz family were also involved in the start-up. Those in active leadership at Downing Avenue Gospel Chapel include Howard Dunkerton, Willis Jepperson, Oscar Ahreholz, Henry Anderson, Ed Dempster, William Farber, Ernie Matthias, Doug Dunkerton, and Bob Smith. Several people have been commended to the Lord's work at home and abroad by Downing Avenue Gospel Chapel.

In 1998, the assembly relocated and became known as Bethany Bible Chapel in Cedar Falls. Nearly 300 people attend the assembly.

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Antioch is a small community north of Cedar Falls. Many believers lived in the Antioch area, which led to Gospel meetings being held in the old Antioch church building and surrounding areas. Russell Nesbit Jr., Duane Wessels, and others labored in the area for a number of years. The desire to plant a new assembly in Antioch reached fruition in April 1974, when 15 believers first gathered to Remember the Lord in the old Antioch church. Soon four more were added. These believers were all from the Hitesville, Stout, Cedar Falls, and Waterloo assemblies, and were driving quite a distance to attend their assemblies.

Later in 1974, these believers bought a lot adjacent the Antioch cemetery. In October 1975, they were able to move into the Antioch Gospel Hall. About 40 were in fellowship in the Antioch assembly in 1985.

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The Mason City Christian Assembly began in 1991, having split from nearby Gospel Halls. Located at 1819 South Coolidge in Mason City, the assembly was started by Glenn Lightfoot and Joe Balsan. Leadership has been shared by Eldon Finer, Dave Platz, and John Muldoon. The Mason City Christian Assembly has about 10 adults and youngsters in attendance.

Eastern Iowa

In the early 1950s, Oliver Smith, Paul Elliot, and William Warke held Gospel meetings in the area south of Manchester. Those saved in these meetings generally went into fellowship at the Manchester Gospel Hall. As employment opportunities grew in the Cedar Rapids area, these believers became exercised about establishing a testimony there. Herbert Dobson spent many weeks at various intervals in his labors in the area and was a large influence in the start and early days of an assembly in Marion, on the north side of Cedar Rapids. James Smith and Hector Alves also labored in the area.

In 1957, the believers rented a large upper room in the Memorial Hall in downtown Marion,. There they held Sunday night Gospel meetings and a weekly prayer meeting. They often enjoyed the fellowship and help of the Manchester brethren. In March 1962, with Ronald Borrett, Verle Smith, and Irvin Toenjjes as initiators, the believers gathered as an assembly. Shortly thereafter, Albert Kampman also served as a leader, along with others.

The Marion Gospel Hall was built in 1967, a few blocks away from Memorial Hall. Adjacent to the Marion Gospel Hall is the Linn Manor Care Center, administered by believers from area assemblies. About 100 adults and youngsters currently attend the assembly, which has experienced recent growth. Workers have been commended to the Lord's service in Zambia and to ministry in the U.S.

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Prior to 1966, the only assembly in the Cedar Rapids area was the Marion Gospel Hall. Three families not associated with that assembly were meeting together weekly to study the Word of God and enjoy happy fellowship. After careful consideration and counsel from Mr. Ben Tuininga, the three families decided to start Breaking Bread together as the Cedar Rapids Assembly, meeting in the home of Richard and Beth Plowman.

In that same year two other families moved to the Cedar Rapids area and began to meet with this small assembly along with two or three single people. With these additions there were nearly fifteen adults and about twenty children.

The assembly learned that a congregation on the northeast side of town wanted to sell their building to enable them to build a larger one. Stewards Foundation agreed to provide a loan to the new assembly if they could come up with a down payment. The Lombard Gospel Chapel in the Chicago area, which had been the home assembly of David and Ann Rodgers, provided what was needed to make the down payment for the new group in Cedar Rapids. The move was made in October of 1967.

In the mid 1970s, about 75 people were regularly attending the various meetings at the Cedar Rapids Assembly. Elders were recognized and functioning. Souls were being saved and the saints were being taught. Then two of the four elders became seriously ill and died, and the assembly declined. In the meantime some of the families attending the Marion Gospel Hall contacted the Cedar Rapids Assembly to see if a merging of the assemblies could be worked out. Eventually three of those families joined with the remnant of the Cedar Rapids Assembly and a new assembly was formed in 1989, using the same building but changing the name to Oakland Road Bible Assembly. By 1999, the assembly had grown to about 125 people, and had changed their name to Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel.

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An assembly of believers was meeting as early as 1887 in the home of C.W. Cross, seven miles from Grandview in southeast Iowa, close to the Mississippi. In 1896, the believers were meeting in Grandview, in various locations. This assembly discontinued in 1920, but at Letts, six miles northwest of Grandview, a small group seems to have been meeting to Remember the Lord. Whether this was connected with the work soon developed by brothers from Omaha is not clear.

Not long after Glen Plowman was saved, he moved his family to Omaha to find work. He knew nothing about the assemblies, or any other church for that matter; he just knew that he was a Christian and needed help to grow. In Omaha, he discovered the tent meetings that Harold Harper was having in conjunction with the Omaha Gospel Hall. Soon, he and his family were a part of that assembly.

He greatly desired that his relatives in eastern Iowa come to know about the Lord. Arthur and Willard Rodgers and others in the Omaha assembly, took the Gospel to Glen Plowman's former home area near Letts, and several were saved. An assembly was formed, meeting in various

places in Muscatine, Grandview, and Letts. J. P. Patterson labored at the assembly when it met in Muscatine.

In 1932, after fifteen were baptized in the Mississippi River, the group obtained a building for their assembly in the country two miles east of the village of Letts. The testimony at the Letts Gospel Hall continued until about 1990.

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In 1952, the Garnavillo brethren learned of assembly interest in the Grandview/Letts area, and Louis Brandt and Dale Hyde began meetings in the Letts Town Assembly Hall , which was a country school house. Mrs. Becky and Mrs. Kent responded to the Gospel. In 1953, a tent was set in Letts, but without much local response. The tent was then moved into Grandview, where a number were saved, including Dan Gast and Ruth Cocklin. Gospel meetings were held in subsequent years in the Gast home and in tents. In 1959, the believers gathered as an assembly. The Grandview Assembly continued to meet in the Gast home until a hall was completed in 1972. About 20 were in fellowship in 1985.

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The Davenport Assembly began in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Egger on West Locust Street in about 1936. Ten adults and three children were in that initial meeting. Others responsible for starting the assembly were Helen and Eldon Baird, Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Iverson, and Mr. and Mrs. Morris. Some of those in leadership over the years are mentioned below in connection with hive-offs.

The Davenport Assembly later rented a remodeled garage on Laurel Street. While there, they held a one-day Bible Conference at which Arthur Rodgers was the speaker. After that, they met in four different rented places until 1949, when they built Harrison Gospel Chapel in Davenport at 3025 Harrison Street. The first Bible Conference at the new building was in September 1950.

The Harrison assembly purchased a seven-acre plot in about 1990 and built the larger High Point Bible Chapel in Davenport at 2600 63rd Street, at which about 75 attend now. Recent elders include James Iverson, Fred Scott, Bill Kuhl, and Tom Daly. Harrison/High Point has commended several to the Lord's work.

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Harrison Gospel Chapel has hived-off three other assemblies. Robert Vogel and Lawrence Fors started the Community Christian Fellowship in Moline. Ray Routley, Jerry Stonehouse, Carl Trent, and August Stevens started Oak Ridge Bible Chapel in Milan, IL. Others started a home meeting in Davenport in about 1995 called Davenport Bible Fellowship. This group continues to meet in the basement of the Andy Parker family.

A recent hive-off from High Point Bible Chapel is the Fulton Assembly at Fulton, IL, started by Abe Chacko, Steve Geddin, and Jim Larson; that group meets in a Christian school in Fulton.

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Shortly after Emmaus Bible College moved to Dubuque, two assemblies were established in that city. The Asbury Road Bible Chapel, begun in 1984, meets at the college and has about 50 faculty and staff families, 50 townspeople, and 100 students in attendance during the school year. The Asbury Community Chapel started in 1986, meets in the nearby village of Asbury, and has a fellowship of about 40 townspeople, 40 faculty and staff families from Emmaus Bible College, and 130 students.

South Central Iowa

Christian coal miners from Scotland immigrated to the coal mining area of southeast Iowa perhaps as early as 1885. They formed little assemblies and began to preach the gospel to fellow miners and farmers. Forbush and What Cheer were among the early assemblies; then Rathbun, Mystic, Numa, Jerome, Hocking, Melcher, and Williamson; then Centerville and Albia. By removals these pioneers or their descendants became the nuclei of assemblies in Des Moines, Eddyville, Ottumwa, and Davenport. The last named had an earlier history, on a different basis, but its later strength was largely due to influx from Centerville. At one time, the assembly at Ottumwa was the largest and most influential in the state of Iowa; it disbanded in the mid 1990s.

The What Cheer Assembly was formed some time prior to 1888, making it the first or second in Iowa (see Berea). It quickly grew to a company of fifty or more Christians. When work in the mines ran out at What Cheer some of these brethren moved to Carbondale and Excelsior. They continued their Gospel activity and worked underground to pay expenses. When the mines closed in those places, they moved further afield into southern Iowa.

Around 1890, a few of the coal miners from What Cheer came to Forbush to work in the mine there, establishing an assembly there. Among them were James Whittem, John Moffat, and W.A. Wilson. They worked in the mine during the winter months, saved their money, then rented tents to use for Gospel meetings during the summer, in many small towns. As people trusted the Lord, small meetings were started. A feature of the work in these towns were joint quarterly meetings consisting of one-day ministry.

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When these towns lost population with the loss of industry, these assemblies moved to Centerville. They bought the Swedish Baptist Mission for meetings, calling it the Centerville Gospel Hall. In 1904, the old Methodist building on the corner of Main and Washington was purchased and became their meeting place until the present building was built in 1950, at 828 South 12th Street.

The Centerville assembly was a fairly large group for a small town; it was a leader among several other assemblies in the area. Their Labor Day conferences were highlights of the year, with several hundred people in attendance. In the late 1990s, only a handful of adults were in the fellowship.

Among those who worked and preached there were William Sommerville, John Moffat, W.A. Wilson, John McGee, John K. Wilson, John Hargrave, James S. White, W.W. White, and Thomas McCully. These men carried on for a long time before any of those giving their whole time to the Lord's work arrived on the scene. Mr. Sommerville was a true shepherd and a good gospeller. John Moffat and W. A. Wilson were gifted men and spent their later years in full-time service. They were used in establishing the original testimony in Centerville in about 1897. W. W. White helped Mr. Moffat and others in tent work at Centerville, Numa, Jerome, and other places. The Welshmen David Lawrence and his brother-in-law were prominent in the assembly later; David Lawrence was an itinerant preacher who traveled often with Arthur Rodgers. John Lewis was another itinerant preacher who was associated with Centerville. George Jones is the current leading elder in the Centerville assembly, now called the Centerville Gospel Chapel.

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Williamson was an active mining town in South Central Iowa when its coal mine was in operation, but scarcely exists today. The assembly meeting at the Williamson Gospel Hall was started in about 1929. The group met first in the Williamson High School auditorium and had about 45 to 50 people in fellowship. Two years after the meeting was started, the group moved a building from Numa to Williamson for their fellowship. Mark Avitt's truck was used to move the building. The Gospel Hall had a large sign on the outside with John 3:16 in bold letters.

Most of the brothers in the assembly were coal miners. Some had moved from Albia and other area meetings when those mines were closed. The Williamson Gospel Hall closed in the mid 1950s after the Williamson mine closed.

Speakers that helped in the meeting included David Lawrence, W.W. White, Albert Orcutt, James Stell, and David and John Horn.

Central Iowa

The towns of Pella and Sully, near Des Moines, were settled mostly by farmers from Holland. Still, the assemblies that started there were influenced by the assemblies begun by the coal miners. The Pella Gospel Hall was established in 1941 by James Steele, Walter VanDer Hart, and Gradus DeCook, and has always been on Union Street. The VanDer Hart family, Gradus DeCook, and George Pinches have shared leadership of the assembly, which has about 25 adults and youngsters in attendance.

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The Bible Truth Chapel in Oskaloosa was established in 1974 by Milo and Harold VandeKrol and Willis Veldhuizin. It was first located at 7th Avenue East, Oskaloosa. In 1991, it moved to a new building east of Oskaloosa on Highway 92, and changed its name to Hillside Bible Church. Milo and Harold VandeKrol, Elmer Roorda, Ray Plowman, Willis Veldhuizin, and Rick Johnson

have been active in leadership.

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The assembly which meets today as Cornerstone Community Church in Des Moines at 3200 Lincoln Avenue, had its beginning on May 19, 1912 when a small group of believers met in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Green, who had moved to Des Moines from Centerville. That first group consisted of the Green family, John Moffat of Centerville, and Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Hodges of Hocking. Soon the Robert D. Livingstons of Hocking, and the J. H. Whites of Centerville began fellowshiping with this small group, which consisted primarily of coal mining families.

The meeting moved to the Livingston home at 1418 E. Court Avenue in November of 1912, where they continued to meet until May 1913. The assembly was strengthened by other families moving to Des Moines, among them Thomas McCully from Albia.

The first Des Moines Conference was held on May 30 - June 1, 1913 in a tent erected in what was then Governor Square Park. Ministry at the conference was provided by Messrs. Wilson, Moffat, Greer, Broadfoot and Pinches. The assembly soon became known for sponsoring Bible Conferences.

Immediately after the first conference, a store building was secured for assembly meetings. In the fall of 1913, Messrs. Greer and McCracken held a series of meetings there. The assembly grew, so an old storage building was found at 1315 E. Walnut, which served as the meeting place for a time. The "Neighborhood House" at 513 E. 13th St. was obtained for the Conference in 1914. The assembly continued to meet at the "Neighborhood House" for about 18 months.

John Green then rented a shop at 1309 E. Walnut Street, which became the Des Moines Gospel Hall. For two years the Bible Conference was held there, and to accommodate the larger crowds on Sunday, services were held at the Masonic Home Lodge at E. 6th and Locust.

In 1921, an old church building at 800 Des Moines Street, near the State Capitol, became available and was purchased. The assembly was then named Central Gospel Chapel. In these early years it was not uncommon for as many as eight or ten speakers to be in attendance.

The numbers attending the Conferences grew so large that the chapel could no longer accommodate them, and in about 1936 the Conference was moved to the Iowa State Fairgrounds, where attendance often reached 700 to 800. The Conference continued at the fairgrounds until 1954 with the exception of three years (1942-1944) during World War II.

By 1953 the assembly required still more space. Land was obtained at 3200 Lincoln Avenue and the construction of a new chapel was begun. The old building at 800 Des Moines St. was sold, and for approximately 16 months services were conducted in the gymnasium of Valley High School in West Des Moines while a new facility was being built.

The first Sunday services were held in the new chapel in May 1955, where the assembly presently resides as the Cornerstone Community Church. Elders since then have included Tom Baird, Jim Green, Jim White, Jack Bernard, Ray Johnson, Andrew Crawford, Albert Orcutt, Lew Clarkson, and Corwin Dawson. About 300 adults and youngsters attend the assembly. Many workers have been commended to the Lord's service locally and abroad. The assembly has been known for its active youth program.

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In the late 1930s, E.F. Washington of Kansas City, KS, with help from Dale Inhofe and Harry Ferris, then associated with Central Gospel Chapel in Des Moines, held gospel meetings on the east side of Des Moines, a racially mixed neighborhood. A few were saved, and a group began to Remember the Lord at a location on W. 12th Street near University. In 1940, the Christians purchased a lot and built a hall at 1400 De Wolf Street, the present location of the De Wolf Street Gospel Hall. An addition was built later to accommodate the growing Sunday School. Dale Inhofe, Harry Ferris, Jack Bell, and Carroll Connett have been leaders over the years. About a dozen people are in the assembly at present.

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The Ames Gospel Chapel, north of Des Moines, began as a congregation consisting largely of university students from various Iowa assemblies. Robert Arthur helped in its early days, and Ansel Bolt was associated with the assembly for many years, until it disbanded in the 1990s.

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In about 1915, an assembly began in the home of Frank Payne at Fort Dodge. However, the Good News Chapel in Fort Dodge is considered to have begun in about 1930. In that city, for many years, *Light and Liberty* and *The Fields*, as well as much other Christian literature, were produced by Walterick Publishers, which later moved to Kansas. Here the Gospel Perpetuating Fund originated two great hymnals: *Choice Hymns of The Faith*, and *Hymns of Worship and Remembrance*, as well as Alfred Gibbs' chorus books. Close to Fort Dodge is Twin Lakes Camp, where Karl Pfaff and others began a series of annual camps and conferences, principally for the young. The Good News Chapel discontinued in the early 1990s.

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From the Good News Chapel in Fort Dodge, Wayne and Carol Messerly went in 1963 to the Story Book Christian Camp in northern Minnesota to serve as volunteer counselors and teachers. In 1967, they felt that the Lord was directing them back to Iowa, so they settled near the small town of Stratford, close to the larger town of Boone, where Wayne took a position as managing editor of a local newspaper. They did not join any of the local churches, but simply Remembered the Lord in their home, praying for a revival in the area and the establishment of a new testimony.

By 1970, the drug and hippy culture had invaded central Iowa, and many of the area high school and college students were deeply involved. Some churches around Boone became alarmed and jointly sponsored a revival crusade. God was already working in the lives of some of the youth,

and several were saved and others renewed at the crusade.

Two of the young men who were saved, Andy Crim and Carl Dorner, sought out the Messerlys, knowing of their Christian walk. The Messerlys were happy to work with them and their friends, opening their home to crowds of young people, most of them still in a hippy life style. They instructed the young people in the things of God, and showed them how to lead Bible studies.

At the end of 1970, 22 young men gathered to Remember the Lord in the Messerly home, and were soon joined by young women and others. Andy and Carl became enthusiastic evangelists, able to speak the language of their compatriots. Within a few weeks, the area was exploding with Bible studies, in what has become known as the 'God Awakening' in that area.

The fellowship in the Messerly home was incorporated in August 1972 as the Stratford Bible Chapel, with Wayne and Tom Messerly, Andy Crim, Carl Dorner, Kevin Chalfant, Steve Huffman, and John Berglund as its leaders. The group at that time had 30 core believers, while up to 125 would come to midweek praise and study meetings.

A hive-off occurred in 1977 when some of the believers began the Boone Assembly. However, the two groups soon decided to re-unite. They purchased an old farm house on three acres between Stratford and Boone, remodeled it, and in 1982 incorporated as the Countryside Bible Chapel. In 1996, about 150 people were in fellowship at Countryside.

Southwest Iowa

The Berea Gospel Hall, in the small town of Berea nine miles from Anita in southwest Iowa, may be the oldest in the state. The Gospel was brought there in 1884 when Alexander Broadfoot moved to that area. Souls were saved through his efforts and the labors of others, among them Messrs. Both, Little, Gotchel, and McLarian. These brethren carried the Gospel to the neighboring towns of Mt. Etna, Massena, Fontenella, Anita, Greenfield, and Atlantic, holding meetings in country school-houses.

The assembly at Berea first met to Break Bread in the Berea schoolhouse not long after Mr. Broadfoot's coming. Never a large assembly, it is yet the parent of the Lyman; Greenfield; Palisade, Nebraska; and Long Island, Kansas assemblies.

Prayerful exercise on the part of S.A. Brown resulted in Alexander Broadfoot and Don Charles coming to bring the gospel into the district near Lyman. In 1906, these two brethren began meetings in a church building and the schoolhouse. Jack Charles later held meetings in an old creamery building, using planks on top of pop boxes for seats. This building was purchased and made into the Lyman Gospel Hall shortly after the work started in 1907 or 1908. Later the assembly moved an abandoned rural church building into Lyman and have used it as their hall ever since. Annual Conferences were begun soon after the work started, and continue to the present. At the first Conference in 1909, the speakers were Alexander Broadfoot, Don Charles,

C.W. Ross, Arthur Rodgers, John Moffat, and C. J. Baker.

In the early days, the assembly at Lyman numbered about 120 for special meetings. In active leadership over the years have been Cal Lindeman, Will Meyer, Lewis Lindeman, Fred Meyer, C.G. Lindeman, Harold Meyer, Edgar Kunze, and Jim Nichols. The assembly has commended workers to Korea and Brazil.

Many other of the Lord's servants have labored faithfully ministering the Word and preaching the gospel in this district, among them C.W. Ross, James Erskine, John Moffat, A.N. O'Brien, William Thomas, A.B. Rodgers, John and David Horn, David Lawrence, C.J. Baker, W. Wilson, and James Gilbert, in addition to those already mentioned.

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The Mayflower Gospel Chapel in Cumberland, a small community a few miles northeast of Lyman, was formed in the 1950s, an offshoot of the Lyman Gospel Hall. Joe Johnson and Agnes Erickson are credited with starting this assembly. Larry Johnson has been its leader. About 20 adults and youngsters attend the assembly, which is now located one mile south of the original hall in Cumberland.

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The Atlantic Gospel Chapel, begun in 1954, is also an offshoot of the Lyman Gospel Hall. The Christians of the assembly met for a year in the Assembly Room at the county Courthouse while their chapel was being constructed. William Howell, Lyman Worthington, Lewis Lindeman, William Morgan, Don Wohlenhaus, Bob (Arnold) Lindeman, Bud (Lloyd) Lindeman, and Gene Mallette were those involved in the initiation of the assembly. Elders have included Ed Hill, Clair Wohlenhaus, Don Hartkopf, George Heuss, Ned Brown, Duane Brown, Jim Freeman, Johnny Mitchell, and Stefan Johnson. The Atlantic Gospel Chapel has commended several missionaries to foreign and local fields. About 160 adults and children attend the assembly.

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From 1932 through 1934, several men conducted Gospel meetings in various country school houses in Adair County during the summer months, and in a large tent pitched in the Greenfield city park. Among those who preached during this three year period were James Gilbert and Glen Plowman of Omaha, and the Horn brothers of Atchison, Kansas. Kenneth and Eldon Baird spent their summer vacations preaching in the Schofield country school house east of Greenfield, and in a rented vacant church building in Greenfield. J.G. Charles of Kansas City held meetings in Jackson Center school house, west of Fontanelle. As a result, an interest was created and some were converted to Christ.

In the summer of 1936, a group of believers Broke Bread for the first time in the home of Eldon and Helen Stowell in Greenfield. Others present at this first meeting were Erskine and Grace Broadfoot, Had and Edna Sivage, Adeline (Jisa) Fils, Henry and Clara Limbaugh, Herb and Ona Stowell, Harold and Tillie Stowell, Herbert and Maurine Stowell, Bertha Baird, Merle (Jr.) Baird, Gwendolyn Baird, Mrs. J.H. Yeates, and Helen (Stowell) Hohertz. All of these had been baptized and received into fellowship at the Berea Gospel Hall prior to the beginning of the Greenfield

Assembly.

Erskine Broadfoot and Had Sivage, because of their qualifications and long time association with the believers at Berea, were acknowledged to be the elders and Eldon Stowell was asked to be correspondent. Home meetings continued for about a year. Then it was decided to rent the old vacant Christian Church building and establish the Greenfield Gospel Hall. Even then, over forty people gathered in homes for Bible readings.

For a few years following the starting of the new assembly, speakers from other assemblies came on Sundays once a month to help, and a number of special meetings were conducted, mostly in the form of one or two-week series of evangelistic campaigns.

In the late 1940s, the assembly began meeting in the court room of the Adair County Court House for their Sunday meetings. In 1950, land was purchased on Highway 25 at the north edge of the town, and a country church building was purchased, moved onto the property, and remodeled. The assembly changed its name then to Greenfield Gospel Chapel. In 1962, they traded buildings with the local Lutheran Church at 401 E. Iowa Street in Greenfield. The assembly numbered about 80 in fellowship in 1998. Among those in leadership over the years have been Eldon Stowell, Ken Baird, John Guikema, and Gerald Reed, and many others.

In 1976, the Greenfield Gospel Chapel started sponsoring a 15-minute Radio Bible Studies program with Ken Baird every Sunday morning on a local radio station. Bruce Collins of Waterloo, IA took over the program when Ken Baird retired.

The Greenfield Gospel Chapel has joined with Berea Gospel Hall, Lyman Gospel Hall, Atlantic Elm Street Gospel Chapel, and Atlantic Sunnyside Bible Chapel in commending several people to the work of the Lord in Brazil.

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The Council Bluffs Bible Chapel, across the Missouri River from Omaha, was established in about 1980 as a hive-off from Keystone Bible Chapel in Omaha. Lloyd Andrew and Richard Lewis are the leading men in the small assembly. Though in a poor neighborhood in a poor building, they maintain the testimony and have seen blessing.

Northwest Iowa

Sioux City was the American home of the Robert Hoys, missionaries to France. On their first furlough Mr. Hoy pitched a Gospel tent and called Harold Harper as the evangelist. Omaha brethren began a course of Gospel preaching and follow-up, which continued for years. One winter was a real harvest time among farmers north of the city, followed later by an ingathering from the city. Arthur Rodgers baptized 21 one Sunday morning. The believers first rented a store building for their assembly meetings, then built their own Washington Heights Bible Chapel in Sioux City. George T. Pinches and William Trotter also did early work in the area.

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Sam Hayes and others of Sioux City had been saved in 1960 through the preaching of William Jackson, from an assembly in Kansas City. Following this, Sam Eadie faithfully instructed the new believers in the Word of God every Friday night, driving from Omaha to Sioux City, a journey of 100 miles one way. Mr. Eadie was in fellowship at the Omaha Gospel Hall. Others in this faithful ministry included Bill Fear and Messrs. Randolph, Petherick, Whitehouse, and Harvey. This continued for 17 years, until in 1977 an assembly was established in the Sam Hayes home. Sam Eadie and Louis Smith were also involved in the start-up of the assembly, which became known as the Sioux City Gospel Hall.

The assembly now meets at 120 South Leonard. Sam Hayes and Bernie Mertens are the current leading brothers in the small assembly of about a dozen believers.

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Val Brandt, 1996, following 75th Anniversary of Garnavillo Gospel Hall

Letters of Interest, Sept, p. 30 and Oct, p. 31, 1946; July 1956, p. 17; January 1952, p. 20

Minnesota

Vernon Schlieff records that the first assembly in Minnesota was located in St. Paul Park, south of St. Paul, and was started by his great-grandfather in the 1880s. This assembly, however, does not seem to be the antecedent of any of the current assemblies in the area. The Vernon Schlieffs also started an assembly in South St. Paul, probably in the 1930s, which grew to 35 at one time. It would seem that this assembly dissolved soon after the Schlieffs moved to Louisiana.

Mr. Schlieff also records that he attended the Sunday School at the Cedar Avenue Gospel Hall in Minneapolis in 1924. That assembly later met at the 42nd Street Gospel Hall in Minneapolis. Harry Ironside ministered there on occasion. Thus, this assembly as well as the above may have been associated with the 'Grant exclusives.'

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The six current assemblies in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area – Believers Bible Chapel, Long Lake Community Church, Maryland Bible Chapel, Northeast Gospel Chapel, Northwest Bible Chapel, and Plymouth Bible Chapel – jointly meet in a Bible Conference over the Labor Day weekend each year, a tradition that began in the early 1900s. These assemblies also meet quarterly for joint Missionary meetings. Bible camps in three locations in Minnesota – Chandler, Paynesville, and Virginia – are supported in part by these and other assemblies. Co-commendation of missionaries to the Lord's work abroad is common among these assemblies. Through the leadership of Homer Payne, Minneapolis assemblies have been helping an assembly in Bolivia, sending work teams for short terms.

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An assembly that eventually became Longfellow Gospel Chapel was meeting in various rented locations in the downtown section of Minneapolis in the early 1900s. These Christians called their various meeting places the Gospel Tabernacle during the early period. The first meetings were held in 1909 or 1910 and the first Breaking of Bread was in September 1911. Carl F. Leverentz and Henry Gilkerson were among those starting the assembly.

Nine people were in attendance at that first Remembrance Meeting. After 1911, records show the families of Walter Purcell, James Innes, Fred Beadle, O.E. Dunkerton, Carl Leverentz, August Leverentz, O.E. Magee, Carl Bergstrom, and R.D. O'Brien in the assembly.

Later leadership included Robert Wilson, Ted Bailey, William Denham, Paul Leverentz, Dan Leverentz, and William Western. Current elders are David Denham, Glen Ellis, and Philip Leverentz. Christians from Northeast Gospel Hall in Minneapolis apparently gave help in Gospel work in the early years.

From the early days, a Gospel outreach was made into South Minneapolis. When a lot in that area was given to the assembly, the believers moved their meetings into a temporary building there, in 1925 or 1926, and erected and occupied the Longfellow Gospel Hall at 3012

Longfellow Avenue S. Since then, the neighborhood has changed, but the assembly remains active at the same address in the inner city. In 1959, the assembly was incorporated as Longfellow Gospel Chapel.

Longfellow has been the prime sponsor for the Minnesota prison ministry of Emmaus Bible College in recent years. The ministry of distributing Bible courses to inmates in Minnesota prisons, is headed by David Denham. Brothers and sisters from various area assemblies correct these courses and conduct weekly classes in a prison in Moose Lake, MN. About 50 adults and youngsters attend Longfellow Gospel Chapel today.

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By 1923, several people were meeting to Remember the Lord in a rented storefront building at 1103 Johnson Street, N.E., in Minneapolis. The assembly was incorporated in October 1923 and called the Northeast Gospel Hall. The original trustees were W.A. Upton, L.W. Anderson, O.A. Anderson, J.A. Innes, W.E. Purcell, O.E. Magee, and W.R. Simpson. Some of these had been in fellowship at the Gospel Tabernacle/Longfellow Gospel Hall.

The trustees had already identified a lot at the corner of 29th Street N.E. and Ulysses Street for purchase. Construction of a basement was begun the next spring and the assembly moved into it; the upper portion was completed in 1929 or 1930. In 1966, an addition was constructed, enabling the provision of six Sunday School rooms. The assembly today is known as the Northeast Gospel Chapel.

Among the many men who have been in leadership at Northeast Gospel Chapel and its predecessors are Albert Upton, Truman Manning, J.S. McLellan, Joe Reavis, Jay Walden, Harold Crawford, Brad Biddle, John Block, Milton Haack, and James Green. With other assemblies in the area, Northeast has commended missionaries to the Congo, the Philippines, Brazil, Japan, Greece, and VietNam. About 85 adults and children are in the assembly today.

Northeast Gospel Hall and Longfellow Gospel Hall carried on cooperative efforts to spread the Gospel in the early years. This was a work for hundreds of children, held on Sunday afternoons on 45th Street between Heawatha and Snelling. The two assemblies also conducted joint open-air meetings at what is now called the 'Seven Corners' area.

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It was the burden of John and Ruth Clift of Northeast Gospel Chapel to begin a Sunday School work in the Golden Valley suburb on the west side of Minneapolis. In 1951, they challenged the newly married Don and Vi McLellan to assist them. The afternoon Sunday School commenced with 18 children in attendance. Teachers and helpers from other assemblies assisted in a temporary capacity and also were active in a Tuesday evening Good News Club. A 'fun night' was a happy activity at the Clift home.

An assembly then began, meeting at Westview School and then at Mission Farms. Those

initiating the new assembly were John and Ruth Clift, Don and Vi McLellan, Robert and Marge McLellan, Bob and Mary Wilson, and Stan and Janette Tjomsland. In 1955, the Christians erected the Westview Good News Chapel. In 1970, the assembly moved to its present location in Plymouth as Plymouth Bible Chapel.

The assembly has always had a strong youth program, which included Sunday Schools, Christian Service Brigade, Pioneer Girls, Released Time Classes, and an Awana Club. Over the years, leadership of the assembly has been provided by John Clift, Bob Wilson, Arnold Petersen, Don McLellan, Scott Henderson, Jay Swisher, B.J. Tuininga, and Gary Campbell. Plymouth Bible Chapel has commended missionaries to Japan, Papua New Guinea, and elsewhere. About 150 adults and youngsters attend the assembly, making it one of the largest assemblies in Minnesota.

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In 1961, a group of families in fellowship at Northeast Gospel Chapel purchased a wooded one-acre tract on Long Lake Road at Sunnyside Terrace, in the rapidly developing residential area of New Brighton on the northern edge of Minneapolis. The Zedicher family had moved nearby a year earlier and started a children's work in their basement, a work which was picked up by the new assembly when it began. Joe Balsan from Iowa set up a tent on the property in 1962 for a Daily Vacation Bible School, which was well attended by the neighborhood children.

A new building was erected later that year. The first meeting of the assembly at Sunnyside Bible Chapel in New Brighton was in June 1963. Fourteen families constituted the initial gathering, including the families of Lloyd and Lois Brandt, Claire and Karen Dean, Ken and Irene Manning, Grant and Helene Zedicher, Arthur and Audrey Redling, James and Mary Upton, Melvin and Coral Jacobson, and Sherman and Delores Camp. These shared in early leadership.

Recent leadership has included C. Ted Grant, Dennis Katterhenry, Kenneth Manning, Grover Sayre III, and David Wagner.

In 1987, the name was changed to Long Lake Community Church. An addition in 1989 doubled the capacity of the building, which is next to a high school; the assembly rents space in it for Sunday School overflow.

Two area assemblies have derived, all or in part, from Long Lake Community Church – Believers Bible Chapel in the Coon Rapids area of Minneapolis in 1987, and Northwest Bible Chapel in Minneapolis in 1994.

Bruce and Cheryl Ewing were full-time workers at Sunnyside from 1977 to 1984. Bill and Ginny Anderson came as full-time workers in 1989, until retiring in 1996. David Corbin and family came in 1996 to devote full time to the assembly. In 1999, Karl and Marcy Schmithe accepted a staff position to work with junior and senior high youth. With an active musical program and many young people, Long Lake Community Church has about 140 persons.

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A few brethren in fellowship at Longfellow Gospel Chapel and Northeast Gospel Chapel were burdened to start an inner-city ministry in St. Paul, which then had no assembly testimony. An assembly was formed in 1984 and met in rented space on Como Avenue as the Como Bible Chapel. Ted Gliske, Kurian Abraham, and Bruce Wahlin were among those who began the assembly. Scott Bourquin later joined in the leadership.

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The work grew and a chapel at 606 E. Maryland Avenue in St. Paul was found and purchased, the present Maryland Bible Chapel. Approximately 60 persons regularly attend the assembly, whose principal burden is evangelization in that part of the city.

Northwest Bible Chapel is the newest assembly in Minneapolis, and is located in Brooklyn Park. This assembly currently meets in a school facility but plans to build. The original members of Northwest Bible Chapel came primarily from Plymouth Bible Chapel and Long Lake Community Church. Rocky DeYoung is currently a full-time worker for Northwest.

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The assembly now meeting at Hinckley Gospel Hall, north of Minneapolis, began in 1985 in the home of Roland and Amelia Ekstrand. Some of the initiators had been in fellowship in assemblies at Willmar (130 miles distant) and Minneapolis (85 miles distant). The Hinckley Assembly was not derived from those, but was the result of numerous Gospel meetings and three years of home Bible studies. In 1990, the Christians purchased a building at 401 Lawler Avenue South in Hinkley, their present meeting place. The brethren involved in the start-up, and who continue in leadership, are Roland Ekstrand, David Klar, and Raymond Grazin. The assembly consists of about 30 adults and youngsters.

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Evangelist A.N. O'Brien lived in Duluth for several years in the 1920s and 1930s, and was considered to be one of the elders at the Duluth Gospel Hall. For many years there was no assembly testimony in the city. The Duluth Bible Fellowship was begun in 1988 by Tim Blazevic, Leo Wittenberg, and Don Peterson, and these have been the elders. About 18 are in the assembly.

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There was a small assembly at Hibbing, 40 miles northwest of Duluth, at which Vernon Schlieff held Gospel meetings. A larger assembly existed at that time in Alexandria, with a large chapel, possibly the forerunner of Manor Park Bible Chapel, which disbanded in the early 1980s.

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The Meeting House in West Virginia, MN, north of Duluth, was the home of an assembly that was established in about 1941 by Neil Fraser, Walter and Lois Neff, Selma Quade, Earl Perala, and Basil Ward. The assembly has since moved into the town of Virginia and meets at the Virginia Bible Chapel. Other individuals in leadership over the years have been Raymond Andersen, Eino Perala, Ted Johnson, Roland Rogers, Elwood Abramson, and Martin Backman.

A worker has commended by the assembly to the service of the Lord in Uruguay. About 80 adults and youngsters attend the assembly.

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The Gospel Halls of the northern U.S. have a number of small testimonies in the state. The largest of these is the Willmar Assembly, some 90 miles west of Minneapolis, meeting at East 13th Street and Trott. The Warren Ramseys, in fellowship with the Willmar assembly, started a meeting in the late 1990s that meets now at the home of David and Dorothy Van Hal in Sunburg, north of Willmar.

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In the 1980s, unable to find the kind of fellowship in which they could wholeheartedly involve themselves, Dean and Ruth Lindstrom, daughter and son-in-law to Ben and Jean Tuininga, opened their home in Rochester in the southern part of Minnesota to Bible studies. In 1987, they began Breaking Bread together in their home. By 1989, the work had grown with five other households and some singles. The home assembly is today called the Rochester Bible Chapel.

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The Minnesota assemblies sponsor three Bible Camps in the state: Story Book Bible Camp in northern Minnesota, Lost Timber Youth Camp in southwest Minnesota, and Koronis Bible Camp and Conference near Paynesville on Lake Koronis.

Sources:

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The History of Long Lake Church, by Grant Zedicher, 1998

Uplook, August 1989, p. 286

Wisconsin

“One of the earliest assemblies in this area was probably LaCrosse. On June 9, 1890, they met for the first time to remember the Lord.” So wrote Val Brandt in 1996 of the LaCrosse Assembly. “I remember going to conference in LaCrosse. I remember Mr. Redpath who had a kind of whistle when he prayed. There was Frank Hussman. . . Some of the preachers there were Grandpa Gould (father of George Gould Jr.), John Ferguson (father of William Ferguson, editor of *Words in Season*), John Conoway (often used nature to illustrate), and W.P. Douglas (a stately gentleman from Cleveland).”

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The assembly initially called Bible Truth Hall in Cudahy was established in 1929 or 1930 by Harlan Vintage and P.A. Orloff. Those and Frank Gilanyi, Ralph Hartfield, Ray Routley, and Fremont Brauch were in leadership over the years. By the 1970s, the assembly had been renamed to Grace Chapel. After the last of the above named leaders had moved or died, the assembly closed in November 1996.

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Wauwatosa Community Chapel in the Wauwatosa area of Milwaukee was established in about 1920 by William Graf, Albert Cutting, and L. Andersen. It was first located on Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee, and after that at three other locations before coming to its present address at 220 N. 67th St. in Wauwatosa. Other individuals active in leadership over the years have been John Hale, T. E. McCully, Gus Quindt, and Frank Brown. Among the many that Wauwatosa Community Chapel has commended to the Lord’s service, we mention Vernon and Gladys Schleif to work in the U.S., and Ed McCully to the work in Ecuador. About 200 adults and youngsters attend Wauwatosa Community Chapel.

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Oconomowoc Bible Fellowship, in the town of Oconomowoc between Madison and Milwaukee, began in the early 1990s in the home of Frank Brown. The Browns were involved in weekly neighborhood Bible studies, while continuing their fellowship with Wauwatosa Community Chapel in Milwaukee, some 35 miles away, where Mr. Brown was an elder. Several other families, including Alan and Kay Gustin, were also making the Sunday journey to Milwaukee. With the blessing of Wauwatosa Chapel, the Oconomowoc group started Sunday evening Remembrance and Family Bible Hour meetings in the Brown home. Most of these Christians continued to drive to Wauwatosa Chapel for the Sunday morning meetings.

After some months, they rented a Baptist facility, and met there for about a year. Then they rented a local Senior Day Center and began Sunday morning meetings, and have continued in that location. About 50 adults and youngsters attend on Sunday mornings. The Christians of Oconomowoc Bible Fellowship meet in homes for three different prayer meetings and Bible studies; some attend other Bible studies to meet and help Christians and the unsaved outside the assembly. Frank Brown, Wayne Scheppele, and Mike Brinkman have been elders in the

assembly.

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The town of Appleton in east-central Wisconsin saw the Appleton Assembly begin in about 1930 in the home of James Simpson. The principal people at that time were the families of James Simpson, Lynn Carey, John Watson, Richard Watson, and Joe Alberts. These men together with James Watson, Oliver Krull, Harold Felten, William Gibson, Earl Asman, and Donald Abel have been the elders. The assembly moved in 1940 to 412 E. Wisconsin Avenue and took the name Appleton Gospel Chapel. In 1966, the Christians moved again, to N. Mason Street, taking the name Appleton Bible Chapel. The assembly discontinued in 1968. The Appleton Assembly has commended a worker to the Congo.

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In 1956, a group left the Appleton assembly to form an assembly in Kaukauna. The Christians met for a little over two years in an empty store on 2nd Street, while building Community Gospel Chapel in Kaukauna at 1717 Main Avenue, which they opened in 1959. The principals in starting the Kaukauna assembly were R. Watson, J. Watson, K. Nichols, and Earl Asman. The latter three were the elders. The assembly commended a sister to work with Asian wives of U.S. service men in Colorado Springs. Community Gospel Chapel discontinued in 1976.

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Fox Valley Bible Fellowship in Appleton was established in early 1996 by Tim and Susan Geske and Ralph and Vicky Wells, and meets in the Geske home in nearby Kaukauna. Although there had been assemblies in Appleton and Kaukauna in years prior, the Fox Valley Bible Fellowship began independently of them. About 30 adults and youngsters attend the assembly. Leadership includes the Geskes and Wells'. Robert and Lois Sawyer, former missionaries to Spain, work in the assembly.

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When the Felten family came to Sheboygan, north of Milwaukee, from Germany in 1893, they found other families of believers and came together for Bible study and prayer. Assembly meetings were soon begun and were held from house to house. As more families were added, the Feltens built a house at 1628 Georgia Avenue in about 1912, and this became the permanent home of the assembly. Services were in the German language until 1916 when the change was made to English. At first the assembly met in the dining room, but as the numbers grew, it was necessary to enlarge the upstairs to accommodate the meetings. As many as 100 persons were present on some occasions. They continued to meet there for 33 years.

In June 1941, these families incorporated as Bible Truth Chapel in Sheboygan and started a building fund. But in 1942, a sad division took place. The 22 believers still remaining in fellowship leased and remodeled a store at 1226 Georgia Avenue and moved there.

Early in 1949, having more than doubled the membership and having well-attended Sunday School classes, with Friday night meetings that drew as many as 140 children, the believers

determined to build on the lot they had purchased years earlier on Broadway Avenue. With volunteer labor, help from other assemblies, and assistance from Stewards Foundation, the Broadway Avenue Gospel Chapel was constructed and occupied in December 1949.

The Lord blessed the testimony beyond expectation. Most of the families that left in 1942 returned, souls were saved, and Christians from churches around were added to the company. There were about 70 in fellowship in the early 1950s. The assembly continues today as Zion Christian Assembly.

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Grace Fellowship in Madison came into being in 1977, starting in the home of David Brauch and moving shortly to the Conference Center of a Quality Inn on Madison's southeast side. Those involved in the start-up include David Brauch, Dick Matthews, and Jerry Barr, and those in leadership include David Brauch, Gerald Kurtz, Randy Jorgenson, George Jones, Dick Peik, and Al Schirmacher. Messrs. Matthews and Peik are former pastors of denominational churches. Grace Fellowship has commended workers to Portugal and Romania. About 30 adults and youngsters attend Grace Fellowship.

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The assembly at the Beetown Gospel Hall began in 1926 in the town of Beetown in southwest Wisconsin. Stephen Nick and Samuel Hamilton are those to whom the start-up is attributed. Stephen Nick, a preacher who lived in Boscobel, Wisconsin, was the leader in starting several Gospel Halls in Wisconsin. The first overseers at Beetown were Roy Barr, Adam Jamison, Buzz Jamison, and Sam Dixon. About 20 adults are in fellowship at present.

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The assembly called Believers Gathered Together in Beloit, almost at the Illinois state line, began in 1972, the result of efforts of Tom H. Ruff, Tommie Ruff, Leroy Ruff, and Thurston Sandlin. The latter was the correspondent for many years. A second assembly was formed in the mid 1980s, meeting at Beloit Gospel Hall with Tommie Ruff as correspondent. The two assemblies existed together in the town until Believers Gathered Together disbanded in the mid 1990s. The Athlone Street Gospel Hall in St. Louis, MO was involved in the beginnings of the work of the Beloit Gospel Hall, which has an attendance of about 50 on Sundays. Leaders over the years include Tom and Tommie Ruff and Major Cain.

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Mt. Sterling, Lynxville, and Prairie du Chien are towns in the southwest part of Wisconsin, near the Mississippi River.

The Lynxville Gospel Hall was established in 1940. The assembly moved to the Mt. Sterling Gospel Hall in 1980 and continues today.

In 1993 a group split off from the Mt. Sterling assembly to form the Prairie du Chien Christian Assembly. These Christians, some of them elders from the Mt. Sterling assembly, first met in a

home for about five years and now have their own building in Prairie du Chien. Daryl Asperson and Robert Borne were among those initiating the new assembly, which has about 40 to 45 persons attending. Daryl Asperson and Robert Borne are the elders.

Sources:

Questionnaire Responses

Untitled Report by Val Brandt, 1996

Letters of Interest, February 1950, p. 1; January 1953, p. 7

Illinois

The establishment of the early assemblies in the Chicago area is intimately associated with tent meetings and conferences, the transplanted Scotsman Donald Ross being the driving force for these. In 1879, he was holding tent meetings in the west side Union Park neighborhood, and publishing his newsletter, *The Barley Cake*. In it, he suggested holding a Bible Conference and mentioned two assemblies as possible conference sites. One of these was at 517 West Madison in Union Park, and the other at 2912 South State Street on Chicago's south side. These unnamed assemblies were apparently the first in Chicago and the entire Midwest, and would have been formed before 1879, perhaps by several years. The first Bible Conference in the Chicago area was held in 1880, the first in a long series there.

When K.J. Muir left Canada in March 1880 to seek employment in Chicago, he sought out like-minded Christians. Not long saved in a Gospel campaign conducted by the Scots preachers John Smith and Donald Munro, Mr. Muir helped in tent meetings held that summer by Donald Ross and the remarkable business man and tent maker, C. J. Baker. When the tent campaign and subsequent Gospel meeting were finished, "the assembly" (not further identified) moved to a hall at the corner of May and Fulton Streets, where many of the early Chicago Conferences were held.

In March 1887, K.J. Muir established his home in Avondale, then a suburb of Chicago. In the fall of 1888, John Arnold, Cuthbert D. Potts, and K.J. Muir with their families formed the nucleus of the Avondale Assembly.

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The fellowship currently known as Palos Hills Christian Assembly in Chicago has its roots in the South State Street Assembly. In the next decade, that assembly moved through several locations, all in the area of 30th and State Street, steadfastly observing the Lord's Supper, prayer, and teaching. In 1891, the Christians met on East 43rd Street, and then further south near 69th and Carpenter. A year later they were at 59th and Wentworth Avenue, and in 1894, at the corner of West 69th and South Wentworth Avenue, where they called their meeting place Alberta Hall. This served as their home until 1918, when they moved into a larger nearby building. For a time they were at 69th and Halstead Street. In 1923, the assembly divided, one group moving to a rented old church building at 66th and Normal, becoming known as the 66th and Normal Assembly, and another moving further west to start the Laflin Street Gospel Hall.

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The Laflin Street Gospel Hall, at 6617 S. Laflin Street, had as its early leading brethren Jim Humphrey, Ken Widener, and Messrs. Miller, Arnot, and Parker. As the demographics of the neighborhood changed, most of the assembly moved to Oak Lawn in 1959. However, a few stayed, notably Jack and Charlotte Mostert. They invited the black people in the neighborhood to

join with them, and a few did so. Steve Thompson, saved while in prison in Japan, came to work with the Mosterts. He and Jack Mostert are the leading men in the integrated assembly, which is the most integrated assembly in Chicago.

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Perhaps in the early 1920s, some brethren, with the full accord of the brethren at 66th and Normal, commenced an assembly in Roseland on the far south side of Chicago, which became known as the Roseland Gospel Hall. The Roseland assembly was started by the Hoekstra brothers, of Dutch descent, along with Messrs. Faber, Boldt, and Slager. That assembly was active for many years, but eventually closed. The building sat idle for some time until a group of brethren asked permission to take over the building and start a new assembly, perhaps in 1926. Later they moved a few doors west on 111th Street. The assembly is now known as the Roseland Bible Church, with a good children's work in the community.

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The group at the 66th and Normal Assembly stayed at that location until 1929. By the mid 1920s, the growing assembly was seeing the need for permanent quarters. The Christians purchased a lot and constructed a hall at 86th and Bishop, and in the summer of 1929, the first meetings of the Roberts Memorial Gospel Hall – or as most people called it, the 86th Street Assembly – were underway, ending forty years of nearly constant moving.

The 86th Street Assembly frequently had tent meetings in the southwest suburbs, conducted by visiting and local brethren. Traveling preachers who visited at 86th Street and its forerunners include many of the well-known brethren of the day. Herbert Dobson and William Warke were full time gospel preachers who made 86th Street their home assembly.

The Christians remained at 86th Street for about 35 years, through the Great Depression and World War II, and into the changing scene of the 1960s. At that point, the elders felt a move further out was desirable, closer to where the majority of the members then lived. A plot of land in Palos Hills was purchased and a new chapel built in 1969 at 10600 South 88th Avenue, the new and present home of the Palos Hills Christian Assembly.

Among the leaders in the earliest years of the assembly were William Dunnett, Thomas Pollard, Alfred and John Stevenson, and Messrs. Barth, Bassett, Weston, and Shewan. Since 1950, elders include Andrew Cotton, John Pollard, Bill Gould, Phil McKendrick, Tom Sendzimer, and Tom Carrick.

Palos Hills Christian Assembly and its antecedents have commended many workers to the Lord's service abroad and locally, and have been substantial supporters of missionary efforts. About 140 adults and youngsters attend the assembly today.

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In 1894, Winsor Chase and James K. Fea of the Avondale Assembly explored the Austin area on the west side of Chicago, and that fall moved their families to Austin to pioneer a new testimony. Others followed, and early the next year a store was rented at Ontario (now Ohio) Street and Parkside Avenue for assembly meetings. Gospel campaigns were held with such preachers as Donald Ross, James Harcus, John Smith, Donald Munro, Alexander Marshall, John Monypenny, Charles W. Ross, and W. J. McClure.

In 1900 the Austin assembly moved into a small building at Laramie and Chicago Avenues. Because of losing two leading brethren, the believers temporarily closed their meeting in 1901. They met with the Colorado Avenue Assembly in Chicago but continued the Gospel and Sunday School efforts in Austin. In 1903 they returned as an assembly and rented a hall on Chicago Avenue about four blocks east of Laramie. In 1908 they moved to an upstairs hall at 419 N. 52nd Avenue (now N. Laramie). Through conversions and the addition of believers moving from other parts, the assembly grew to around 50 by 1913. In that year, the assembly incorporated and property was secured at 746-48 N. 51st Court (now Leamington) for the construction of a hall. An opening conference was held in the new Austin Gospel Hall in August 1913.

Conversions and influxes from overseas swelled the assembly to about 200. The assembly continued for more than 40 years, until the building was sold in 1956, and the assembly moved temporarily to Emmaus Bible School in Oak Park. In 1959, the Christians built and moved into Woodside Bible Chapel at First and Chicago Avenues in Maywood on the western edge of Chicago.

Leaders after the Austin period were Henry Moffatt, Phil Clarkson, Donald Anderson, Harold Shaw, Clarence Welsher, John Duff, and Bob Wilson. Elders since then include Tom Bendelow, Chuck Christensen, Dan Smith, Bob Logan, Duncan Mathieson, Steve Wilson, Bob Ramey, Jack Barclay, and John Hurni.

Woodside has two other groups using its facilities: the India Assembly meeting in a separate room but at the same times as the English-speaking meetings; and a Spanish-speaking group of about 20 on Saturday nights for Bible studies. The English-speaking assembly now has about 70 adults and youngsters, while the India Assembly has about 40. The Austin/Woodside assembly has commended a large number of servants to the work of the Lord throughout the world.

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The roots of Norwood Gospel Chapel in Chicago date back to 1916. A group of Christians, dissatisfied with their denominational church affiliations, began meeting together in homes. The interest grew and they sought help from the Moody Bible Institute for someone to minister to them. Among the first sent was Harold Harper, who was associated with the assemblies. In the summer of 1917, Mr. Harper and others conducted a gospel tent campaign in the neighborhood. The good results created a need for a regular meeting place. At the close of the tent meetings a nearby store was secured at Central Avenue and Irving Park. Here a progressive work continued for four years. In 1922, the Irving Park Gospel Hall, a modest building at 5614 Dakin Street,

Chicago, was built. The group at that time numbered about 40.

Henry Petersen built up a large Sunday School and Friday night children's meetings. Alfred and Edwin Gibbs were also instrumental in building up the assembly. In leadership at the Irving Park Gospel Hall were J. Millard Doyle, George McAllen, Harvery Langguth, Paul Erickson, John Mall, S. J. Nelson, Charles Howard, Harold Linqvist, and Sor Sorensen. The assembly grew in attendance in the 1920s and 30s, but after World War II, felt they needed to move.

In 1951, after nearly 30 years on Dakin Street, about 125 members in fellowship in the Irving Park assembly moved into the newly constructed Norwood Gospel Chapel, located in a residential section on the northwest side of Chicago at Nagle and Foster Avenues. The Norwood Gospel Chapel has commended several to the Lord's work.

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About 10 people of the former Irving Park assembly purchased the Gospel Hall on Dakin Street in 1951 and continued to meet there, calling it Portage Park Gospel Hall. Now called Portage Park Gospel Chapel, the assembly still meets at the location on Dakin Street.

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In 1977, two families immigrated from Korea to Chicago, having been in fellowship in the Korean Brethren Assembly in Seoul, Korea. They entered into fellowship at the Norwood assembly, but soon desired to establish a Korean-language assembly. Thus, in 1980, the Norwood Gospel Assembly of Korean came into being, the results of efforts of Young M. Lim, Bona Soo Rhee, and Joon H. Park. These and Sang Jin Park have been the elders. Korean is used as the language for the adults, and English is used in the Sunday School.

In 1985, the assembly divided in half, one becoming the Emmaus Gospel Assembly and the other San Jung Korean Assembly in Des Plaines. Emmaus Gospel Assembly rents space in the Park Manor Bible Chapel in Elgin and has about 60 adults and children in attendance. The San Jung Korean Assembly changed its name to Chicago Korean Bible Chapel. Both assemblies use Korean and English in their services, as before. Mr. Lim published a Korean hymnal in 1977 and is working on a second edition of it.

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The Union Ridge Gospel Chapel in Chicago began as a Sunday School outreach led by Charles Clohsey and Stanley Modrzejewski of Norwood Gospel Chapel. By 1957, it had been established as an assembly. Paul and Al Streder, John Everding, and Art Modrzejewski were active in leadership.

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A group of brethren from the Laflin Street Gospel Hall – William McCartney, Doug Ibbotson, Art Miller, William Trotter, Fraser, Brown – decided to go further south in the early 1930s to begin a new work. They rented a store on 103rd Street and started the Washington Heights Gospel Hall. Doug Ibbotson was commended to the work of the Lord from Washington Heights.

He was also involved in the work at the Navy Yard in South Carolina before returning to Chicago.

The Washington Heights assembly mushroomed and other works hived off from it. The assembly purchased a building, then later built another in the same block. They took the name Beverly Bible Chapel in 1962.

After that, a group left to form a new assembly in the western suburbs; its chapel was completed in 1976 and called the Oak Forest Bible Chapel. Don Thomson was a leader at Oak Forest, which has about 80 adults and youngsters in attendance. Over the years, this chain of assemblies has commended many missionaries.

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In 1958, about 15 couples from Laflin Street Gospel Hall built Oak Lawn Bible Chapel at 4259 W. 107th Street in the western suburbs. Some of the families at the Oak Lawn assembly were the Millers, Hamiltons, McCallums, Halyburtons, Norgards, Ganleys, McKendricks, Kennedys, Hinshelwoods, Schoerners, and Boyds. The assembly has commended workers to Cuba, Yugoslavia, South Africa, and to local ministries. T.B. Gilbert was commended from Oak Lawn. Jeff and Beth Tichelar are full-time workers in the assembly, which has about 100 adults and children in attendance.

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Fernwood Gospel Chapel hived off from the Washington Heights Gospel Hall in about 1939. William McCartney, Ira Wagner, Roy Mills and William Brook were those who started the assembly. These and George Brucer, Robert Mattingly, John Slager, Robert Drechsel, Wesley Mills, Lawrence Hurley, and Charles VanderVeen shared leadership over the years. Active for many years, Fernwood Gospel Chapel commended missionaries to the foreign field before closing in 1967.

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The assembly now known as Village Church in Oak Park has its roots in a work established before 1920. Known initially as Bible Truth Assembly and located on Austin Boulevard at Corcoran in Chicago, the assembly at some point moved to its own building at 1107 Ontario Street, calling it Bible Truth Chapel. Robert J. Little was associated with the assembly and was the 'radio pastor' at the Moody Bible Institute radio station in Chicago for many years, followed by Don Cole of the Lombard Gospel Chapel.

In 1952, the Christians built the River Forest Bible Chapel in River Forest at Harlem Avenue and Augusta Boulevard, where they remained until 1987. Those active in leadership at the River Forest Bible Chapel included Bob Constable, Jim Catron, Sam Brooks, Ernie Sandeen, Gordon Haresign, John Smart, Roy Horsey, and John Montgomery. At that time the assembly purchased a school building on East Avenue, between Roosevelt Road and the Eisenhower expressway in Oak Park, and changed the name to Village Church. Most of the men in early leadership at River Forest were gone by then. Jim Callahan is a full-time worker in the Village Church assembly.

Many have been commended from the Oak Park/River Forest/Village Church assembly.

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A few miles south of Oak Park, at La Grange, an assembly was formed in about 1949 and met in temporary quarters, anticipating building their own chapel on a main road close to a large housing and shopping area. By 1959, the believers had completed their building, La Grange Gospel Chapel, which they occupied until the late 1980s, closing at that time. James Kennedy was an elder there for many years.

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Believers Assembly Chicago in La Grange is an assembly composed of believers from India. It is a product of a Bible study started in La Grange in the early 1970s by K.M. Mathews and others with a brethren background. In 1996, the Lord enabled the group to buy a church building in the town. The assembly has had the joy of seeing a few Hindus come to the Lord. Abraham T. John and Sajan Mathews are the current elders. About 70 people are in Believers Assembly, which has also commended one worker to the Lord's service.

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In the spring of 1913, Henry Miller heard George M. Schmidt preaching the Gospel on the streets of Chicago, and stopped to speak with him. Shortly, they and their wives began to meet to worship the Lord in the Miller's home. They were soon joined by Mr. and Mrs. Lange, and then others, meeting to Remember the Lord in a variety of homes. When their homes could no longer accommodate the growing German-speaking assembly of believers, they met in a series of storefronts, first on North Avenue, then Armitage Avenue. Finally the assembly settled at 1844 N. Larrabee Street, forming the Larrabee Gospel Hall. The Lord's Supper was conducted in German, while the Sunday School, led by George Wagener, was conducted in English for the neighborhood children.

In 1928, a group of young ladies in the assembly, burdened for the spiritual welfare of the large number of children in the Jefferson Park community, did house-to-house visitation, then rented a large garage in which to begin a new Sunday School. That work eventually grew into the Grace Gospel Church with a succession of pastors.

During the early to mid 1930s, the gathering of Christians at Larrabee Street grew to encompass a group of Assyrian believers, among them Paul David, at first meeting separately. Then when two Mexican brothers, Otilio and Manuel Carrera, co-workers of George Schmidt, were converted, the German-speaking and Assyrian-speaking believers decided to merge and make the worship suitable also for the Carrera brothers.

The assembly grew and in the 1940s the believers purchased property at 3525 N. Damen Avenue. After remodeling the building, they moved into it in 1949 and took the name Lakeview Bible Truth Assembly. During this period, members of the Grace Gospel Church moved into new quarters and used their original building as a youth center, with a gym. In 1990, the Lakeview meeting purchased the properties of Grace Gospel Church. The Lakeview assembly moved into

the building at 5555 N. Lotus Avenue and changed its name to Northwest Gospel Chapel. Families from the two groups merged into this assembly and retained the youth center. Elders have included Armando, Bill, George, and Manual Carrera, and George Bowman.

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In the 1920s, the Methodist Church Council ruled that “the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, as a future event” was not to be preached by its pastors. This ruling caused an immediate uproar in the Lombard Methodist Episcopal Church. The pastor told five objecting families to leave, and about thirty did leave in early 1927. Among those were the families of Frank Erickson, William Routson, Dave Weber, William Kerr, Mae Patterson, and Noah Roeshley.

The people that left the Methodist Church engaged A.H. Fardon, an evangelist and Bible teacher from Kansas City, to join with them to conduct tent meetings in Lombard. So many people attended these meetings that a board was formed to consider the beginning of a new church. The Board asked Mr. Fardon to consider moving to Lombard and be their full-time worker, and he agreed.

At that time there was no brethren assembly in Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, or Lombard. At the end of 1926 and in early 1927, some individuals from the Austin Gospel Hall moved to the Lombard area, including the families of Will H. Durant, William S. Kellar, and Charles M. Allen. There was no apparent connection between the group from the Methodist Church and those from the Austin assembly prior to the tent meetings in August 1927, but the Durants became involved in that new work. They and Frank Erickson were instrumental in purchasing two lots in Lombard and the construction of a new building, the Lombard Gospel Chapel at 40 W. Ash St. The group had its first meeting in March 1928, and celebrated the Lord’s Supper each week from the beginning. Tent meetings were a regular Gospel outreach of the Chapel.

The Lombard Chapel continued to grow at a rapid pace into 1930. By March 1930, the Sunday School had increased to 150. Soon, plans were being made to begin a new work in Villa Park. A hall was secured and a group of 35 to 40 from Lombard began a similar work there. Starting as a simple hive-off in January 1931, this group continued to grow, but eventually joined with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Even with the new work in Villa Park, the Lombard Gospel Chapel continued to grow rapidly. Many accounts are given of people coming to salvation through Jesus Christ. Tent meetings and special meetings at the Chapel were common. Noted speakers were James McKendrick from Scotland; T. Ernest Wilson, then a missionary in Portuguese West Africa; A. G. Bently of Toronto; William R. Newell of Deland, Florida; Harold St. John; and Alfred P. Gibbs. In May 1931, H. A. Ironside, then pastor of the Moody Memorial church in Chicago preached at Lombard Chapel.

Though Lombard Gospel Chapel had a strong brethren orientation by this time, many of its members from other backgrounds were not comfortable, and 1934 was a year of change. Many in the assembly wanted to name Mr. Fardon as the pastor of the Chapel, and this caused a deep

division. Rather than be the source of problems, Mr. Fardon, who had led many in the church to Christ, resigned and left Lombard Chapel. About 25 left with him, but others who had left earlier during the conflict returned

The assembly continued to invite well known speakers, and was involved with the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago. During World War II, many servicemen passed through the Service Men's Center at 646 South State Street, and Lombard Chapel had an ongoing part in this ministry.

In the early 1940s, the numbers were down to about 50 people in regular attendance. These included the families of Will Kellar, Charles Allen, Earl Elliot, and Evelyn Varder. Miss Varder in 1948 went to Immanuel Mission in Arizona where she started a school for Navajo children. Lombard Gospel Chapel was the home church of Stacy Woods, later president of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship.

During and after the war, families who joined with Lombard Chapel included those of Frank Wilson, Willard Rodgers, Robert Hanson, and Charles Howard. Wheaton College students who attended included Jim Elliot, Ronald Harris, Jim Yorgey, and Priscilla Hoy (Kaliodjoglou).

In the 1950s, the younger people in the assembly agitated for a new building in a different part of the town. This was done and the Sunday School grew so rapidly that an addition was built that was larger than the original building. Eventually over 400 children were in the Sunday School. Other families moved into the area and became part of the assembly. Among these were the families of John Harper, John Phillips, C. Donald Cole, Charles Fizer, Jack Fish, and David Glock. Naomi Cole began a Bible class with help from the other ladies in the assembly; over a hundred women attended the class and many of them eventually came into the assembly along with their families.

Lombard Gospel Chapel continues as a thriving assembly today at 369 N. Stewart.

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In 1930, T. B. and B. M. Nottage established the first black assembly, Grace Gospel Hall, in Chicago. Among its original members was W. F. Mullins. Edgar Burgess was associated with early Gospel efforts there. For six years T. B. Nottage commuted from New York, coming four to six weeks at a time, to help in the work in Chicago.

While this work was going on, meeting with discouragement and opposition, and some success, Theodore Williams Sr., a former Baptist pastor of Detroit, came in contact with B. M. Nottage and through him learned about the New Testament church. In February 1945, Mr. Williams moved to Chicago to give a hand to the assembly work there. In 1946 he was joined by Mr. O. F. Gall, commended from Grace Gospel Chapel in New York City. Mr. Gall had been exercising his evangelistic gift in and around New York for about 22 years while secularly employed. Louis Hoy of Arlington, WA also joined the efforts at about that time.

Grace Gospel Hall first occupied a store front at 4646 Langley Avenue. At the urging of Mr.

Williams and Mr. Hoy, the assembly at 4646 Langley Avenue moved to a funeral parlor at 18 East Fifty-fifth Street, and then to another funeral parlor at 4842 South State Street. The testimony grew slowly, with 37 in fellowship in 1949. With financial assistance from the assembly at 86th and Bishop, the Christians purchased a lot at 9140 South State Street in the middle of Chicago's South Side. Grace Gospel Hall was incorporated in 1947; the original trustees were Louis Hoy, Frank Mullin, and Theodore Williams, Sr. Construction of the Hall began soon, but several years elapsed before the roof and doors were in place, due to lack of funds. Saints at Arlington, WA and Vancouver, British Columbia provided financial assistance for this; some Chicago-area assemblies provided the heating plant, and an assembly in New York City paid for the plumbing and electrical work. In the 1950s, the highway department decided to build a highway through the property. With proceeds from the highway department, the assembly built a new Hall at 96th and King Drive. Close to a grade school with 1200 pupils, Grace Gospel Hall has emphasized children's work.

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Grace and Glory Gospel Chapel branched out from Grace Gospel Hall under the eldership of Messrs. Gall, Mullin, and McCray. The Learning Center Gospel Chapel in Harvey, IL was a branch-out from Grace and Glory Gospel Chapel, under the original leadership of James Fair and Mr. Henry.

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For four or five years preceding World War II, Joe Nieboer spent considerable time laboring among the black population on Chicago's South Side. Among those he contacted was Burleigh Edwards, a business man. Mr. Nieboer taught him the security of the believer and other Scriptural truths. In about 1944, Mr. Edwards started, from his apartment house at 41st Street and Michigan, a Gospel and visitation work under the name of South Side Gospel Testimony. In September 1949 an assembly with that name was formed, with assistance from the Nottage brothers, with ten in fellowship. A room in the apartment house was converted into a chapel. The Gospel was broadcast by loud speaker from the building and given out by tracts, visitation, and other means.

In 1949, the little assembly had opportunity to buy a substantial church building. This property with an adjoining corner lot at 64th and Drexel Streets was acquired, and the assembly was incorporated as South Side Gospel Assembly. The assembly numbered twenty seven at the time of the move. Visitors, preachers, and teachers from other assemblies were given a hearty welcome. Groups from Bethany Chapel at Wheaton and Emmaus Bible School helped in the ministry.

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The South Side Gospel Assembly carried on outpost work that developed into Westlawn Gospel Chapel, on South St. Louis Street near 21st, under the leadership of LeRoy Yates, Melvin Banks, and Mr. Rollerson. The Lighthouse Gospel Chapel was another branch-out from the South Side Gospel Assembly. From the Westlawn Gospel Chapel came Roseland Bible Church, the Christ

Community Church in Chicago, and the Family Gospel Chapel of Bangor, Michigan.

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In the early 1940s, the only assembly in the town of Wheaton met in the home of Wheaton College professor Mortimore Lane, and only for the Lord's Supper. Billy Graham, while attending Wheaton College, frequently attended those meetings at the Lane's home. Many assembly young people attended Wheaton in those days, but because the closest assembly was in Lombard, seven miles away, most attended other churches. Knowing this, William McCartney, who had been active for years in helping to establish assemblies on the south side of Chicago, took steps to initiate an assembly in Wheaton.

In 1945, he was instrumental in having a large house purchased close to Wheaton College on President Street. A wing was added and the house, called Bethany House, was used for assembly meetings and was made available to students for relaxation and recreation. Mr. McCartney persuaded Harold Harper of Pennsylvania to move his family to Wheaton and minister to the students. Almost immediately, students, faculty, and staff of Wheaton College began attending the assembly. A few families from Lombard Chapel joined the Wheaton assembly.

In the early 1950s, Bethany Chapel in Wheaton was built next to Bethany House and became the home of the assembly. The chapel accommodates about 200 persons. Now it numbers approximately 150 during the regular Wheaton College semesters.

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Warrenville Bible Chapel in Warrenville, near Wheaton, was opened for regular services in November 1959. Branching out from the assembly at Bethany Chapel, this work resulted chiefly from the efforts of one family in Warrenville bringing large numbers of boys and girls to youth meetings in Bethany. Interest in starting a new assembly testimony in Warrenville developed, and seven families – those of Robert Mojonier, Herman Heise, John Sweemer, Charles Shelburn, Sophus Bolt, Del Dennis, and Maurice Martin – started to pray together about this. With encouragement from the elders at Bethany, a fund was started in early 1958. Money came from many sources, and construction of a building on a one-acre lot was carried out in the late summer of 1959. The building has been added to twice, seating 200. An adjacent lot was purchased in the early 1970s.

Robert Mojonier, Herman Heise, John Sweemer, and Sophus Bolt were the first elders. Since then, Don Pope, A.G. Sutton, Maurice Martin, David Neal, William MacPherson, and Erwin Kittner have become elders. Several workers have been commended by Warrenville Bible Chapel to the Lord's service abroad. About 200 adults and youngsters are in the assembly.

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Glen Ellyn is between Lombard and Wheaton. The Glen Ellyn Gospel Chapel began in 1986, having derived from the Lombard Gospel Chapel. Ron Walker, Chuck Formby, Richard Neal, Chris Barton, Ken Blysmas, and Tim, Jim, and Bill Hertz were the principals involved in the beginning of the assembly. Gerry Wright, Ed Auer, and Bob Marshall have also shared in

leadership. The assembly has commended two workers. About 30 are in Glen Ellyn Gospel Chapel today.

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One of the largest assemblies in the outlying areas of Chicago is the Arlington Countryside Church in Arlington Heights. This assembly began in 1966 through the cooperative vision of men and women from various assemblies closer to Chicago and the staff of International Teams, formerly called Literature Crusades. As the northwest suburbs exploded with people, the new outreach grew rapidly. Elders there have included Walter Liefeld, Neil Glass, Cy Fors, John Elliot, John Stadt, and Evan Davis. Although the community and congregation have been transient, Abner Bauman has been involved full-time in pastoral and evangelistic ministry since 1971.

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The leadership of 13 families from Arlington Countryside Church resulted in the formation in 1982 of Alpine Chapel in Lake Zurich, which is northwest of Arlington Heights. Art Volkmann, Rick Knox, Jim Harshaw, and Dick Loizeaux were the principal people starting the assembly. Meeting initially in Seth Paine elementary school, the Christians in 1985 moved to their present location on 17 acres at the corner of Miller and Echo Lake Roads in Lake Zurich.

Dick Loizeaux assumed full-time ministry responsibilities that year. In 1990, additional staff members were added. Alpine Chapel has grown to about 700 people through an aggressive outreach in the expanding community, and the facility has been expanded several times to accommodate the growth. Leadership has included Jim Harshaw, Dick Loizeaux, Rick Knox, Fred Heick, Charles Christiansen, Juan Angolo, Rich Borst, and John Cross. About 70 people professed salvation in 1997 through the outreach of the assembly, and 60 new families were added.

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In the 1880s, James Marcus married Margaret Ross, daughter of Donald Ross, and moved northwest from Chicago to Elgin, where he obtained employment. He remained in that town for ten years and helped build up the little Elgin Assembly. L.C. Burbury was a leading elder in the assembly at one time, and more recently Art Modrzejewski.

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A mission group – the Gospel Expansion Fellowship – from Park Manor Bible Chapel in Elgin, Bethany Chapel in Wheaton, and Norwood Gospel Chapel in Chicago started the Meadowdale Gospel Chapel Carpentersville, north of Elgin, in 1956. The principals in the beginning were Louis Cook, Walter Albright, Robert Harper, and Emil Jordi. Sharing in leadership since then have been Charles Frame, Donald Mullins, Jim Hoeflich, Ralph Whitlock, and Dan and Dave Niequist. Meadowdale Gospel Chapel has commended workers to the Lord's service. About 85 persons are in the assembly today.

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In the early 1940s, a Mr. Ransome started a meeting in his home in Rockford, in the northern

part of the state. In 1943, these Christians formed Miriam Gospel Hall in Rockford. In 1957, they sold this building and built Ridgeview Chapel in Rockford. While in temporary quarters in the Community Hall, awaiting the completion of Ridgeview Chapel, a significant growth in the Sunday school occurred, with real blessing in the Gospel, and souls saved.

Ridgeview Chapel continued until 1978. However, an outgrowth of the assembly was the formation of the Beloit Gospel Hall in Beloit, WI, started by Mr. Ruff and his two sons.

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Believers Bible Chapel in Rockford began in 1995 in the home of Warren and Brenda Henderson. Ralph and Estelle Borchardt worked with the Hendersons in establishing this assembly. From eight people at the beginning, it grew to about 50 in 1998, and had moved to rented quarters in the Wannebago County Farm Bureau building. Elmer and Jean Wacker, and Rick and Ramona Kuntzelman were also early members.

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In the Evanston area on the north side of Chicago, believers were meeting before 1916, and in that year erected Grace Chapel there . The assembly had an active outreach and attracted many of the well known speakers who frequented the Chicago assemblies. By the late 1920s, some changes had apparently occurred because a small group was then meeting in a small room in downtown Evanston. As this group grew, they began meeting in a storefront. In 1941, the present building at the corner of Cleveland and Asbury was erected and called the Evanston Gospel Chapel.

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Farther north, almost at the Wisconsin state line, is the town of Zion, founded many years ago as a Christian community. A week-night Bible study in the home of Bill and Polly Allen, former assembly missionaries to the Belgian Congo, led to the start of the North Shore Assembly in Zion. Early members of the Bible study group were Clarence and Marge Wright and Ed and Helen Hanni. Soon Heinz and Lore Habel and their parents from Kenosha joined, and then a messianic Jewish couple, Martin and Fania Suess. James and Helen Kay and their son John and his wife Nadine, moving to Zion, encouraged the group to begin Breaking Bread together in the fall of 1965.

The numbers grew, and the North Shore Assembly moved to the home of the younger Kays a year later. When others continued to come, including Howard and Grace Armerding, the assembly moved to the basement of the administration building of Mt. Olivet Cemetery, of which the Armerdings were part owners. In 1969, they purchased and remodeled a home on 33rd Street and Gilead Avenue, changing the name then to North Shore Bible Chapel.

In spite of a hive-off of several members to start the Lakeland Fellowship in nearby Gurnee, the Christians felt the need for larger quarters, and in 1996 purchased and remodeled a funeral chapel at 2800 W. 29th Street in Zion, their present quarters. Leadership has been shared by

David Herman, William Allen, Heinz Habel, and Al Leach. About 70 adults and children attend North Shore Bible Chapel.

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Four families in leadership at the Fernwood Gospel Chapel in Chicago were desirous of starting a testimony in the city of Lansing in the Chicago metropolitan area but near the Indiana state line. The Gilbert, Hurley, Leathem, and Murray families started holding prayer meetings in their homes. With the assistance of Stewards Foundation, the Lansing Gospel Chapel was erected on Bernice and Roy Streets and occupied in 1957. Though small, the assembly has seen souls saved and built up, and continues today.

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The assembly now meeting at Grace Bible Chapel in Springfield had its start in 1954 in the home of Robert Isringhausen on Milton Avenue. Robert and Camille Isringhausen, Lamont and Norma Haynes, Floyd and Helen Pierce, Lorraine Cantrall, and Barbara Lynard were among the founders. The assembly was known as the Springfield Gospel Chapel at that time. The brethren from Prospect Avenue Bible Chapel in Champaign gave assistance in the early days, and William MacDonald and Paul Flint from Emmaus Bible School, then in Oak Park, visited periodically. Nick and Alberta Guikema moved to Springfield in about 1958 and joined the assembly.

From the Isringhausen home, the assembly moved to the Knights of Pythias Lodge Hall on South Spring Street for a time, then to the Pleasant Hill School. In 1958, property was purchased and a building was constructed at the corner of Milton Avenue and Carpenter Street. The assembly was known then as the Milton Avenue Chapel. In 1977, property at 700 S. Livingston Street was purchased. The congregation relocated there and chose the name Grace Bible Chapel. Another move took place in February 1995 to 3335 Woodhaven Drive.

The Gene Haas family were the first fruits of the work begun in 1954 and the tent meetings held in 1957. Larry Haas was for many years in leadership and led the singing at Grace. Leaders over the years in addition to those mentioned include James McFarland, Nick Guikema, Philip Dossett, Tom Duncan, John Gantz, Mike Williams, Mike Rodier, William Ilch, Robert Wenneborg, Morton Morris, Richard Cooley, Rick Petrone, Mark Pribble, and James Fitzgerald. The assembly has commended workers to Brazil and Zambia. About 125 adults and children attend Grace Bible Chapel today.

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The assembly now meeting at Oak Ridge Bible Chapel in Milan in the Quad-cities area was formed in November 1978, a hive-off from Harrison Gospel Chapel in Davenport, Iowa. It was at that time called Valley Christian Fellowship and met at a day care center on Blackhawk Road in in Rock Island. The principal people in establishing the assembly were Craig Rolinger and Ray Routley. The families who lived in Illinois came with the new meeting, principally the Ferguson, Stevens, Stonehouse, Trent, Rolinger, and Routley families.

The assembly met in the day care center until October 1981, when they moved into a building

they had purchased in Milan, at 2716 W. First Street. That building had been a restaurant, which the Christians renovated and enlarged. At that time they changed the name to Oak Ridge Bible Chapel. The elders have been Criag Rolinger and Ray Routley. Craig and Nancy Rolinger have been commended for work at the assembly. About 50 people attend Oak Ridge Bible Chapel.

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In Champaign, 100 miles south of Chicago, the assembly now known as Stratford Park Bible Chapel was established in 1917 by Paul Rader, a pastor from Moody Memorial Church in Chicago. Subsequent pastors were Charles Porter in 1920 and James Emblem in 1923. In 1930 the church began moving toward a New Testament structure when Harold Harper came and taught Scriptural principles of gathering. In 1935, E. G. Dillon helped to further establish the company as an assembly. It was called The Gospel Tabernacle in Champaign, IL until 1938.

The Christians met in a small rented hall from 1940 to 1948. They constructed their own building on the corner of Washington and Prospect Avenue in Champaign in 1948, and remained there as the Prospect Avenue Bible Chapel from 1948 to 1967. The new and current building was built in 1967 on the corner of Kirby and Stratford. Commended workers have been Tim and Shirley Dever, Robert and Debbie Whattoff, and William and Sue Tell. Leaders have included Frank and Robert Faulkner, Jim Kay, Ed Hilderbrand, Aldon Jensen, Morel and James Dixon, Robert Jordan, Herb Atwood, John Garrett, Robert Whattoff, Ken Raymond, and Richard Schmall. Nearly 200 adults and children are in the assembly.

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Neighborhood Bible Fellowship in Carbondale in the southern part of the state, began in 1978 in the home of Glendall and Janet Toney at 801 W. Sycamore, and has moved through several locations, now being in its own building at 2605 Striegel Road. The originators came from Cape Bible Chapel in Cape Girardeau, Missouri – the Toneys, Stan Tucker, Kent Carrell, Laurel Faust, Curt and Cathy Caldwell, Mike Yockey, Glen Berry, Scott Adams, Janice Crumbacher, Peter and Dianna Chandler, and Debbie Cooper. Leadership has been shared by Glendall Toney, Stan Tucker, Kent Carrell, and Dennis Smith. About 130 adults and youngsters attend the assembly.

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Servants Church in Batavia began meeting in January 1994, with Paul Regan one of the people starting the assembly. However, in 1998 the assembly removed itself from the fellowship of brethren assemblies.

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Several assemblies were begun in the period between the two World Wars, through the efforts of various pioneers. Henry Petersen was instrumental in starting the Melvina Gospel Hall in the western part of the state through visiting families around Melvina and Montrose. A store was purchased for meetings in the early 1930s. The assembly lasted seven or eight years. Sam McGill was a leading elder. The Peoria Assembly in the middle of the state, had ceased to function by 1949. The Joliet Assembly, near Chicago, met for many years. E. G. Matthews of Waterloo, IA and Joe Nieboer of Chicago are remembered to have ministered there.

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We also mention several inter-assembly activities, most of which are still continuing, and which served as connecting points among the assemblies.

The fellowship among the Chicago assemblies was somewhat divided between north and south in the early days because of distances and transportation. The annual Thanksgiving Conference was a four-day conference usually held on the north side in the Logan Square Masonic Lodge. People from throughout the Midwest came to it. For that Conference the north side assemblies would often invite Northcote Deck as principal speaker.

In about 1938 the teenagers on the south side organized a committee with representatives from every assembly and started a monthly young people's meeting. Their monthly Sunday evening Singspiration would pack out the building, and young people from the north side would drive all that way after their Sunday evening service to join. Some of the young men who were involved in those gatherings became the leading men in the Chicago assemblies, including Jim Kennedy, John Boyd, Neil Glass, and Wilson McCracken.

An assembly broadcast over radio station WAIT during World War II was a success. Some assembly young men who were in the armed forces would give their testimonies, and a male chorus from the 86th Street Assembly sang quite frequently on that program and became quite popular in the Chicago area. A mixed chorus from several assemblies also sang for the broadcasts. Peter Pell, Charles Howard, and Bob Arthur were among the speakers, and Dick Boldt, Phil Clarkson, and Jim Kennedy were announcers.

The Chicago Missionary Study Class was (and is) the joy of many young and older men. Started at the time of the First World War, classes are hosted by different assemblies throughout the city on the second Saturday of each month. A typical session consists of an afternoon devoted to reading of letters; then supper, followed by a two-hour evening meeting. Typically a young brother was assigned a topic several months in advance – a particular missionary or mission field, or a review of a missionary book. Usually a missionary was available to minister in the latter part of the meeting, or else one of the local brethren would speak. Roy Rapsch had much to do with the Class for many years.

The Chicago Missionary Study Class has for years maintained the Chicago Missionary Guest Apartments. In 1998, the location was in Glen Ellyn, with Harry and Jean Williams as host managers. Earlier managers have been Sally Weidner, Kirk and Paula Lithander, and Steve and Diane Richards. The building contains six apartments, five for furloughed or visiting missionaries, and one for the manager. The six apartments are 'adopted' by assemblies who are responsible for decorating and supplies.

The Lake Geneva Youth Camp has been another rallying point of the Chicago area assemblies.

Sources:

Questionnaire Responses

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Letters of Interest, June 1945, p. 13; November 1945, p. 29; March 1949, inside front cover and p. 21; November 1953, p. 3; July 1950, p. 20; September 1951, p. 3; February 1957, p. 5; June 1959, p. 11; July 1961, p. 8

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Indiana

Several assemblies were started by the Scottish pioneers in northwest Indiana not far from Chicago. Assembly testimony in Indiana began in the 1870s when James Campbell visited Valparaiso. As a result of his visit, an assembly was started in that city, and was strengthened when Judge Gillet, a well-respected Christian and Bible teacher, identified himself with the testimony. Alexander Matthews and Donald Ross, among others, ministered there. The work continued at the Valparaiso Gospel Hall until the mid 1980s.

Mr. Ross had meetings at Crown Point in the late 1800s and the Crown Point Assembly began at that time. A Mr. Turner and was in the fellowship there. In 1949, the assembly built a chapel seating over 100.

Mr. Ross also visited Lowell, and saw the Lowell Assembly started in that little town. The Lowell and Crown Point assemblies disbanded many years ago.

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T.B. Gilbert was led to the rural area south of South Bend to serve the Lord in 1917-18. His going was in response to the prayers of a few people who had formerly been linked with assemblies in various places, but were strangers to each other. Mr. Gilbert helped them to establish assemblies in their various communities. The first of these began at Bass Lake. Three others were formed at Knox, Aldine, and Ora, all in happy fellowship with each other, and choosing "Meeting House" as their common name. The Gospel Meeting House in Knox continues today. The Meeting House in Aldine continued until the late 1970s.

The situation at Ora was a remarkable example of the power of the true gospel. Some cultish groups were already established there, when in 1918 and 1919, Mr. Gilbert visited this town of 150 people. On both occasions he held three weeks of meetings. He found it useless to preach on texts, as the people were skeptical that he was going to bring them his personal ideas. So he preached on the Gospel of John and the Acts, chapter by chapter. Several were saved in these campaigns, one old man saying that he had been praying that God would send someone to clear up his confusion, resulting from the cultish preaching in the town. The Ora assembly was started in about 1930, and probably called its meeting place the Ora Gospel Meeting House at that time. Charles Malott, James Stephenson, and Oliver Schwartz are remembered as being involved in the start-up.

From 1930 to 1942, the Christians met in a small hall. Then in 1942, through the Lawrence Bennett family, the assembly moved to its present building, now called the Ora Gospel Chapel. In 1945, about 25 were gathering to Break Bread regularly, and 50 to 60 came out to the Gospel meeting when Mr. Gilbert spoke, a remarkable number for a town of 150.

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In 1930, C.E. Bulander, then pastor of a church at Royal Center about 30 miles from Knox, invited T.B. Gilbert to come there for a series of meetings, which resulted in Mr. Bulander's

identification with the assemblies. Mr. Bulander soon began work around Logansport, 70 miles north of Indianapolis, and Mr. Gilbert held Bible classes at the city hall. The Logansport Gospel Chapel, also known as Bethany Gospel Chapel, was established in about 1934 as a result of these efforts. The assembly first met in the home of Byron Flory in the country; and from there in a succession of homes and storefronts until 1992, when the assembly acquired its own chapel at 321 Cliff Drive. Leaders in the assembly have been Byron Flory, Floyd Swigert, Fred Stout, Milsted and George Hammon, Clarence Rude, Bert Hostetler, and Bob Galinger. About 15 people are now in the assembly.

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Many of the adjoining towns were visited with gospel tent efforts. T.B. Gilbert held Bible classes at Mishawaka, near South Bend, and the Mishawaka Assembly was planted there. Its derivative today is Grace Bible Chapel.

In about 1934, C.E. Bulander and John Farquharson pitched a gospel tent near Brookston, and the Brookston Assembly was formed there as the result of this effort. It disbanded long ago.

At the beginning of World War II, an assembly was formed in Ripley when gasoline rationing prohibited travel. It continued at the Ripley Gospel Chapel until the early 1990s.

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Bethany Fellowship in Warsaw, southeast of South Bend began in 1977 as Bethany Bible Chapel. Ron Moore, Ron Scantlen, and Abraham Thomas were the principal initiators of the assembly. The Chapel was first located in the nearby small town of Winona Lake. Abraham Thomas, Ray Moore, Wayne Taylor, Dick Lehman, Irv Lindemuth, Ben Scripture, and Leo Belanger have been active in leadership over the years. Bethany Fellowship has commended several to the Lord's work. About 45 adults and children are in the assembly.

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A. R. Cole, whose work was largely caring for orphan children, lived for many years at Kendallville in the northeast corner of the state. He was instrumental in initiating the Kendallville Assembly, which disbanded long ago.

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Grace Chapel at Frankfort, between Lafayette and Indianapolis, was underway in the 1950s under the leadership of John Freeland. They acquired and remodeled a small building at that time to provide facilities for Sunday school and adult meetings. It has since disbanded.

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The Round Grove Assembly, which had been in existence for years in the west central part of the state, moved in 1949 to the home of Bert Hostetler in West Lafayette. It disbanded many years ago, but the Westside Bible Fellowship meets today in West Lafayette.

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Muncie Bible Fellowship in Muncie, northeast of Indianapolis, began in 1985 as a Bible study in the home of Richard and Sharon Rawson, who were from an independent Baptist church. The group included Paul and Debbie McCollum and Gene and Reva Mussick. In 1986, Garlord and Barbara Kramer and family, from an assembly background, joined the group, and were followed in 1987 by David and Felicia Dixon, and the Anderson family, also from assembly backgrounds. At that time, the fellowship first began Breaking Bread.

In 1988, the group relocated to a hotel, and in 1990 to a store front at 4006 W. Jackson; in 1993 they rented and remodeled a 2400 square foot building at 3800 W. Jackson Street, where they stayed until the landlord sold the building, at which time they moved back into the Rawson home at 116 Winthrop, and continue there to the present. David Dixon and Richard Rawson are the leaders of the assembly.

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The assembly now known as Bethany Bible Chapel in Carmel on the north edge of Indianapolis, started in about 1915. In that year, Emile Carboz, an immigrant from Switzerland, moved his family to Indianapolis. They met Dan and Bonnie Robertson, and the two families began Remembering the Lord in one of their homes, since there was no meeting of 'open' brethren there. They were soon joined by the Butlers and Friebergs. In the 1920s, the growing group moved into a storefront building on North Tacoma Avenue for a meeting place. From there they moved to a YMCA on North Pennsylvania Avenue, and from there to a Youth for Christ building.

During the late 1930s, the Dave and Jean Sheele family moved from New York and came into fellowship. In the 1940s, Richard and Frances Hill started coming to the meeting with their family. In 1949 William M. Brown moved to Indianapolis to devote most of his time to the work there. The assembly had been meeting in a public building and in various homes and needed its own chapel. The brethren secured a lot and Mr. Brown drew up some plans, but the neighborhood selected objected to the chapel being built. The lot was sold and another one bought in a new location outside the city limits. Jack Davies, of California, was asked to give a bit of architectural treatment to the plans and in 1950 and 1951 the Indianapolis brethren built a functional and attractive chapel. Messrs. Carboz, Sheele, and Hill were the principal men involved in building the chapel at North Grand Avenue (now North Leland Avenue) in northeast Indianapolis. It was called Bethany Chapel at that time, and later changed to Bethany Bible Chapel.

During this period, many were saved and added to the assembly. But in the early 1950s, some of the elders moved or were transferred, and the assembly decreased. Then Leonard Sheldrake, son of the well-known full-time servant of the Lord, moved to the area and began coming to the chapel. Soon he was one of the stalwarts of the assembly. Ray Morgan became another elder of the assembly at about the same time. William and Mabel Burrows came in 1961, and William became a real shepherd. The chapel was enlarged in the 1960s.

In 1971 the Christians sold their building and began to meet in the Jordan YMCA until 1973 at which time they bought an older house at 4312 East 116th Street, Carmel, and renovated it for their meeting place. The assembly commended, among others, Mark and Carol Kieft to serve in

the foreign field. The Kiefts have since returned and helped start Faith Bible Chapel in Farmington Hills, MI, where they serve the Lord full time.

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At Bicknell in the southwest part of the state, a large assembly arose through the efforts of saved miners from Scotland, but after the mines closed, probably in the early 1900s, the Bicknell Assembly ceased.

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Sources:

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Letters of Interest, June 1944, p. 37; November 1953, p. 3; June 1959, p. 11; July 1961, p. 8

The History of Bethany Bible Chapel, Carmel, Indiana, by Ray Morgan, undated

Ohio

Information about the earliest assemblies in Ohio is scant. The Scots evangelist John Smith, who worked with Donald Munro and others in Canada, made Cleveland his home in his later days, and was no doubt associated with an assembly in the early part of the twentieth century.

In 1930, T.B. Nottage began the assembly at Elim Gospel Chapel in Cleveland. Though he was an itinerant worker, he and his wife Josephine and children moved to that city in 1936 to be closer to the work. When World War II broke out and traveling became difficult, he curtailed his itinerant evangelism and concentrated his efforts in Cleveland, preaching, doing visitation, and radio programming. The Christians at Elim Gospel Chapel purchased a substantial building at 10522 Amor Avenue in the 1950s, where they still meet. Faith Gospel Chapel in Cleveland is an offshoot of Elim Gospel Chapel.

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In 1936, Central Gospel Hall met in a dilapidated theater building on Central Avenue in Cleveland. B.M. Nottage and Theodore Williams were associated with that assembly.

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The Addison Road Gospel Hall at 1447 Addison Road in downtown Cleveland had about 150 adults and children in attendance at the Breaking of Bread in 1945. Probably the largest assembly in Ohio at the time, the origins of this assembly have not been identified.

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A hive-off from Addison Road Gospel Hall occurred in 1950, when a group purchased land in Cleveland Heights, east of central Cleveland. While awaiting completion of construction of a new chapel, the group met in a Junior High School building. Gracemount Gospel Chapel in Cleveland Heights was occupied in the fall of 1951. It was a vibrant assembly in the 1950s and 1960s, under the leadership of Ken and Robby Pile, the Beattie family, the Baxter family, and others. When the demographics of the area changed, many people began to fellowship elsewhere. With dwindling numbers, Gracemount Chapel was sold to a different evangelical group in 1994.

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An assembly in the Willoughby suburb northeast of Cleveland, was established in the late 1950s. The Christians built the Willo Gospel Chapel on Johnny Cake Ridge Road with an auditorium seating capacity of 186. Its name was changed later to Willo Bible Chapel. The assembly disbanded in the early 1980s.

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Believers Bible Chapel in Painesville, a town northeast of Cleveland on the shore of Lake Erie, was an outgrowth of a local Wednesday night Bible study in the home of Rob and Jane Main on the far east side of Cleveland in the 1970s. Many in the Bible study were in fellowship at Gracemount Gospel Chapel at the time. The group desired to start an assembly, and the elders at Gracemount gave their blessing. The new assembly was initiated primarily by the Mains, Tice

and Evelyn Ozinga, Arthur E. and Susie Auld, Arthur H. and Debbie Auld, Walter and Kathy Lord, and John and Jill Ozinga. Tice Ozinga had been an elder at Willo Bible Chapel, before that work dissolved. Arthur E. Auld had also been in the Willo fellowship, and had been an elder at Gracemount. Taking the name Concord Bible Chapel, hoping someday to be located in Concord Township, the Christians began Breaking Bread in 1978 at the Painesville YMCA. Tice Ozinga and Arthur E. Auld were recognized as the two elders of the new assembly.

After a year or two, the group began meeting in the Concord Township Fire Station. After another two years, they moved to a store front in Perry, where they took the name South Ridge Bible Chapel. By 1989, they had purchased and renovated an old Baptist church building in Painesville, and moved in as Believers Bible Chapel. Elders now include Arthur H. Auld and Rob Main. The assembly has commended workers to ministries within the U.S.

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Westlake Bible Fellowship began in 1968, a hive-off from Gracemount Gospel Chapel. Located first in Birch School in North Olmsted, a western suburb of Cleveland, the assembly moved to Cahoon Road in Westlake, and now has its own chapel on Hilliard Boulevard in Westlake. Those starting the assembly include Karl and Lois Reader, David and Sandy Bingham, Len and Cherry Dick, and Guy and Betty Meehling. These and Roger Meng and Donald Morris have shared the leadership of Westlake Bible Fellowship. About 110 adults and youngsters attend the assembly.

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In north-central Ohio is the city of Mansfield where assembly testimony has long existed. The assembly at Lincoln Heights Gospel Chapel was active in the 1940s and 1950s, continuing into the middle 1980s. The Chapel was newly constructed in 1948.

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An assembly in the city of Norwood on the east side of Cincinnati was begun in 1938 in a small rented building, which the Christians called the Norwood Gospel Hall and later the Norwood Gospel Chapel. A Mr. Powers is remembered as initiating the assembly. Failing to find suitable property to purchase, the assembly moved to the home of John J. McGehee.

In early 1958, the little assembly purchased a half-acre site at Galbraith Road and Kirkland Avenue in the Finneytown area of Cincinnati. On the property was a large old house, which they remodeled. There the testimony had grown to about 80 in fellowship in 1961, with a Sunday school of 120, limited only by space.

In 1961, they built the Northern Hills Bible Chapel on Galbraith Road in Cincinnati, where they still meet. The chapel has an auditorium seating 210. Leaders in the assembly over the years include Gus Jacobs, Israel Martin, John McGehee, Thomas Parks, Bill Wilson, Jim Adams, and Phil Miekley. Today about 150 adults and children attend Northern Hills Bible Chapel.

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Ross Bible Chapel in Hamilton, north of Cincinnati, began in 1974 in the home of Brack and

Donna Strong. Wayne and Betty Schlichter had contacted the elders of Northern Hills Bible Chapel for help in establishing a new assembly. Brack Strong responded, along with Ralph and Ruth Merritt, Jim and Sue Slay, and Jim and Jan McGuire. After about two months, the group moved to the Elda Elementary School, and in another two years to 2846 Hamilton-Cleves Road, the present location of Ross Bible Chapel.

Elders have been Wayne Schlichter, Brack Strong, Fred Patton, Ralph Merritt, and Mike Smith. With a large children's work, Ross Bible Chapel has about 100 adults and children in attendance. The assembly has commended several to the work of the Lord.

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An assembly was formed in Toledo in 1950, a breakoff from a United Presbyterian Church. The assembly was originally located at 15th and Monroe Streets and called Christian Fellowship of Toledo. Waldo Yeager, Harold Vernier, and Herb Houck were among the principal people in the start-up.

In the 1980s, the assembly moved to Auburn and N. Cove, where it grew. From there, a group hived off in 1985, the remaining Christians taking a name similar to their old one: Toledo Christian Fellowship. That assembly continued to the late 1990s, when it disbanded, most of the Christians at that time joining with the group that had hived off.

The assembly that had hived off in 1985 moved into Southwest YMCA and took the name Christian Fellowship of Toledo South. In 1988 these Christians moved to their present location at 6711 Pilliod Road in Holland on the southwest side of Toledo. The assembly has commended several workers to the field at home and abroad. About 300 adults and youngsters are in Christian Fellowship of Toledo South. Leaders over the years in the two assemblies include, besides those mentioned, Ben Smith, Bill Wood, Gil Elliott, Dean Pilton, Paul Carter, Wally Yeager, Paul Delamater, Bill Webb, Don Bickford, and Lou Vasaturo.

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Believers Assembly in Bellbrook, just south of Dayton, began its birth process in July of 1975 with five believers meeting in the home of Rennes Bowers in Enon, a small town northeast of Dayton. Rennes Bowers III had been a hippie who was saved in 1974 and disciplined by Don Welborn in Iowa. He came to Ohio in 1975 to witness to his parents and others, and decided to stay and lead Bible studies. He was commended by assemblies in Iowa and began the work which is now called Believers Assembly.

In 1977, the Christians meeting in Bowers' home moved to Beaver Valley Road in Fairborn to accommodate growth and took the name Believers in Christ Jesus. The growing assembly moved through several locations in the Dayton area over the following 15 years – the Dayton City Mission, the Dayton Christian High School, a city recreation center, and the Fairborn Senior Citizens Center. From 1992 to the present, they have occupied their own chapel at 3821 Upper Bellbrook Road.

The first elders were recognized in 1979, and have included Rennes Bowers III, Rodney Geiger,

Mike Gaynier, and Dwight McMahan. Believers Assembly has commended several to the Lord's work abroad. About 35 adults and children are now in the assembly, though at one time more than 100 were in Believers Assembly.

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Sources:

Questionnaire Responses

Letters of Interest, August 1945, pp. 11; June 1948, p. 18; November 1953, p. 3; January 1956, p. 19; June 1959, p. 11; July 1961, p. 8

Random & Reminiscence, by Theodore Williams, Sr.; self-published, undated

Michigan

Detroit had no assembly testimony until around 1880. T.D.W. Muir lived in Hamilton, Ontario and spent his time preaching the Gospel in Ontario and in towns in the central part of Michigan. In 1881, he came to Detroit with his wife and they held street meetings in Cadillac Square, the downtown area of Detroit at that time. They met some Christian people and saw others led to the Lord.

These then formed a small assembly, the first in Michigan and later to be known as Central Gospel Hall. The first meeting room was located in a rented store at 5th Avenue and Michigan in the Corktown district of Detroit. The group was small and the people were in poor circumstances, so it was a constant struggle to meet expenses. They met in a variety of places over the next 20 years, even building and occupying a hall at the corner of Seventh and Perry Streets.

Each summer a tent was pitched and the Gospel was preached nightly. As the assembly grew larger, the Christians began to hold annual conferences. It was on the occasion of one of these conferences, perhaps in about 1889, that a small 'exclusive' assembly some 10 miles outside of Detroit came to seek fellowship with the Detroit assembly. Its people were French and had for some time conducted their meetings in their native tongue before switching to English. When they heard of the assembly in Detroit founded by Mr. Muir, they became associated with it.

By 1900, the assembly had moved to an auditorium over Dickinson's Hardware Store at 416 Grand River Avenue and continued there for several years. The group was calling their meeting place Central Gospel Hall by then. As the assembly grew it became necessary to seek more space. A hall was built at the corner of Grand River and Harrison Avenues and occupied in about 1906. It was a large hall with a balcony and a seating capacity of about 300, with a large Sunday School room downstairs.

It was at about this time that H.A. Cameron, a young medical doctor, came from Scotland and joined the fellowship. He was soon Mr. Muir's right hand man; Muir and Cameron were the two pillars of the work for many years. Muir's excellence as a preacher and knowledge of the Word attracted capacity crowds to the auditorium; on occasion the stairs up to the speaker's platform were used as seating when Mr. Muir spoke. Mr. Cameron was the exacting teacher, and was the person who encouraged Will Pell to begin publishing the *Assembly Annals* magazine and the Sunday School curriculum.

Detroit was growing rapidly in the early 1900s because of the automobile factories and the migration of many people from the British Isles and parts of Europe. Tracts were given out in various sections of the city and this resulted in a summer of tent meetings on the east side of Detroit in 1914. In 1917, Mr. Cyril Popplestone had a Sunday School in that area with 60 to 80 children in a tent. In November 1918, a new Gospel Hall was opened in the east side of Detroit. The outreach of the assembly included foreign missionary work; the first missionary commended was Miss Mary Ridley, who went to China and labored there many years.

One of the members of the assembly became interested in deaf people. For many years he conducted a Bible Class for deaf mutes in the balcony of Central Hall. A number of years later, a small assembly was formed for these Christians and met Sunday afternoons in the old Bethany Chapel (now Bethany-Pembroke Chapel in Detroit).

Tent meetings in the summer continued in various parts of the city. Special Gospel meetings were held during the year. A tract band was formed by the assembly, which reached out into the city and produced much fruit. The annual Conference of Christians was a high point in each year. Most of the local assemblies joined with Central Gospel Hall. For many years the conference was held in the Sank Temple on Grand River Avenue and as many as a thousand people attended. Some of the preachers over the years were Charles Ross, W. J. McClure, Mr. McCrory of Hamilton, Ontario, Leonard Sheldrake, William Robertson of Philadelphia, Andrew Stenhouse of Chile, John Ferguson, J. Alexander Clark, and many full-time preachers from Michigan, Ohio, and the Chicago area. These were times of blessings to the hearts of the Lord's people.

As the Christians moved away from the center of the city, other assemblies were started. In Ferndale, a northern suburb of Detroit, tent meetings were held in the summer of 1925; the Ferndale Gospel Hall started in November of 1926 and continues today. (See below for the Berean Tabernacle in Ferndale.)

Also in 1926, Sunday School and Sunday evening Gospel meetings were held in a store on the west side of Detroit called Springwells. At least a dozen young people were saved as a result of that work. It continued as an outreach of Central Gospel Hall but never became an independent assembly.

A fruitful series of Gospel meetings was held at Central in the spring of 1927. William Gillaspie and Fred Nugent, both from Ontario, were the evangelists. At least 30 young people came to the Lord and were added to the assembly.

A group of the Christians had settled in a neighborhood near West Chicago Boulevard and Livernois Avenue and became interested in their neighbors. In the summers of 1926 and 1927 they had tent meetings on West Chicago Boulevard and many were saved. An assembly was formed and a building was erected by the men of the assembly and called West Chicago Gospel Hall. They later moved to Livonia, a suburb of Detroit, to a larger building now called Stark Road Gospel Hall.

There was a large population of Italian people in the east side of Detroit. Young people from Central Gospel Hall became interested in helping there during summer tent meetings. Two Italian evangelists from the eastern United States, Mr. Rosanio and Mr. Patrizio, conducted meetings in Italian and English. A group of Christians was formed and became an assembly in October of 1931. As the young people grew, up the meetings were held mostly in English but the outreach was mostly among Italians. (See Ethnic section)

That same year, Mr. R. Hopwood of Central Hall who was fluent in Spanish began meetings in homes among the Mexican people in Detroit. A small assembly was started in 1926 and continued for a few years.

The town of Windsor, across the river from Detroit, in Canada, was growing and Christian people from overseas had come there to live. For a number of years they came over on Lord's Days for the meetings at Central Gospel Hall.

A real missionary spirit continued in Central over many years. Missionaries were commended and sent to various parts of the world. James and Olive Scollon were commended in 1938 to the work of the Lord in Honduras, South America. They continued working there for over 50 years, planting assemblies and carrying on an effective work in printing scriptural materials in the Spanish language.

During this period, the assembly held monthly 'Fellowship Meetings,' emphasizing missions and attracting well known speakers. Several young people at Central were exercised at that time about serving the Lord on the foreign mission fields. In 1946, Donald Cole was commended to go to Angola, along with his wife Naomi, who was commended from Central Hall in Toronto. They served there many years until civil war in Angola became too dangerous and the missionaries were evacuated. Others were commended to Sakeji School in Northern Rhodesia, Angola, Brazil, and Italy.

World War II was a time of serious prayer for the safety of the many young men from all Detroit assemblies who were serving their country. The young women at Central Hall made up a monthly newsletter to send to the servicemen, which included news of the boys who were overseas, as well as pictures and encouraging words.

After World War II, the Christians began to move to the outlying parts of the city. The brethren began to consider moving to a new location and an old church building was found at the corner of Curtis and Lenore Avenues. The assembly purchased it, tore it down, and erected the Curtis Gospel Chapel in northwest Detroit, which was dedicated in October 1957. Special Gospel meetings and summer Daily Vacation Bible Schools have continued, with many children coming from the neighborhood.

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In 1989, Faith Bible Chapel in Farmington Hills near Detroit was formed by some former members of Curtis Gospel Chapel. Mark and Carol Kieft, commended from Bethany Bible Chapel in Carmel, IN helped start Faith Bible Chapel, where they have served the Lord full time.

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Farmington Road Gospel Chapel in the Detroit area was built in the 1950s. The assembly continued into the 1970s.

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Jim Wallis and Don Fraser desired to start a new assembly in the Redford area of Detroit. Enlisting the help of four more couples, they began the work in a public school, with 50 people at the first service, at which time some were saved. Children's classes were also held on that day in 1951. Gifts and loans enabled them to build Dunning Park Chapel at 24800 West Chicago Boulevard; the assembly still meets at that location.

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The Midland Avenue Brethren in Detroit, meeting for many years at 10025 Midland Avenue, built a new chapel in 1953 on Burt Road and Pembroke Avenue, with a seating capacity of 320 in the main auditorium. The name chosen was Pembroke Chapel, now Bethany-Pembroke Chapel.

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The assembly meeting in the Dearborn Chapel in southwest Detroit at Nona and Hamilton Streets, constructed a large new building in the 1950s. The assembly continues at this time.

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The Martin Road Christian Assembly in St. Clair Shores, in the northeast Detroit metropolitan area, has its roots in a Sunday School work begun in 1916 or 1917. Cyril Popplestone started the Sunday School in his home on Bewick Street. A room in an empty store was later rented at the corner of Warren and Pennsylvania Streets for the growing Sunday school work.

Around 1919, John Ferguson, Sr., pitched a tent nearby at Warren and Cadillac Avenue for a month of Gospel meetings. The need for having a place for special meetings induced Mr. Hitt of Central Gospel Hall in Detroit to purchase a frame building, which was transported in sections to Forest and Pennsylvania Streets. The work of erecting the building was done with the help of numerous Christians, many of them from Central Gospel Hall. The building was used initially for the Sunday School work.

The building was very modest in appearance, being of collapsible construction and set on wooden pillars driven into the ground. The Christians were constantly concerned that these pillars might collapse and the building fall, especially when large crowds were present at special meetings.

About this time Don Charles had special meetings there. A number of people from the neighborhood came and several were converted. John Pinches also had a six-week series of meetings on the chart 'Two Roads and Two Destinies.' It was after those meetings that the assembly was formed in January 1924, and the building designated East Side Gospel Hall in Detroit. John Pinches from Central Gospel Hall came at that time into fellowship at East Side Gospel Hall. H.A. Cameron, T. D. W. Muir, and John Ferguson were among those who gave help at the new assembly.

Some of the early workers were the families of Cyril and Harry Popplestone, David McKay, Walter Lyons, John Pinches, William Upleger and Mabel Gibson Upleger, William Ingram, Cluot, Nell and Tress Bonser, James Brown, Gunda Anderson Ghiata, Elsie Benning Weinert,

Mabel Thompson Ross, Beatrice Mellick, Margaret Ingram Murdock, and William Smith. About 60 or 70 Christians were in fellowship in 1926.

During these years the assembly had tent meetings on Holcomb and Forest, a few blocks away. The tent was an attraction to the people who wouldn't come into a building. George Pinches, brother of John Pinches, had several weeks of Gospel meetings in the tent. Many were saved during a Gospel campaign held by Fred Nugent, which was held nightly for six weeks.

The district was changing rapidly and those who could afford it began moving to the suburbs. The Sunday School was dwindling. In about 1950, the Christians bought property on Harper Avenue at Woodhall in Detroit, erected a building, and called it Harwood Chapel. Italian brethren acquired the East Side Gospel Hall at that time. A very fruitful seven-week campaign was held in Harwood Chapel in 1952 by Pat Magee.

Harwood Chapel was a one story brick building without a basement. Soon it was too small for Sunday School work, and when the Ford Expressway was designed to come near, the assembly decided to move. They had spent about seven years at Harwood.

Property in Detroit was too expensive then, so the present site on Martin Road outside the city at St. Clair Shores was purchased and the Martin Road Gospel Chapel was built in 1958. A Sunday School bus was purchased to bring children to the Sunday School. Mr. Hewson from Salem Hall in Detroit (which assembly built Plymouth Road Chapel within a year or two), gave help in Gospel ministry. John and James Barclay were the first Gospel preachers at the Martin Road Christian Assembly.

Allan Bennett, Barry Mahloy, Eleanor Wylie, Robert Simpson, Lawrence Vroom, James Barclay, and John Smedes are among the many who have worked with the young people. John Smedes and Barry Mahloy with others did house-to-house visitation work in the neighborhood. Lou and Doreen Jerome, Jack Wylie, and Eleanor Wylie accompanied the spoken word with their singing on the Lapeer Radio. John Smedes and Lambert Wilson assisted in the work of the downtown Mission. Daniel Nichols served with the Spain Team of Literature Crusades.

A group left to start a new assembly in a Sterling Heights in 1976. Martin Road Christian Assembly is much smaller today; nevertheless, it is active. Christians from India have joined the assembly. Each week during fall, winter and spring, the Christians conduct a Girls Club and a Boys Club, and a Daily Vacation Bible School in the summer. The ladies continue to have a weekly Bible Study and a Monthly Missionary Work Meeting.

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Lakeside Bible Chapel in Sterling Heights on the north side of Detroit began in 1976 as a hive-off from Martin Road Gospel Chapel. Six families from that assembly were instrumental in its formation. Meeting first at the Graebner Elementary School, land for a chapel was purchased in 1978, and the building was finished in 1980. An expansion of the building was completed in 1990, and more land was purchased in 1997. Robert Johnston is the full-time worker at Lakeside. Average attendance at the Family Bible Hour was about 275 in 1997. The assembly has

commended workers to the Lord's service in the U.S., Spain, India, and Colombia.

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C.V. Baby, with John M.Chacko and a few other believers, started meeting for Bible studies in 1978 in Warren, MI. This led to the formation of the India Believers Gathering. The assembly is now known as India Brethren Assembly. (See Ethnic section)

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The Middle Eastern Bible Fellowship in Detroit began in March 1991, when a group of men and women of Arabic descent, including Ata and Salwa Mikhael, Raphael and Renee Haddad, and Philippe Yacoub, gathered to Remember the Lord. (See Ethnic section)

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Black assemblies have historically been strong in the Detroit area, thanks in large part to B.M. Nottage. In 1956 these were Bethany Tabernacle, the home assembly of B.M. Nottage and established in 1932; Grace Tabernacle; Berean Tabernacle in the Ferndale area; River Rouge Bible Assembly in the River Rouge area; Community Tabernacle; Gospel Chapel of Detroit; and Oakdale Tabernacle.

The River Rouge Bible Assembly in Detroit had its start in 1933 when William McHenry began a Bible class in his home on Polk Street. Initially the group met from house to house, later renting a room in the McFall Funeral Home on Palmerston. Among those involved in the very beginning were Sisters Smoot, Folks, Douglas, and Larkins.

In 1934, a store front was rented from Mrs. Collier on Polk and Hall. Then the group moved to the home of Stanley Lamar. During this time, various men came to help minister the Word, including Brothers T. Williams, John Glover, Nottage, and McDonald.

A chapel at 332 Polk Street was completed in 1947, and the assembly met there for many years. A building fund was started in 1959 for purchase of property on Beechwood. River Rouge Bible Assembly was formally incorporated that year. Plans were laid in 1962 to build, and the new chapel at 329 Beechwood was dedicated in 1967.

The assembly has been led by several pastors, beginning with John Glover in 1937, followed by Stanley Lamar in 1938, John Moore in 1959, Timothy Love in 1962, and Pellam Love in 1982.

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A Baptist pastor in Detroit, Theodore Williams, Sr. became exercised about his denominational position, and in 1936 resigned his pastorate. Soon thereafter he came in contact with B. M. Nottage, through whom he learned of assemblies meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. That same year, he and a small company of believers began Breaking Bread together in a canvas tent in the Ferndale area of Detroit. Called the Berean Tabernacle, the assembly was begun by Mr. Williams and another brother, with assistance from two brothers from Bethany Gospel Hall in Detroit. Soon they had erected their own building on Reimanville Avenue.

The Flint Bible Hall was started at about the same time. Between 1936 and 1945, Mr. Williams had weekly radio programs on various Detroit, Flint, and Pontiac stations.

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In April 1939, a group of Christians established the Pilgrim Assembly in Detroit and moved into their first church home. In 1946, they incorporated as the Gospel Chapel of Detroit. Increasing numbers impelled them to move into larger quarters on Gratiot Avenue in 1951. In 1977, they moved to a building on East Grand Boulevard, and moved again into their present facility at 16241 Harper Avenue. Leading brothers have included Regan Wright, Julius Rivera, Arkles C. Brooks, Sr., and later his son Arkles C. Brooks, Jr. each of whom have served as assembly pastors. The assembly consists of about 100 adults and youngsters.

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The congregation now meeting at the Metropolitan Community Tabernacle in Detroit came into existence on Armistice Day, 1923. It functioned as an independent community church for many years. In about 1940, under the leadership of John E. Glover and B.M. Nottage, it came into fellowship with assemblies of brethren. Known for many years as Community Tabernacle, at Cameron and Wellington Streets, the assembly moved in 1985 to a building at 9835 Hayes and remodeled it, calling it Metropolitan Community Tabernacle. William James Coleman was the full-time worker at Metropolitan for many years, and known for his Bible teaching ministry. He was jointly commended in 1966 by the six black assemblies then existing in Detroit. Metropolitan Community Tabernacle has recognized elders.

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Grace Chapel in Detroit, formerly Grace Tabernacle, is another fruit of the labors of B.M. Nottage in the 1930s. When Ken Hampton left the Detroit police force to become the full-time worker for the assembly in 1980, it had about 50 people regularly attending. In 1987, the assembly purchased a church building with a 600-seat auditorium; within a year, up to 500 people were attending Grace Chapel, which had three Sunday morning services and a Sunday evening Lord's Supper. The active church sponsors a radio program, is involved in food and clothing distribution, and has several youth programs and an active music program.

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Smith's Creek Bible Camp, initiated by Grant Love and supported by the Detroit black assemblies, provides summer camp grounds for youngsters. Another such group is at Muskegon and is known as the West Side Grace Mission.

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The assembly now known as Dexter Street Gospel Chapel in Flint began in about 1910 when James Turfus moved from Sterling, MI to Flint. Meetings were held in the home of Freddie Coombs. Robert Kersey was also involved in the earliest days. Tent meetings along the Flint River are remembered from those days. After the home meetings, the group moved to space over a drug store at 912 Richfield Road (now Lewis Street). The group seems to have taken the name

Gospel Hall Mission at that time. In 1921, the meeting place was moved to downtown Flint, over a dime store, and became known then as Central Gospel Hall.

Early leaders were George McBain, Archie Smith, Meldrum Allen, George Garret, and George Youmans. Brothers who have helped in the assembly include Ross Rainey, Robert Johnston, George Pirie, and Donald Wellborn. Preachers in the early days of the assembly included Thomas Dobbin, T.D.W. Muir, and Dan McGeachy.

In 1932, the assembly moved to Davison Road Gospel Hall in Flint, at 3229 Davison Road. In 1955, the assembly built Dexter Street Gospel Chapel on the corner of Dexter Street and Dale Avenue. William Pell and Walter Jensen spoke at the dedication in March 1956. Elders serving then and since include Samuel Lynch, Claud DeWitt, William Stewart, Joseph Porter, James Turfus, Stuart Turfus, and Larry Lambert. About 40 adults are in fellowship in 1998.

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The assembly now meeting at Civic Heights Bible Chapel in Flint started in about 1913 in a home. The principals in starting and maintaining it from then until the 1930s were Thomas Lloyd, Thomas Gordon, Robert Irvine, Charles Smith, Thomas Lennox, David Kirkcaldy, Edward Vall, Jim Jackson, Robert Black, William Mackie, John Jackson, Roy Nelson, Thomas Kane, and Andrew Richardson, and their families. Subsequent leaders include Andrew Mackie, Archie Anderson, Joseph Black, Jack Wilson, Ed Bills, Fred Brown, Arthur Randall, Earle McGarvah, and Gerald Sanders.

When the Christians outgrew the home, they rented a building until 1926 when they built and occupied a new building at 601 E. Pasadena Avenue, taking the name Hebron Hall. In the 1930s they renamed it Pasadena Avenue Gospel Hall, and then Pasadena Avenue Gospel Chapel. In 1964 the assembly moved for one year to Flint Christian School while their new Civic Heights Bible Chapel, at 3610 Wisner Street in Flint was being constructed.

By 1984, neighborhood violence induced the Christians to sell the building. They met for a year at the Genesee Valley Mall auditorium, then decided to disperse to two other assemblies – Dexter Street Gospel Chapel in Flint and Countryside Bible Chapel in Owosso, near Flint – rather than re-form their own. The funds from the sale of the building were used to establish the Civic Heights Bible Chapel Foundation, which contributed to many Christian ministries for a number of years. The assembly commended several to the Lord's work at home and abroad.

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Countryside Bible Chapel in Owosso began in 1958, an outgrowth of a children's work, and deriving from Pasadena Avenue Gospel Chapel in Flint. Roy Nelson, William LeCureux, and Sam Lynch were among those starting the assembly and have been involved in leadership along with Robert Tissot and others. The assembly has commended workers to serve at Bair Lake Bible Camp.

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T.D.W. Muir, with William Garnham, pitched his tent at Saginaw, north of Flint, in 1886. A few souls were saved at that time and the Saginaw assembly was likely planted in about 1887. In 1888, James Kay was encouraged to move to Saginaw by Mr. Muir, and remained there doing extensive evangelistic work in the area until his home call in 1901.

The Christians comprising the assembly first met in a rented building on the corner of Ames and Harrison Streets, the first Saginaw Gospel Hall. Later they moved to a building on Hamilton Street, then to a building on the corner of Madison and Fayette Streets, then in about 1938, to a building on the corner of Throop and Porter Streets. In 1945, the assembly built a new hall, known as the Madison Street Gospel Hall on the corner of Madison and Porter Streets in Saginaw, and has been at that location since.

Leaders in the assembly over the years include Joseph Pocket, John William, Edward S. Williams, and Mathew McDonald. The assembly has commended John Govan to the work of the Lord.

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The Sturgis Bible Chapel began sometime prior to World War II and still continues. It expanded twice in the 1940s and 50s to accommodate the growing attendance at both Sunday school and adult meetings.

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Coldwater Bible Chapel, about 15 miles north of the Indiana state line, was established in 1955 by the families of Robert Branch, Elmer Anderson, and Dak Warner. It was a hive-off of the Sturgis Bible Chapel some 25 miles away. First meeting at a location on U.S. Highway 12 between Coldwater and Quincy, it now meets at 120 South Jefferson in Coldwater. Those active in leadership have been, in addition to the above, Ted and Nancy Hadfield, Terry and Connie Vercruysse, Tom and Phyllis Duke, and Phil and Dixie Hoard. About 20 adults and children attend the assembly.

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In 1932, James Noall from Detroit held a series of meetings in an old schoolhouse four miles north of Sheridan, a small town northeast of Grand Rapids. Cecil Starks walked to those meetings from his home in Sheridan; there he heard the gospel and received Christ. Shortly after, in early 1933, an assembly was started in the home of the Starks. Charles Frisbey and the Pell family from Grand Rapids also helped in establishing the Sheridan assembly. The principal leaders over the years have included Clayton Baldwin, Bert Starks, Cecil Starks, and Wayne Beard.

In 1934, an old house in Sheridan was purchased for the meetings and called the Sheridan Gospel Hall. In 1940, a chapel was built at 124 N. Main Street, and since then the assembly has been called Sheridan Bible Chapel.

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The city of Muskegon lies on the shores of Lake Michigan. The Muskegon Gospel Chapel at Allen and Oak Grove, was constructed in about 1953 in a new residential neighborhood in a well-equipped and attractive building. This assembly disbanded in 1990.

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In the early 1900s, an assembly of Christians existed in Montague, north of Muskegon. The assemblies at that time tended to follow the railroad line: Montague, Muskegon, Grand Haven, Grand Rapids. A Mr. Meinert, for whom a county park and street are named, was one of the leading brethren in the assembly at Montague. Probably known as the Montague Gospel Hall, long since disbanded, the old building still stands.

In about 1970, a group of Christians with charismatic leanings began meeting in Whitehall, near Montague. After a time, some of them expressed an interest in joining with the brethren movement, and invited Ed and Peg Burdick, commended from Dunning Park Chapel in Detroit, to help them. The Burdicks came in the 1980s, knowing the situation, but after a few years, they realized they were not helping assembly to grow. The assembly was called White Lake Fellowship during that period.

The Burdicks, with Gary and Jan Seaver, Mel and Lois Rykse, Jay and Eva Lou Larman, and Jay and Becky Vander Laan, left that church in 1991 to form Friendship Bible Chapel in Montague. White Lake Fellowship disbanded soon after that. The assembly at Muskegon Gospel Chapel had also disbanded at about that time, and some of the Christians from there joined with Friendship Bible Chapel. The assembly first met in the Seaver's home, and now meets in the Montague City Building.

The assembly has commended Mel and Lois Rykse to Operation Mobilization. Ed Burdick is a full-time worker at Friendship Bible Chapel, and Peg Burdick is president of Winning Women for Christ. About 30 to 40 adults and youngsters attend Friendship Bible Chapel on Sundays.

Bair Lake Bible Camp and Upper Peninsula Bible Camp are the two brethren-sponsored Bible Camps in Michigan. Jack and Carol Long of Friendship Bible Chapel have been commended to work with those camps.

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At Holland, southwest of Grand Rapids, the origins of the Holland Gospel Chapel are now lost from memory. Some have called it the Wielenga Assembly because of the prominence of the Wielenga family. The assembly met on East 14th Street prior to 1954. In that year, the Christians moved to their current location at 106 W. 26th Street. Other leaders over the years include Henry Ebelink, Simon Dogger, and James Derks. The assembly meeting at Holland Gospel Chapel has commended workers to Japan, Ireland, Turkey, and Mexico. About 100 are in the assembly.

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In 1998, a hive-off of the Holland Gospel Chapel formed an assembly in Burnips, a rural town

east of Holland. Dave and Arleen Nyhof, and Bernie and Lil Nyhof have leadership roles there. The Burnips Assembly is characterized by the presence of several home schooling families. The home school network is active among the believers in western Michigan.

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From 1911 through 1914, evangelists T. Dobbin, R. McCrory, T. Touzeau, and T.D.W. Muir held tent and cottage meetings in Jackson, in the mid-southern part of the state. In 1914, as a result of these efforts, the Jackson assembly began in the home of Charles Atkinson. Among the early members of the assembly were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Atkinson, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Schilling, Archie Martin, and Elma Smith. The Christians later moved to a small rented building at 1325 East North Street. In 1946, they purchased a building at 910 Bennett Street, the present location of the assembly, and held the first meeting there in 1949. The meeting places have collectively been called the Jackson Gospel Hall.

Charles Atkinson, Archie Martin, Nick Sarlo, and Douglas Losey are among the leaders over the years. Lorne McBain and Norman Crawford are itinerant workers who have lived in Jackson and been active in the assembly. Other preachers working in the area have included William Ferguson, William Warke, A. Klabunda, Archie Stewart, Oliver MacLeod. The Jackson Assembly has commended a worker to Puerto Cabelo, Venezuela. About 38 were in fellowship in the Jackson Gospel Hall in 1946, and about 75 in 1989.

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The North Adams Gospel Hall was started at nearby North Adams in 1932 by the efforts of brethren Stewart, McBain, and Klabunda. About 20 believers gathered to Remember the Lord at their first meeting. About 100 came to a special meeting later in that year. Memory has lost further details of this assembly, which disbanded long ago.

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Other Michigan assemblies which have been started through those associated with the Jackson testimony are Battle Creek Gospel Hall (1918), Sterling Gospel Hall (1919), Midland Gospel Hall (1919), Deckerville Gospel Hall (1920), Boyne City Gospel Hall (1922), Ubly Gospel Hall (1928), Franklyn Mines (Laurium) Gospel Hall (1935), Alpena Gospel Hall (1938), Sherman Gospel Hall (1954), and Ceresco Gospel Hall (1968).

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The present Sherman Gospel Hall was planted by Fred Mehl in 1954. Originally in the village of Mesick, and known as the Mesick Gospel Hall, it moved to its present location in Sherman in the northwest portion of the Lower Peninsula in 1959. Some Christians from the disbanded assembly at Cadillac joined with the Sherman Gospel Hall. Others involved in the start-up were Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Spencer, Olive Spencer, Crystal Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Marvin, Anthony Clouse, and Mrs. P. Oswald. Those active in leadership have been Lloyd Spencer, Chancy Spencer, David Spencer, Thomas Spencer; Robert Nielson, Arthur Phillips, William Armstrong, and Stuart Thompson. About 35 adults and youngsters are in the assembly today.

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The assembly known now as Rock Bible Chapel got its start in 1951 as a Sunday School work conducted by John Small at the town hall in the small town of Rock on the Upper Peninsula. In 1952, the Smalls built their home in Rock and held assembly meetings there for three years. Then in 1956, the Smalls built a chapel on the lot next to their home, and the work has been called Rock Bible Chapel since then. Benjamin Yeadon took principal responsibility for the work from 1968 until his death in 1998. William Ducote and Mike Lepisco have also shared leadership. About 125 adults and youngsters are in the assembly today.

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The Pelkie Gospel Hall in the Upper Peninsula, began in 1981. Many of the Christians who formed the assembly had been saved through the Gospel outreach of the Christians at Lake Linden Avenue Gospel Hall in Laurium, about 25 miles north. The leaders have been Eugene Maki, Hugo Kemppainen, Kenneth Sohlden, and Samuel McClung, who were also involved in the start-up of the assembly. Joe Balsan, an itinerant preacher from Des Moines, was also one of those starting the assembly. Mark Martinmaki also preached in the Pelkie area. About 30 adults and children are in the assembly.

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Asamblea Evangelica in Grand Rapids began in 1995 in the home of Ricardo and Diana Tavarez home. The Christians moved after that to 635 South Division, where they currently meet. The Spanish-speaking assembly consists of Christians from Guatemala, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, as well as the U.S. (See Ethnic section)

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The roots of the assembly presently at Forest Hills Bible Chapel in Grand Rapids go back to 1899. Messrs. Tazelaar, Krone, and Vander Muelen had visited Fred Wunsch in Lowell, a town east of Grand Rapids. Fred was the father of Gerald Wunsch and was in fellowship in an assembly that these men had heard about. They asked him for help in starting an assembly in Grand Rapids. Shortly, a group began meeting to Remember the Lord in one of their homes. At the end of 1900, the growing group purchased a small building at 272 N. College Avenue, and this became the College Avenue Gospel Hall.

John Van Kammen, the father of Mrs. Betty Wunsch, emigrated from the Netherlands to Grand Rapids as a young man in 1902, and was saved while attending meetings at College Avenue Gospel Hall.

By 1925, the College Avenue Gospel Hall was too small, and the assembly purchased and moved into another building at the corner of Eastern and Baldwin in Grand Rapids and named it the Eastern Avenue Gospel Hall and later the Eastern Avenue Gospel Chapel. However, it was usually called either the 'Eastern and Baldwin Assembly,' and sometimes the 'Van Ryn Assembly' because it was the home assembly of the Van Ryns who had moved to Grand Rapids from the Netherlands. August Van Ryn itinerated among area assemblies in the years he lived in Grand Rapids.

Cornelia DeJonge, commended by the Eastern and Baldwin assembly in 1925, was the first missionary to go out from West Michigan; she served in Africa. In 1951, Gerald and Betty Wunsch were commended by the assembly to the Lord's work in New Guinea. They served the Lord for 41 years as missionaries in that country.

Harry Ironside had an evangelistic campaign at the Gospel Hall in 1926, well remembered because of the number, young and old, who were saved. He, C.J. Scofield, and many other well-known speakers visited the assembly regularly. The Eastern and Baldwin assembly and its forerunner was a 'Grant exclusive' assembly until the 1930s. Peter Pell Sr., father of ten children including Peter Pell Jr. and Will Pell (who began Gospel Folio Press around the year 1925), attended the assembly for a time. Harry Ironside baptized Peter and Will by immersion there. He asked Will, "Are you dead?" Will knew enough to answer in the affirmative, and then Ironside said, "Good, because I only bury dead people." Later young Peter would travel and preach with Ironside.

After breaking with the Grants, the assembly joined in fellowship with the 'open' meetings in Grand Rapids. During the course of years, it has taken a more progressive stance. Russell Van Ryn was a conscientious shepherd through the 1970s and 1980s. In 1975, the assembly moved to the suburbs and changed its name to Forest Hills Bible Chapel.

Kevin Dyer and Don Cole visited there periodically. Many missionaries have gone out from Forest Hills. Gerald and Betty Wunsch were honored by the government of Papua New Guinea for their work. Forest Hills has been active with Upper Peninsula Bible Camp where Russ and Ruth VanRyn worked as directors many summers.

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During the thirties, there was a great reaping in Grand Rapids. Peter and Will Pell largely held the same doctrines as H.A. Ironside; they worked with M.R. DeHaan in his early days; they also were great friends with Mel Trotter of Rescue Mission fame. These men, with David Otis Fuller were greatly used to shake Grand Rapids and to make it a kind of hub of evangelical and fundamentalist work. Peter and Will were active open-air preachers in those days.

A brother named Kramer had moved to Grand Rapids from Kansas. He was a strict 'exclusive' and a very careful Bible student. Peter and Will Pell both attended Kramer's Bible readings, and Peter was especially influenced. However, Mr. Kramer's assembly never received Peter or Will Pell into their fellowship.

Will Pell went to Bay City to a Bible Conference he had heard about and there met 'open' brethren preachers such as John Ferguson and Leonard Sheldrake. He found the believers in Bay City to be sound in faith and practice. The Pells after that identified with the 'open' assemblies. About that time an assembly began in Mr. Sharporn's woodworking shop behind his house in Grand Rapids. Later Will bought a building, which was called the Evangel Hall, for the assembly. In about 1958, the assembly moved to the present Northwest Gospel Hall at the corner of Garfield and Myrtle on the northwest side of Grand Rapids.

From Northwest Gospel Hall several missionaries have gone out or have been jointly commended – to Mexico, Japan, India, Columbia, and Paraguay

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A hive-off from Northwest Gospel Hall occurred in 1985 when Mr. and Mrs. John Sawyer and Mr. and Mrs. Karl Rewa joined with George and Nancy Sturm in order to establish an assembly in Allendale, west of Grand Rapids, called Fellowship Bible Chapel. The Rewas and Sturms were both trained through the Discipleship Intern Training Program at Fairhaven in California, and therefore followed much of the emphasis of Jean Gibson and Bill MacDonald at the first. This work, though small, goes on. At the start it was enlarged through outreach to Grand Valley State University in Allendale. Bob and Lois Sawyer came in about 1987 and during that time the assembly saw its greatest gains. Bob Sawyer was a roommate of Jim Elliott in his Wheaton College days; he and his wife Lois were of great help to the many young converts. In 1988 they responded to an invitation to help a missionary family in Spain and labored there for seven years. The Sturms went to Albania in 1992.

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The Burke Street Assembly in Grand Rapids began in 1991, springing up from among the many home schooling families in Grand Rapids. Most of the initial families did not have an assembly background, coming rather from Baptist, Reformed, charismatic, and independent church backgrounds. There are about 10 households in the Burke Street Assembly, which presently rents space in a Christian School. John Bjorlie, Sid Patten, and Larry Baker are the elders.

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Bailey is north of Grand Rapids and Newaygo is nine miles north of Bailey. The assembly meeting for many years at Newaygo Gospel Chapel moved to Bailey in the early 1980s. After a division, some of the believers joined with the Bailey Gospel Chapel and others formed the Newaygo Believer's Bible Chapel.

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James Kay had close links to the beginnings of the assemblies at Deckerville, Bay City, Midland, and Standish. A Mr. Morris was influential in starting the Cass City Assembly. Alex McDonald and Dan McGeachy are linked with testimonies at Bad Axe, Ubly, and Deckerville. An assembly at East Lansing goes back to the early pioneers; it has relocated to Williamston. An assembly in Kalamazoo, going back to earlier days, built a new hall in about 1949, but has since discontinued. The Schoolcraft Assembly in Detroit was originally a French meeting.

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