

U.S. – Northeast

This section contains New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

New Jersey

Terrill Road Bible Chapel in Fanwood has an illustrious history. By the year 1870, a small group of 15 or 20 believers were gathering together in assembly fellowship in Plainfield. Of the original company, only one name is remembered, that of Louis Rhéaume. Mrs. Elie Loizeaux was a step- daughter of his.

Later in the 1880s, Paul and Timothy Loizeaux with their families moved to Plainfield and met with this small group. They were the founders of the Bible Truth Depot, later known as Loizeaux Brothers Publishers. At about this time F.C. Jennings, a gifted writer and teacher, joined with the group. The assembly grew and the Lord blessed. A little later, J.D. Loizeaux, the Perrins, the Hardinghams, and the Maugers came into fellowship.

Toward the end of the 1880s, F.W. Grant, the well known assembly leader and writer, came to Plainfield with his family and took his place among this group. (F.W. Grant's sons, Fred and Frank, and some members of the Loizeaux family, were associated with a similar assembly in nearby Berkeley Heights – the Berkeley Heights Gospel Hall – which continued until World War II.) F.W. Grant produced *The Numerical Bible* while in Plainfield. Miss Emily Farmer, who assisted C.I. Scofield in the preparation of his well known reference Bible, was also in the assembly for many years. During these years, the assembly was known as Bible Truth Hall in Plainfield, but was usually called the Front Street Meeting, denoting its location in downtown Plainfield at 331 E. Front Street.

Soon after the turn of the century, Samuel Ridout, another well known author, came to Plainfield with his family, and came into fellowship. F.W. Grant and Samuel Ridout were successive editors of *Help and Food*. The Front Street Meeting was quite large at this time. After Mr. Ridout died in 1930, John Bloore assumed the editorship of *Help and Food* for twelve years. He perhaps more than anyone else was used to break down some of the party lines among brethren. The Front Street Meeting had been in the 'exclusive' camp, and with Mr. Bloore's and others' efforts, became an 'open' meeting.

Others in the meeting in the first half of the 1900s were James Parker; Hughes Fawcett; P. Daniel, Elie, Alfred, and Parker Loizeaux, the sons of Timothy Loizeaux; Fred and Frank Grant, the sons of F.W. Grant; the Armerding family; the Loughs; Carvers; Inglis Fleming; Ferdinand French; Walter Temple; and for a time, John Smart and R.E. Harlow. Those who ministered at the assembly comprise a veritable Who's Who among the brethren.

Hillside Cemetery, located on the border of Scotch Plains and Plainfield, stands today as a

memorial of many saints, including those listed. Their tombstones stand as a great tribute to God's Word. The entrance of this cemetery is graced by the markers of three of the original Loizeaux family, whose inscriptions are written in French.

The Front Street Meeting built a new chapel in the neighboring town of Fanwood in 1957 and since then has been called the Terrill Road Bible Chapel. Others in leadership over the years include John Reid, Phillip Carter, John French, Ledley Perrin, Douglas Haggan, Robert Hansen, and William Patterson. The assembly has commended several people to the work of the Lord in Puerto Rico, to itinerant ministry, to Emmaus Bible College, and other areas. Terrill Road has about 110 adults and youngsters in attendance at this time.

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The assembly that meets today at Cedarcroft Bible Chapel in South Plainfield has its roots in the Front Street Meeting, discussed above. In late 1898 or early 1900, several men with their families left that 'exclusive' assembly and started an open meeting in a storefront – the Liberty Street Assembly. Among these were F.C. Jennings, Sydney Perrin, Walter Hardingham, Joshua D. Loizeaux, Nathan Saunders, and Nicholas and Edward Mauger.

The Baehr family moved from Bronx, NY to Plainfield in 1912. A couple named Platts lived across the street from the Baehrs and sent Mr. Perrin to visit them. He told the Baehrs about the Sunday School at Liberty Street, and the parents realized this was the place they had been looking for. This was in 1918. Conrad Baehr and his wife Myrtle later became missionaries to China.

Mr. Perrin, the son of W. L. Perrin who owned an insurance company in New York, was a Sunday School superintendent; he picked up the children and bought bus or trolley car tickets for others who lived further away. Joshua D. Loizeaux took young people to the local rescue mission to help in the assembly ministries there.

Later, the Christians moved to a larger building and became the Washington Avenue Gospel Hall in Plainfield. For many years, F.C. Jennings had a Tuesday evening Bible class at the Westfield Assembly, which was a hive-off from the Washington Avenue Meeting. He would walk the five to seven miles to Westfield for these classes, and take transportation home.

In the 1930s, the Washington Avenue Meeting moved to the Grove Street Chapel in North Plainfield. They remained there until buying property and building a chapel on Kenyon Avenue in South Plainfield in 1965, calling it Cedarcroft Bible Chapel. Leading brothers over the years at Grove Street/Cedarcroft include Frank Biffen, Rufus Hummel, James Van Duzer, Alfred Guzzetti, and many others. Kingsley Baehr is a resident worker for the assembly.

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When the Front Street Meeting broke from the 'exclusive' camp in the 1930s, ties between the two Plainfield meetings became strong, and there was much interaction between them. They formed monthly missionary meetings in Plainfield, alternating responsibility for the meetings.

They fellowshiped regularly together for a number of years until the Front Street Meeting moved to Fanwood. The William Deans family, who had ties with both the Front Street and Grove Street meetings, left for Africa as missionaries in 1929, with a send-off from both assemblies. In 1940, the Front Street Meeting procured a printing press for the Deans in the Congo, with which to print Christian literature.

Captain Barlow, who had been a sea captain, became the New York dock captain of the Cunard Line and did much to help many missionaries with transportation and in other ways as well. He also helped start a monthly missionary meeting, probably in the early thirties, in a small meeting in Elizabeth. A light supper was served and missionary letters were read, followed by a prayer meeting. The monthly missionary meeting outgrew the chapel in Elizabeth and was moved to the larger Kenilworth Gospel Chapel (see below) with the same format, and attended by a sizable number of people from many different New Jersey assemblies.

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The roots of Woodside Chapel in Fanwood go back to the time of Walter W. Gill, who came to Westfield from Iowa to practice dentistry in the early 1900s. Mr. Gill was converted in 1918 at a Billy Sunday meeting. He longed to share the Gospel with others and began teaching in the church he attended in Westfield. Unfortunately, his message was unwanted and he was denounced for sharing God's truth. He did, however, find a group meeting in Plainfield who believed as he did – the Washington Avenue Gospel Hall – and he began to fellowship there.

He began a Sunday School in a Norwegian section of Westfield. The group met in various homes, including the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Hansen. Some were brought to the Lord through this effort, which was followed in 1921 by evangelistic tent meetings in that area. Mr. Hugh McEwen of Philadelphia came as the evangelist and God answered prayer in the salvation of several of these Scandinavian people. The new converts formed the nucleus of the Westfield Assembly. They rented an upstairs room on Elm Street in Westfield in 1924 and began meeting together for the preaching of God's Word, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

For the next twenty eight years these believers met in four different locations in Westfield, seeking to serve the Lord in any way they could. Evangelistic meetings were frequent. A.P. Gibbs used his slides to present the Gospel to children. Many were saved. A small rented store on Cacciola Place provided a spot for gathering children on Friday nights to hear and learn the Scriptures.

In the late 1940s, the YMCA in Westfield was used as a meeting place, but as it did not provide good facilities for Sunday School or Gospel meetings, the group began looking in earnest for their own quarters. God finally provided property in 1951 on Morse Avenue in Fanwood. Woodside Chapel opened its doors in January 1952. Following the passing of Walter Gill, his son John (Jack) Gill faithfully led and shepherded this assembly until his home call in the early 1990s.

In 1954, the adjacent corner lot was made available and purchased. A year later the chapel was

extended to twice its length and the basement and two classrooms were finished. In 1959 and 1960, the nursery, foyer, and side classrooms were added. A new auditorium was built a decade later under the able supervision of James Perrin.

Many godly men and women shared in this outreach to the neighborhood over the years, such as Albert and Arthur Mayer. Many well known servants of the Lord have been commended from Woodside, including Len Brooks, Ed Christensen, Jack Fish, Fred Kosin, and James Stahr. Present elders are David Brooks, George Dick, Eugene Graber, John Jeffers, and Alan Schetelich.

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Henry W. Redfield had been active in a denominational church in Tarrytown, New York. By the late 1870s, he had become concerned over what he felt was an unbiblical system in the church he attended. After reading the Scriptures for many months, he became convinced that he would have to take an independent position where scriptural methods and principles could be applied. A series of letters dating from 1877 set out his convictions, essentially the same as those held by the brethren, though he knew nothing of the assembly movement.

By 1882, the Redfields had moved across the Hudson River to Closter, a community in the northeastern corner of New Jersey. Mr. Redfield and his wife invited a few friends to join them in a simple observance of the Lord's Supper, and thus an assembly was born, probably the second oldest in the state, Bible Truth Hall in Plainfield being the oldest. Harvey Wadham was also involved in establishing the assembly.

Just before the turn of the century, when several key families in the assembly were about to move a few miles south to Tenafly, it was decided to relocate the assembly to that village. The Remembrance Meeting was held in a rented library room. The Christians called their meeting place Tenafly Hall. The Sunday School met in the railroad station. The assembly was incorporated under New Jersey law in 1908. The assembly later moved to its own building – Washington Hall.

The Christians were energetic and evangelistic. Tent meetings brought many in. Others were reached through an unusual form of evangelism – some of the men conducted daily Bible classes on the commuter trains during the long ride to New York City.

Through the years there has been a steady outreach in evangelism, missions, and humanitarian service. Alfred A. Kunz, one of the elders, founded and directed the Pocket Testament League. Missionaries were sent to Angola and Italy. In 1972, Henry Redfield, Jr. became one of the founding directors of El Nathan Home, then in Buffalo and now in Missouri.

The assembly now meets at Grace Chapel at West Clinton Avenue and Tenafly Road. Elders have included Alfred Kunz, Robert Watson, and Charles Steinhof, among many others.

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A few miles north of Newark is Kearny. The original thoughts about an assembly in Kearny

began in 1892, at a time when there was a very small meeting in Newark. Some of the brethren in fellowship in the Newark Assembly decided to hold tent meetings in the town of Kearny. When people responded, the brothers not only desired to establish an assembly there, but to develop a children's work. The assembly moved through several rented buildings in the next several years and was subjected to persecution from 'rowdies,' as they called their antagonists. In March 1898, a small Sunday School work began in a home.

The assembly eventually located in the Good News Chapel in Kearny, which they apparently owned. A Mr. Spencer is considered the founder of the assembly, along with Mr. John Thomson Sr. Others who helped in the work were Mr. Oliver, Mr. Miller from Portland, OR, Mr. Wilson from Willimantic, CT, and Mr. Lyon from Great Britain, who arrived in 1903.

In about 1910, the meeting place was called the Kearny Gospel Hall. At some point, a separation into two groups occurred. One group took the name Kearny Gospel Chapel and the other reverted to the name Good News Chapel. Both groups were in Kearny.

In 1979, the two works recombined into one, and the building originally housing Kearny Gospel Chapel was sold to a day care center, and the newer building that housed Good News Chapel was renovated and the work became known as Kearny Bible Chapel. The assembly continues with this name and location.

Others who have shared leadership over the years include Messrs. Shearer, John Thomson Jr., Robert Gardner Sr. George Green, George MacLachlin, Robert Turner, William Watson, Robert Gourley, John Henderson, Sal Cristo, Lawson Mitchell, Jay Allen, and Thomas J. Turner. The assembly has commended workers to Africa, Spain, and Russia. About 100 adults and children attend Kearny Bible Chapel.

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Kenilworth Gospel Chapel has an interesting history because of its involvement with the beginning of the borough of Kenilworth.

In the late 1800s, commercial development in the area west of Newark and south of Orange was underway. A clothing company was one of the largest moving into the area, employing several hundred people. But these all lived in New York City, and transportation was a real problem. So the clothing company decided to have a residential area built in what was then called the New Orange Industrial Park, and sought bids for the development and construction of 100 homes. The successful bidder was the construction company owned by James Arthur of Philadelphia.

Mr. Arthur arrived in 1898 with a group of construction men, and these men with their families and a few already living in the area, were the founders of the borough of Kenilworth. But Mr. Arthur was a Christian, associated with the brethren assemblies, and many of those he brought with him were also.

In that same year, 1898, George MacKenzie, a 33-year-old immigrant from Scotland who had

been saved in a New York City mission a few years earlier, had begun teaching at a Bible Institute in Philadelphia. Largely self-taught and having no association then with assemblies, he had discovered the New Testament principal of the oneness of the body of Christ, and began teaching this, which led to his early dismissal from the school. But the Lord had led him into the acquaintance of James Arthur, perhaps a year or two earlier, who then was associated with a small Presbyterian church. Recognizing his teaching and preaching gifts, Mr. Arthur invited George MacKenzie to teach them these New Testament truths. The group soon withdrew from the Presbyterian association and formed the West Philadelphia Assembly (later known as the Lansdowne Gospel Hall).

And so it was that James Arthur brought with him to New Orange/Kenilworth a substantial New Testament church testimony. George MacKenzie, who had identified with the 'Grant' brethren by then, moved to the area at the request of Mr. Arthur in about 1905 and soon took up his calling as an itinerant preacher, traveling widely, and apparently living for a time in St. Louis.

In the early 1900s, it is known that a group of assembly Christians was meeting in a small building at 17th Street and Monroe Avenue; these were probably the group identified with Mr. Arthur, who are said to have met initially in various homes. In 1908, the meeting place of these Christians was located in the Council Chambers of the present municipal building.

A few years later they moved to a store at 52 South 21st Street (now Orange Avenue). In about 1933, the Christians started a Sunday School work there. Upon growing, they decided they needed their own chapel. The lot at the corner of Newark Avenue and South 23rd Street was donated to the group by Howard Gillings, and ground was broken for construction in July 1936. Kenilworth Gospel Chapel was dedicated in December of 1936.

By consistent door-to-door visitation, series of meetings once or twice a year, and the use of able speakers at the Gospel meetings, the work grew. By the beginning of 1948 they had expanded their quarters, and undertook a five-week Gospel campaign with Lester Wilson, then of Greensboro, NC . The assembly grew rapidly after that. Over the years, many additions have been made to the building, until now it extends from Newark Avenue to Passaic Avenue along 23rd Street.

Besides the MacKenzie, Arthur, and Gillings families, Mrs. Winnie Dyke is also remembered as having a strong influence in the early days of the assembly, and conducted a home Sunday School. Fred MacKenzie, son of George MacKenzie, was a strong leader in the assembly for many years. He was president of *The Fields* and then *Christian Missions in Many Lands* (CMML). He became a leader among many assemblies and was influential, with many others, in breaking down the barriers between the 'Grant' and 'open' assemblies in the area. Kenilworth has for many years been counted among the 'open' assemblies. Other leaders over the years have included George Sharp, Frank MacMillian, Ben Hubinger, William Baxter, Alec Carver, William Arthur, and James Arthur, Jr.

Kenilworth Gospel Chapel now numbers about 125 adults and children. The assembly has commended Bob and Joyce Clark (jointly with Maplewood Bible Chapel), who have an extensive preaching and radio ministry. Others have been commended to the Philippines and South Africa.

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The village of Maplewood was blessed with an assembly of believers as early as 1913. At about that time, several families moved to Maplewood not having brethren backgrounds, and in searching for a fellowship where Biblical truths were expounded and practiced, joined in with the new assembly and became mainstays in the work.

For a while the Christians met in rented facilities in the center of Maplewood. Subsequently they rented a store front on Springfield Avenue, the main artery in town. Gospel texts were placed in the windows, and were an effective means of spreading the Gospel. The work grew to the degree that the Maplewood Bible Chapel was built in 1938 on a triangle of land bordered by Lexington and Burnett Avenues. For a number of years following, it was perhaps one of the most progressive assemblies in the metropolitan New Jersey area. It was blessed with a host of young people, many with growing families, and many wise shepherds. The names of Low, Main, Myers, Mauger, Lough, Bellinger, Fortune, Humphries, MacKenzie, Brackenridge, Scheele, and others are part of the history of the assembly.

People still speak glowingly of the blessings derived by attending Charles Bellinger's Bible study. Mr. Bellinger was the leading brother in establishing *The Fields*, forerunner of *Christian Missions in Many Lands*. During the 1940s and 1950s, Jack and Marge Wyrzten and family lived in Maplewood and made the chapel their church home. Young Don Wyrzten, who is now well known for his sacred music, started out by playing the piano in the Sunday School.

The work is not as large as it once was, but a faithful number still meet in the name of the Lord Jesus and have an outreach to the neighborhood through youth activities and DVBS. They are encouraged in the work by elders Grosvenor Rust, William Elder, Richard Magee, Lance Ellis, and Vincent D'Addio.

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Grace Chapel in Elizabeth was well underway in 1932 at 357 Morris Avenue, and known then as Bible Truth Hall. In that year, another assembly that had been meeting in a store front merged with Bible Truth Hall. James C. Manahan had built the Hall, with a meeting room on the first floor and an apartment on the second. When he died, he willed the building to the assembly. In leadership have been Messrs. Manahan, H. Carpenter, J. Troutman, Gibson, Avery, and now Bill Kother. Owen Hoffman was commended by Grace Chapel to the Lord's work in Georgia. The assembly of about 25 people has an outreach to inner city youth, transporting up to 25 each week to the Sunday School.

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The assembly now at Central Bible Chapel in Palisades Park in the New York City metropolitan area, began in 1907 in a store front a few blocks from the present location at 14 W. Central Boulevard. Peter Steenland, Harry Ackerman, and Rollo Steenland were the leaders in forming the assembly, having left the multi-denominational Union Church of Palisades Park, which had become liberal. At the store front, it was known as the Palisades Park Gospel Hall and took its current name after moving. Active in leadership after these first men were L. Stanley Ford, George T. Mortland, Harold Buirkle, Edward Armstrong, David Swaim, and Ned Stephens. The assembly has commended workers to Paraguay, Poland, and the Phillippines. About 45 adults and youngsters attend Central Bible Chapel today.

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Correspondence shows that believers had been meeting as an assembly without a specific name in the city of Hackensack in the New York metropolitan area since about 1905. How the assembly began has been lost from memory. Prior to incorporating in 1940 as Hackensack Gospel Chapel, the believers had met in rented space on State Street and on Main Street in the city, and probably in other locations as well. In 1940, the Christians erected their own building at the corner of Euclid and Terrace Avenues. At that time, there were no recognized elders, but the trustees for the incorporation were William Walsh, Collins Chivers, Florent Feltz, Wesley Schierloh, and Otto Speck, so these men would have been among the leadership.

The assembly was active during this period. It sponsored a 15 minute radio program each Sunday morning; regularly distributed literature in the neighborhood, and had a Sunday School of over 100 students at times. Only a few adult neighbors would come to the meetings. In the late 1950s, desiring an outreach into the neighborhood, the believers invited Ernest Woodhouse to come as a resident evangelist.

Expansion of the building was impractical, so the believers agreed unanimously to relocate. At about the same time, a Family Bible Hour on Sunday mornings decided upon. The elders at that time were Benjamin Boonstra, Ernest Chick, Florent Feltz, Nazar Nazarian, Meno Nershi, William Walsh, and Cecil Whitaker. A site was chosen in a suburban area near Hackensack. The opening of Valley Bible Chapel, in Washington Township Bergen County, was on January 1, 1961.

The assembly has commended workers to the field in India, Bolivia, and Colombia. Local residents have come to know Christ as Savior, and a strong youth program has seen conversions. About 130 attend Valley Bible Chapel. Current elders are John Molnar, J. Leslie Campbell, Kenneth Biswurm, and Robert Hayes.

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The assembly now at Brighton Avenue Bible Chapel began in about 1930 on North Park Street in East Orange and was known in the beginning as The Gospel Chapel. R.H. Muir was the principal person in the start-up, and has been followed in leadership by Alfred Moffit, Don Small, and Michael Pongracz. The assembly has commended John and Eleanor Sims to the work in Zimbabwe, and Bob Young to Zambia. About 55 adults and young people are in Brighton

Avenue Bible Chapel today.

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Rutherford Bible Chapel in the New York metropolitan area, began as an assembly in homes in the Rutherford area. In 1901, the Christians rented the basement of the Public Library and were known as Library Hall assembly. In 1915, they moved into a rented store at 37 Park Avenue. In 1926 the Christians moved to 118 Union Avenue, where they were known as the Rutherford Gospel Hall. In 1970, they purchased their own building at 161 West Passaic Avenue, and took the name Rutherford Bible Chapel.

Arthur Mauger, Alwyn Ball, Lyman C. Hershey, and Ernest Hageman were those who began the assembly. In addition to these, Walter C. Nearpass, Walter L. Nearpass, John Barlow, Henri Larrieu, and Gerard DeMatteo have been in leadership. Rutherford Bible Chapel has commended several persons to ministries in the U.S. and Canada. About 125 adults and youngsters attend the assembly.

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A few believers in fellowship at Grace Gospel Chapel in Jersey City, desiring to start a work nearer their area a few miles north, began Gospel Tent work in Union City with the help of Thomas Baird. Souls were saved and the group began meeting as an assembly in store fronts in Union City in October 1914. Dirk Janssen, Arthur Bowman, and Samuel Donnelly are among the names remembered as initiating the assembly. Later the believers met in a loft over a machine shop at 522 – 30th Street, Union City. They took the name Bethel Gospel Chapel and incorporated in April 1930. Finally, on October 1934 they erected a chapel at 3124 Summit Avenue, Union City, where they still meet.

Others in leadership have included Harold Brown, Franklin Spangler, Howard Klenk, Fred Holst, Edward Zogheb, Franklin Brown, and Pasquale Garafalo. Several from the assembly have been commended to the Lord's work abroad. With the influx of Spanish-speaking peoples from Central and South America, the assembly is now bilingual. About 40 to 50 adults are in fellowship, with about 10 to 15 youngsters.

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Mountain Ridge Bible Chapel in Berkeley Heights began in 1962. The initial group of about six families, from assemblies in nearby towns, met at that time at the Mountain Park School for Sunday morning worship, Sunday School, and Bible Hour. All other services were held in the downstairs of the Howard's home, which had been finished off by the brethren as a large meeting room. A week-long series of children's meetings conducted by Mel Wistner attracted as many as 80 neighborhood children, giving ample indication of a wide open door for evangelism in the area. In 1966, the congregation, numbering about 60, moved into its own new building at 763 Mountain Avenue, its present location. In 1976, the congregation had increased to about 125. Five families were active in the beginning of the work: Alec and Nancy Collette, Robert and Elizabeth Howard, Edward and Florence Kretzmer, and George and Alice Ingalls – all sent out with the blessing of the Woodside Chapel in Fanwood – and Edward and Christina Whittle sent

with the blessing of the Kenilworth Gospel Chapel. Presently, 130 adults and children make up the fellowship. They are led by Scott Allen, Paul Gilkenson, Allen Goetz, Robert Howard, Douglas Tremper, and Paul Trimmer as elders. David and Judy Shoop are resident workers serving not only Mountain Ridge but also the many area assemblies in a teaching ministry. The assembly has co-commended and supported workers to Paraguay and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

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A few miles from Berkeley Heights is Summit, and there the Summit Gospel Hall existed for many years, finally disbanding in about 1957. Its time of origin is not remembered, but it was in existence by 1935, and probably many years before that. Leading brothers were Messrs. McClay, Glasgon, J.S. Hyde, and R. Collette.

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The New Jersey assemblies retain much of their corporate fellowship. Besides the monthly missionary meeting at Kenilworth, there is an annual Memorial Day outing established by Alex Breckenridge of the Maplewood Bible Chapel in the 1920s. At one time this outing pulled in up to 1500 people, and still gets 500 or more. The Women's semi-annual Missionary Conference is shared by several assemblies. Grace Gospel Chapel in Jersey City has a rally the 2nd Saturday of each month, and the Kearny Bible Chapel has a rally the 4th Saturday of each month.

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The assembly of Christians presently meeting at the Fifth Avenue Chapel in Belmar, a town on the New Jersey shore south of New York City, originated in the mid 1920s by brethren from the metropolitan area of northern New Jersey and New York. These Christians desired to Remember the Lord during their vacations at the shore. A small store was secured for this purpose on South Main Street in Neptune near the old Neptune High School.

In about this time, several families moved to this area and an assembly was formed on an all-year basis. The home of August Handle in Asbury Park served as a meeting place. Mr. and Mrs. Dussman and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hart from Eatontown, Mr. and Mrs. Nunzio Pizzulli from Long Branch, Miss Gertrude Elliot from Bradley Beach, and Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson, made up the assembly.

About 1925, a room was secured in the American Legion Home on Bangs Avenue, Asbury Park, available for Sunday morning meetings. Thursday evening meetings were held in homes. When the Legion moved to Sewell Avenue, the assembly met in a room there. Robert Hazel and Stan Hart were saved and came into fellowship in 1928.

To conduct Gospel meetings, the Christians realized they must have larger quarters, and rented a store front on Ridge Avenue in Neptune. The assembly grew, and many of the well known preachers of the time preached there. In 1935, they secured a larger store on Seventh Avenue, west of the Bradley Beach railroad station. It was at this time that monthly ministry meetings were inaugurated, continuing until about 1970. Annual conferences were held until about 1973.

In 1940, the Christians purchased and refurbished an unused Episcopal Church building on Fifth Avenue in Belmar, where they are still located as the Fifth Avenue Chapel. F.C. Hart, A.T. Thorn, and Robert Hazel were mainstays of the assembly during the war years. Elie Loizeaux and Ed Turner were prominent in leadership later. Enlargement of the building was done in 1958 and again in 1980.

In the mid 1960s, the Christians helped establish Bethany Bible Chapel in the Silverton area of Toms River, 25 miles south of Belmar.

In about 1970, the committee of *Christians Missions in Many Lands* (CMML) purchased property in nearby Wall Township and moved into it in 1971. The move has been mutually profitable, because the Fifth Avenue Chapel has provided a convenient assembly for missionaries on furlough, and it has given the assembly a world view of missions.

Fifth Avenue Chapel has commended workers to Zimbabwe, France, Peru, South Africa, and Ireland. The assembly has about 140 adults and youngsters in attendance today.

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In 1953, a meeting place was erected by an assembly meeting in Toms River. That unnamed assembly lasted a few years. In 1964, a series of evangelistic meetings were held at the Fifth Avenue Chapel. Some people from the Brick Town and Toms River areas received Christ as savior at these meetings. These new Christians needed to be taught in the things of God, so Robert Hazel was asked to lead a weekly home Bible study, which continued into 1965. Then the Christians asked Boyd Nicholson from Canada to come for an evangelistic campaign.

At about this time, a children's work had been started in a home and needed more room. The Christians procured space in a store, and a 6-12 Club was begun. Mel Wistner, the chalk artist, took the first series and seven children received the Lord. This encouraged the Christians to begin a new testimony in the Brick Town area. Thirty believers met as an assembly in June 1965 in the Britts Department Store community room, calling themselves the Brick Town Bible Chapel. In December, they moved to a home for the Sunday meetings and used Osbornville Elementary School for the children's meetings.

Adam Miller and William Wilson were the acknowledged leaders of the assembly at that time. They found a choice piece of land on Church Road, Toms River, and the Christians purchased it. At that time, the name of the assembly was changed to Bethany Bible Chapel. While waiting for construction, the assembly met in a church building in Herbertsville for about a year. In May 1967, Bethany had its first meeting in the new chapel.

James Bechtle, Frank Jelley, Charles Myers, Mark Kolchin, and Dave Collette have been among the elders over the years. Bethany Bible Chapel has commended workers to the Lord's field in Zambia and the U.S.A.

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Community Bible Fellowship in Beachwood, near Toms River, was formed in 1971 through the efforts of Rod Conover, John Wenteler, Gary Walter, and Bob Carver. Not a hive-off from another assembly, the group met initially in the Conover home in Toms River, then in several schools until the current building on Compass Avenue was purchased. Over 400 adults and youngsters attend Community Bible Fellowship.

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Bethel Bible Chapel in Red Bank a town inland from Long Branch, began in 1965, a hive-off from the Long Branch Gospel Hall. The assembly was started by G. Anderson, Pat Truglia, and R. Tirado. The latter two have been the elders. Bethel Bible Chapel has commended Robert Billings to work in the assembly, and David Dunlap to ministry in Florida. About 70 adults and children are in the assembly.

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There were Italian-speaking assemblies in Orange, Long Branch, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Hackensack in the 1950s. The believers meeting at Long Branch Gospel Hall and Livingston Gospel Hall today are primarily of Italian descent who now conduct their meetings in English. (See Ethnic section for a discussion of the extensive Italian work in the U.S. and Canada.)

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The assembly meeting today at Carter Road Bible Chapel in Princeton began in Trenton in about 1870. Mrs. Esther Hyde, Harry Matlack, Fanny Barlow, Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Jaeger, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Sorter, Samuel Hannah, and Ira Fisher were among those who were involved in the early days of the assembly. Meeting first in a building on North Broad and Perry Streets in Trenton, the Christians moved later to a building on Bank Street, then into the Old Trenton Academy. After that for many years until 1932, the assembly met in the library of the WCTU building on East State Street, taking the name Library Hall. When forced to vacate, the assembly built Woodside Chapel at Huff and Brinton Avenues, Trenton. Evangelist Samuel Stewart was associated with the assembly for a time at Woodside Chapel.

In 1973, the Christians relocated to 193 Carter Road in Princeton, its present location. Leaders over the years have been W.S. Jaeger, Samuel Sorter, Edward Ristow, T. Bain Jackson, Samuel Hannah, Elwood Matlack, Ron Marchant, and Norman Fiess. Carter Road Bible Chapel has commended workers to Greece, Papua New Guinea, and ministry within the U.S.

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Hamilton Bible Fellowship in the town of Hamilton near Trenton began in 1991 as a hive-off from Carter Road Bible Chapel. Before coming to its current meeting place at Langtree School, Whatley Road, the assembly met at 5 Snowball Lane in Hamilton. Harold Neil, Sr., Harold Neil Jr., and Thomas Freeman were those who started the assembly, and who have shared the leadership. Hamilton Bible Fellowship has about 20 adults and youngsters in attendance.

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Marmora Gospel Chapel in the town of Marmora on the New Jersey coast south of Atlantic City,

started in 1963 and has remained since then at its location on Lyndhurst Road. Ed Richmond and Raymond Henry were the principals in getting it started. In addition to those, Ed Smullen and Gilbert Leeds have been in leadership in the small assembly.

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An Atlantic City assembly began in 1920 through the efforts of James Kelly and a Mr. Smith, meeting then on Maryland Avenue as the Atlantic City Gospel Hall. The assembly moved in about 1940 to Ventnor, still in the Atlantic City area, where a Mrs. Thomas purchased a fraternity house at Troy and Monmouth Avenue for the Gospel Hall. The active workers there were Louie Villari, David and Jessie Phillips, Don and June Phillips, Lou and Arlene Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Thomas and her son Charlie, Edna Williard, and a Mrs. Felsberg.

Sometime after that, the assembly moved to the Margate area of Atlantic City, and was located at Ventnor and Washington Avenues. From there, two assemblies developed. One became the Longport Gospel Hall at 2800 Atlantic Avenue, in which William Moon, Jessie and Arthur Davenport, John Fannan, Walter Brown, Nelson Williard, the Haughks, the Sunderlands, and Angus Weir were early leaders. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the leadership was Gustave Semrau, Roy Morrison, and Edward Niebch. The present overseers are Kenneth McCullough, Albert Amadio, and Todd Cherry. About 60 adults and children are in Longport Gospel Hall now.

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Linwood Gospel Chapel also derived from the Atlantic City Gospel Hall and is on New Road and Pierce Avenue in the town of Linwood in the Atlantic City area. Jim Kelly and Angus Wier were associated with Linwood in its early days. Other leaders over the years include Messrs. Bryson, Sunderland, Davenport, Wagner, Amos, Haugh, Bateman, Cook, and Greer. Linwood Gospel Chapel has commended a worker to Japan and has about 70 adults and youngsters in attendance.

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The Hammonton Assembly in the village of Hammonton, half way between Philadelphia and Atlantic City, is remembered to have existed in the 1930s. Bob Stark and the Brownlees were leading families there.

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The earliest record of an assembly in Camden, across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, is in conjunction with a series of Gospel meetings advertised as: 'Free Lectures on the Future of the Human Race, Illustrated from a Large Chart,' convened by William Beveridge and Alexander Lamb in September 1909.

This seems to be the root of the assembly which met in a rented room at the intersection of Broadway and Walnut Streets, for records show that on two successive Sundays, their total offering went to the support of the two mentioned servants of the Lord. Two further moves occurred shortly thereafter – the first to 1259 Kaighn Avenue in September 1910 for one year, and the second to 2nd and Pearl Streets for six years. The assembly purchased a former

Episcopalian building at 915 North Front Street in North Camden in October 1917, where it remained for the next 44 years. The assembly incorporated as the Gospel Hall Association in 1917, and became known as the Camden Gospel Hall. Also in 1917, Mr. and Mrs. John McKay became the first commended workers from this assembly, serving in the West Indies.

Those signing the Articles of Incorporation in 1917, and thus who were probably among the leaders of the assembly, were James and Hugh Brown, D.H. Oliver, Alex Morton, Herbert Staats, and O.R. Ferguson. Other names appearing in the records of this time include J. Rothwell, Anthony Wilson, B. Brown, J.W. Snyder, and Robert Stark.

Herbert Rue was saved in 1921 through contact with the assembly, and became a respected elder until his death in 1975. His co-worker Elwin DuBell was converted at the same time. In August 1924, William Warke was commended from the Camden assembly for ministry in the Gospel; Robert Surgenor was his understudy for many years. Others saved and becoming stalwarts in the assembly were Jack and May Draper and their son Robert. Such Gospel preachers as John Ferguson, Fred Nugent, Hector Alves, and Archie Stewart were among those who ministered at the assembly in the 1920s and 1930s. Andrew Harley in the 1930s and 1940s, and Charles Strom after 1950, were among the respected elders in the assembly.

Merritt, William, and David Curran and Eugene Higgins are among the many taking active leadership roles at the Camden Gospel Hall. Eugene Higgins was commended by the assembly to Gospel ministry in 1974. Active Gospel efforts in the 1950s and 1960s included weekly Saturday visits to the Philadelphia Home for the Indigent. Outdoor Gospel meetings were held for years at Broadway and Sycamore Streets, often on Sunday evenings just before the assembly Gospel meetings. Herbert Rue would often illustrate the outdoor message with chalk texts on the sidewalk. Ruth Fisher and Eleanor Cunningham witnessed to the women of the Spanish families then moving into north Camden. Sunday School outreaches were made into the areas of Grange and Haddonfield.

The deteriorating condition of both the Gospel Hall and the neighborhood led to the purchase of a lot on Caroline Avenue in the Pennsauken area north of Camden. Building was commenced in 1961, and the new Pennsauken Gospel Hall was completed in 1963. The assembly continues today at the same address.

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Barrington is on the south side of Camden. As early as 1912, several believers, including the Hocking family, lived in Barrington and traveled together via train, ferry and trolley from Barrington to Philadelphia to Remember the Lord with the believers at 20th and Dickinson, the so-called Downtown Meeting. Several of these men traveled to work together as well. They would bring their Bibles and have a Bible reading on the train. Gustav Eisle, a neighbor, traveled with them and became interested. He asked to join the readings and was soon saved.

Later cottage meetings were held in the homes of these believers by William Beveridge. The number of believers in this group grew during the period 1913 to 1915. On June 6, 1915, the

group of about 25 believers met as an assembly for the first time in the Barrington Fire Hall at Haines and Second. This was the start of the Barrington Gospel Hall.

In 1919 or 1920, a church building on Kingston Avenue became available for use. It was bought by William Anderson and the assembly met there from 1920 through 1997. Some of the early overseers were William Moon, Samuel Hocking, David McClintock, and Tom McCobb. In 1928, Gospel meetings by John Conway and R.T. Halliday saw a large number saved. In another series in 1933 by Robert Young, William Scott was saved and who had a great influence on the assembly in the future. Shortly after that series, Robert Young moved to Camden for a series and saw others reached, including some who would make up the future of the Barrington assembly.

A strong bond has existed between the two assemblies at Pennsauken and Barrington through the years. Their histories in many ways are interwoven. Much of the recent growth at Barrington is attributable to Gene Higgins in his outreach work each summer. Some of the names of those who were a help to the assembly during its early years and who were instrumental in the preservation of the testimony include William Beveridge, George Duncan, David Oliver, Fred Watson, Robert Telfer, James McCullough, David Calderhead, John Watt, W.P. Douglas, Clay Fite, and the McEwens and Kellers.

The Barrington Assembly sponsored a New Years Conference through the 1930s, at which time responsibility was taken over by the Camden assembly. The Conference was held for many years at the Haddonfield Heights town hall and then the Haddonfield Heights high school. William Scott was a leader in the assembly for many years, and served as Correspondent and Sunday School superintendent; he was a gifted and godly man who steered the assembly through some difficult times as well as times of growth. A.J. Higgins is the Correspondent at present.

The Barrington Gospel Hall on Kingston Avenue was sold in 1997 and a new building was occupied in 1999 at the corner of Barrington and Trenton Avenues. The believers met in the Legion Hall on Lord's Day in the interim.

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New York

Perhaps the first assembly in the state was started in Buffalo in 1875 by Edward Fairbairn, a Scottish immigrant who worked in secular employment all his life. The group he gathered together for Bible studies and prayer first met to Break Bread in a rented second floor room on Main street in Buffalo. The Joseph Morton family joined the group in 1877, followed by Alexander Tweedley and John Townsend. These Christians were evangelistic and spread the Gospel into the newly formed Village of Blasdell. The first three to preach there were Messrs. Fairbairn, Tweedley, and Townsend.

As numbers increased, the Christians moved to Allen Street in downtown Buffalo, and then to Florida Street. In 1877 the assembly acquired a brick cottage at 111 Elmwood Avenue and called it Assembly Hall. A basement was added, and a second floor with a caretaker's apartment. The apartment later became a place where visiting missionaries could stay.

The Buffalo Assembly Hall later spawned three other assemblies: Blasdell Gospel Chapel in 1888; Berkshire Avenue Chapel in 1929; and Cold Spring Bible Chapel in 1963.

Assembly Hall changed its name to Elmwood Gospel Chapel in 1951. Elmwood Gospel Chapel was one of the original founding and participating assemblies in the origins of Camp Li-Lo-Li in 1952. In 1964, Elmwood closed its doors because the neighborhood had become dangerous and joined with the Berkshire Avenue Chapel pending purchase of property in an area where most of its people lived. They located a lot in Amherst and erected the Amherst Bible Chapel. In 1974, they parted from Berkshire and moved into their new building.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a severe economic depression in the Buffalo area forced about half the assembly to move because of job transfers. However, the assembly continued, and has slowly grown from its lowest point. About 60 people attend the Family Bible Hour at this time. Over the years, leaders have included Edward Fairbairn, Alexander Tweedley, John Townsend, George Lord, George Gibson, Carlton Clapp, James Virtue, Harry Thompson, Alvin Sauer, Edwin Monroe, David Ednie, Robert Parker, Samuel Brady, George Boggess, Charles Parsons, David McCulloch, Melville Northrop, and Clyde Tyson.

A large number of workers have been commended from Amherst Bible Chapel and its antecedents, to mission fields and full time work, perhaps more than any other North American assembly. One of these workers was Abigail Townsend Luff, the well-known "Sister Abigail," commended in about 1905 for full-time ministry to El Nathan Home, since moved to Marble Hill, MO. Sister Abigail was a great influence in the assembly in its days at 111 Elmwood Avenue.

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Berkshire Avenue Chapel in Buffalo began in the Kensington area in rented space in the Knights Lodge on Bailey Avenue near Shirley. It consisted in its early days mainly of believers from Assembly Hall and was called Kensington Gospel Meeting at that time. The believers changed

the name to Kensington Gospel Hall in approximately 1936 when they purchased a frame church building at the corner of Berkshire and Suffolk Streets. In about 1938, a fire destroyed the building, and the assembly met with the neighboring Calvary Baptist Church while the new semi-basement part of a future chapel was built. Early in 1952, a second floor with additional lower rooms was constructed. The name became Berkshire Avenue Chapel at this time. From 1964 through 1974, the Elmwood Gospel Chapel believers joined with them, a period remembered as very profitable.

Leaders in the earlier history of Berkshire Avenue Chapel include Wallace Logan (when on furlough from Africa), Paul Sacher, Walter Lord, Sam Carson, Sr., George Gibson, John Hynd, and Walter Holler. Since then, elders include William Sacher, Harry Thompson, Phillip Ensmenger, David Bell, G. Stewart Timm, Clarence Bunce, Floyd Crittendon, Otto Kuehliwind, Rolland Walker, Jack Pinkham, Les Paulson, Lee Kiddy, H. James Thompson, Harry Chang, Fred Pohle, Bill Pohle, Ken Pohle, Don Santucci, Michael Johnson, and Paul Ranbler.

Commended and co-commended workers were sent to the Philippines, Nigeria, and Colombia. Otis and Geraldine Tillman were commended to inner-city Buffalo. Berkshire Avenue Chapel discontinued in 1992.

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South of Buffalo in the western part of New York state is Jamestown. Grace Chapel in Jamestown began in 1951 in a home at 141 Beechview Avenue. Gunnard Lindberg, Donald Allison, Merrill Allison, John Cole, and James Bottomley were those involved in the start-up of that assembly. These and James Loizeaux, Kenneth Cole, and Harold Collette have been its leaders. The Grace Chapel assembly has commended workers to the Lord's field in Puerto Rico. About 30 adults and youngsters attend Grace Chapel.

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An assembly in Rochester began in 1916 as a result of efforts by Harold Harper and John Bramhall. The Christians first met on St. Paul Boulevard, then moved into a building at the corner of Carter and Hearld Streets, where they took the name Carter Street Assembly. After that they moved to 195 Congress Avenue, the current location, where they took the name Congress Avenue Gospel Chapel for a time, before changing to Congress Avenue Bible. Some of the leaders over the years have been Bob Westfall, Ted Larter, Vernon Larter, Jim Boyd, Mel Northrup, and Harvey Rodger. Two assemblies have hived off from Congress: Northgate Bible Chapel and Crossroads Bible Fellowship. Congress Avenue Bible Chapel has about 200 adults and youngsters. The assembly has commended workers to Zambia, Colombia, Zaire, and Papua New Guinea. Randy Amos and Ray Blais and their families were commended for full time work at Northgate and elsewhere.

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Northgate Bible Chapel in Rochester began in 1965 at 240 McGuire Road, its present location. A hive-off from Congress Avenue Gospel Chapel, it was begun by the families of Robert Westfall, Earl Clark, Andrew Greer, Ted Larter, Orville Musclow, James Boyd, and Gladys

Valcore. Leaders have included the six men named above, with James Nieboer, Herm Klingenberger, and Dale Brooks. The active assembly has commended workers to the Lord's service in Colombia, Zaire, and Zambia, and to serve with International Crusades. Ray and Becky Blais are commended for youth work at Northgate and at Camp Li-Lo-Li. About 160 adults and children attend Northgate Bible Chapel.

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Crossroads Bible Fellowship in Rochester began Breaking Bread in 1996 in the home of Chuck and Mary Gianotti. The meeting moved to the Norman Howard School at 725 Pinnacle Road, Henrietta on Easter Sunday, 1997. The assembly began with the blessing of Congress Avenue Bible Chapel, from which most of the original members came; the Gianottis moved down from Canada. The Gianottis, Rick and Jennifer Myles, Bill and Kelly Wendlandt, Jim Mayer, and Larry Haag were the principals involved in the start-up and are the recognized leaders of the assembly. About 45 adults and youngsters attend Crossroads Bible Fellowship.

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Prior to World War I, the Schenectady Believers Assembly met on Vischer Avenue in the Bellevue section of Schenectady. From 1923 to 1940, the Christians met in rented quarters at the IOOF Hall at Broadway and Thompson Streets. From 1940 to the present, they have been in their own quarters at Bellevue Gospel Chapel in Rotterdam at 2702 Guilderland Avenue. Alex Cooke is considered to be the person starting the Believers Assembly on Vischer Avenue, while Robert Wallace and Arnold Button initiated the move to Broadway and Thompson Streets, with Robert Wallace and Albert Davids instrumental in the move to Guilderland Avenue.

Those active in leadership include Albert Davids, Walter Delap, Harvey Wilson, Fred O'Bryon, Earl Brinkman, Clayton Anderson, Abraham Lorenzo, Burnell Fields, Doug Lewis, Rick Strohm, Bill Crecca, and John Smith. Bellevue Gospel Chapel has commended workers to the field in Zambia. About 100 adults and children attend the assembly.

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Shiloh Gospel Chapel in White Plains has its roots in a Sunday School work begun in that city in the fall of 1955. Sanford Fray and others of Grace Gospel Chapel in New York City developed this outreach. When a good number of children were coming, weekly Bible studies were started, and from that the Lord's Supper began in August 1958.

The assembly has moved through several locations and now occupies a chapel at 27 Juniper Hill Road. Stanley Fray and others have shared in the leadership after Sanford Fray relocated. The assembly has about 50 adults and six children.

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Community Bible Church of Northern Westchester, at 301 Chadeayne Road in the village of Ossining on the Hudson River, started in 1970 as a hive-off from both Bethany Chapel in Yonkers and the White Plains Gospel Chapel. Ten families, including those of Tom Dunkerton, Nathan E. Dunkerton, Fred Vesperman, and Paul Winter, began the new assembly. Nathan

Dunkerton and David Dunkerton have been the active leaders; David Dunkerton serves as the full-time worker. The assembly has commended workers to the Lord's service with A.I.M. Kenya and to Colombia; to local ministry with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade, and World Concern; and to Men's Mission in Alabama. Grace Sidebotham has been commended for neighborhood Bible studies. Community Bible Church has about 135 adults and youngsters in regular attendance.

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An assembly now meeting at Bethany Chapel in Yonkers began in about 1910 in South Yonkers, meeting in homes on St. Andrews Place. George Clarke, O.E. Dunkerton, E. Morgan, David Munro, and David Tully are considered to be the founders. The assembly was initially composed primarily of families relocated by their companies from other places. The group met for a time in the Temperance Hall on Palisade Avenue, then at the Women's Institute on North Broadway. In 1931, the Christians incorporated their assembly as Bethany Gospel Chapel and in 1938 they built their own chapel at 55 Greenvale Avenue, their present address. Other elders after the early period include, among many, Edward and John Drost, John T. Ferris Sr., Candido Sousa, and Ned and Tom Dunkerton.

Workers have been commended to Peru, Korea, Mexico, South Africa, and the Congo. Many others have been commended for ministry within the U.S. About 70 persons are presently in Bethany Chapel.

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In 1912, a number of black brethren who had come from the British West Indies were in fellowship with Christians at the 125th Street Assembly in New York City. Being located in the white section of the city, they were not reaching the blacks. Then the Nottage brothers, together with Messrs. Sampson, Seeley, McLaughlin, and others began open-air work and other activities. A tract band was formed in 1913, and three and a half million tracts were bought and distributed by the summer of 1914. Hundreds were saved or restored to the Lord. Home meetings were begun in the winter of 1913, and this led to the establishment of the first assembly in the black areas of New York City. By October 1914, 30 of the believers were able to gather as a local church at 50 West 134th Street in the heart of Harlem. Called Grace Gospel Chapel, the assembly grew in ten years to 300. Today, Grace Gospel Chapel is located nearby at 102 West 133rd Street.

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Many of the Christians in fellowship at Grace Gospel Chapel were being relocated to Queens in the late 1940s. After many tent meetings in 1948 on Northern Boulevard in Corona, in the Queens area, they realized the need for a meeting place in that area, and purchased a store front on 103rd Street, calling it Corona Gospel Hall. After that it was called Corona Gospel Chapel and upon the 1962 completion of a new chapel at 102-05 35th Avenue, Galilee Gospel Chapel.

Those involved in the start-up include Evans Welch, Joseph Muller, Lloyd Rallos, Jerry Thompson, A. Cambridge, B. Holder, and Mr. McClaughlin who conducted the tent meetings. Others active in leadership include S. Graves, L. Collymore, B. Phillips, G. Tucker, and G. Daniels. Joseph Muller has been commended for full time work at the assembly. About 150 adults and youngsters are in the meeting.

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Good Tidings Gospel Hall in Brooklyn traces its history to a small home meeting in 1918 at 136 Third Avenue in Brooklyn, the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Ellis. A few believers originally from the Caribbean met in the Ellis home for prayer and Bible study. At that time, they fellowshiped at the 13th Street Assembly in Brooklyn, comprised largely of caucasian believers. But they yearned to reach the blacks in their own neighborhood, and sought God's face for His enabling. The Spirit of God worked among them; backsliders came under conviction and were restored, and souls were being saved. Albertha Herbert and Alexander Weeks were among the first fruits and became stalwarts in the work.

At first the group met monthly on first Sundays while they continued to fellowship with the 13th Street Assembly. Soon they began meeting weekly in homes. In April 1919 they rented quarters at 160 Third Avenue for a Sunday School, and three weeks later began celebrating the Lord's Supper there with an initial attendance of 14. The young assembly was assisted by Grace Gospel Chapel in New York City, both financially and in ministry. John B. Hunte, Thomas Ellis, and Joseph Griffith are considered the founding elders. They were soon joined as elders by George Jilkes, James E. Herbert, and George Phillips.

By the end of 1919, the membership had increased to 79, and the assembly relocated to larger quarters at 169 Third Avenue. Between 1930 and 1940, the assembly in cooperation with Grace Gospel Chapel began a program of open-air preaching, which resulted in the formation of two more assemblies, in Corona (Queens) and in Montclair, New Jersey. During the period 1940 to 1950, the assembly increased through conversions and immigration from the Caribbean. The Christians relocated to the Old Globe Theatre on Sumpter Street and remained there for many years. They incorporated as Good Tidings Gospel Hall in 1940.

The expanding assembly needed more room; in 1983, they were donated the deed to property at the corner of Fulton Street and Reid Avenue, now Malcolm X Boulevard. They constructed a new building seating 400, and continue at that location. The vigorous assembly publishes a quarterly paper, has a radio program, and has many youth outreaches. From 1930 and on, the assembly sent many of its members to mission fields in Barbados, the West Indies, the western United States, and Florida. Elders since the early days include Donald Robinson, George Berry, William Cox, William Lane, Joseph Welch, Theodore Edghill, Frederick Pilgrim, Granville Salmon, Theophilus Cato, Justin Mason, Alfred Fox, Roy Sixto, Andrew Esdelle, Hugh Wood, Rudolph Jackson, and Patson Agard. Today there are about 350 in fellowship under the spiritual leadership of eight elders.

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Sea Cliff Gospel Chapel in Sea Cliff, Long Island has its beginnings in 1889. The year before, William A. Isaac had immigrated from Ireland to accept employment as estate superintendent for a wealthy businessman, John T. Pirie. Mr. Pirie was a staunch Methodist and was concerned that his superintendent seemed not to be a believer, apparently because the Isaacs were not attending a church. But Mr. Isaac explained that he and his family “broke bread” each Sunday in their own home in the manner of the earliest Christians. Mr. Pirie asked if he could join them, and was so impressed that he asked others to be included. The assembled group increased to about thirty families, and Mr. Pirie then provided larger quarters on his estate for the Sea Cliff Assembly.

From 1901 through 1906, Bible conferences were held on the Pirie estate, in a tent seating 600 people. C.I. Scofield attended some of these conferences, and there, with Arno Gaebelain, expressed his desire to produce a reference Bible. Mr. Pirie and others of wealth supported the project, and much of the writing was done in the Pirie home.

The German Methodists moved a ‘Tabernacle,’ a large open-air frame structure, to the north end of Main Street in Sea Cliff, and tents and dormitories were erected for accommodations. It seems that these Methodists and the brethren cooperated to an extent in this venture, for the Centennial report states, “Prayer and revival meetings were held by the Methodists and the brethren, and there was a spirit of evangelism that spread over the whole area of Sea Cliff and its surroundings.”

Prior to 1918, the brethren continued to meet in the cottage on the Pirie estate. In that year, the building the Methodists had used on 14th Avenue was purchased for the assembly. The assembly was incorporated as Sea Cliff Gospel Hall and met there until 1949. The property was titled to Miss Margaret Pirie, and the officers of the corporation were initially all members of the Pirie family, male and female. A 1944 document shows that the assets and control of the corporation were to be turned over to the Sea Cliff Assembly upon moving into planned larger quarters.

The new Sea Cliff Gospel Chapel was completed in August 1949 on a large lot at Sea Cliff and Carpenter Avenues. A Hammond organ and a Steinway piano were donated to the assembly, which has had a vigorous musical program since that time. The Sunday School has attracted up to 150 students. The assembly has maintained an active youth program with Good News Clubs, Pioneer Girls, craft classes, jail ministries with the young people, and for a time a special Sunday School for retarded children, managed by Helga Swanson.

One of the early preachers at the chapel was Richard Hill, a former missionary to Russia, and later involved with the Missionary Institute in Brooklyn, where several well-known brethren missionaries received training. Mr. Hill, with the help of Christian Missions in Many Lands, directed the Sea Cliff Conferences that still continued at the “Tabernacle” into the 1930s.

Apparently the first commended worker by the Sea Cliff Assembly was sent in 1930 to France to direct an orphan home there. Many others have since been commended to the work at home and abroad, including Walter Liefeld who was commended to full-time chapel ministry in 1961; he

was later commended by the assembly to teaching at Trinity Seminary in Illinois.

Besides those mentioned above, other leaders include Franklyn Mauger, Thomas Isaac, Albert Grieg, Byron Bjork, Bill Isaac, Cyril Lewis, Mark Diggory, Herbert Liefeld, Robert D. Kroeger, Charles Hendron, Harry Thurber, and David Collins. The active assembly has attracted ministry by a large number of well-known brethren preachers and missionaries.

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Edward Dugan, who was a baker, pitched a Gospel tent in 1927 on a lot he owned in Glen Head, Long Island. He invited preachers such as Willie Beveridge and Hugh McEwen to preach there, and he too did open-air preaching and tract distribution. In 1929, the tent was replaced by a house called the Gospel Meeting House. Regular assembly meetings began at that time.

Sisters from the nearby Sea Cliff Assembly helped establish a Sunday School work. Gordon Reager came often to the assembly in those days. Horace Klenk did neighborhood and hospital visitation work in the area for many years. In 1932, May Carruthers came into the Glen Head assembly and became a real worker, winning many to Christ. Evangelist Richard Hill came every Tuesday evening from Brooklyn to conduct a Bible study, and later joined the assembly. The Gospel Meeting House has been at 2 Orchard Street since its inception, and had the same name. About 40 adults and youngsters attend the Gospel Meeting House today.

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In 1880, Charles F. Boynton, an ordained minister, was dismissed from the Presbyterian church in Freeport, Long Island when he persisted in preaching the Gospel. He had come into contact with brethren in Delaware, and became acquainted with Malachi Taylor in New York, so he took the dismissal as an indication that the Lord wanted him to make the change. He and his wife began Remembering the Lord at his home at 500 Babylon Turnpike, Freeport, on the first Sunday after his dismissal. This was the start of the Freeport Assembly.

In 1907, the Frew and Cameron families arrived from Scotland and joined the Freeport Assembly, and the Medd, Wilson, and Carnie families came in about 1910. At that time, quarters were rented on the second floor of the Realty Building on Railroad Avenue, Freeport for the assembly meetings. They continued there until about 1918 when they moved to the hall of the Vigilant Hose Company on North Main Street. In 1920, the assembly purchased a lot on West Dean Street and erected the Dean Street Chapel in Freeport.

The Sunday School thrived and outgrew the available facilities, and in 1954 the assembly enlarged and renovated the chapel. H.P. Johnson, H.F. Baehr, and Quentin Bennett are among those in active leadership over the years. Dean Street Chapel has commended workers to the Lord's service in France, the Philippines, Nepal and Butan, and Turkey. About 60 adults and youngsters attend the assembly today.

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Born as a Roman Catholic in the New York metropolitan area, John Thomas was saved in 1968,

and disciplined and introduced to the assemblies by Stan Vaninger. He moved to Colorado Springs where he benefitted from the ministry of John Walden. He helped establish Bethany Bible Chapel, Warsaw, IN and had an itinerant preaching ministry in the midwest, North Carolina, and Virginia. Wanting to return to New York, Mr. Thomas accepted the pastorate of the independent First Baptist Church at 35 Campus Drive in Port Washington on Long Island in 1982. In that year, the church started and continues to run the Port Washington Christian School. In two years the constitution of the church was changed to incorporate a plurality of elders, the Lord's Supper was instituted, and the name was changed to The Bible Church of Port Washington. John Gerringer from the Shannon Hills Chapel in Greensboro, NC came to help in the work, and now he and John Thomas are the two elders. The assembly has about 70 adults and children.

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Though Staten Island is a borough of New York City, it lies against New Jersey, connected to it at Elizabeth by the Goethals Bridge across the narrow Arthur Kill. In 1937, a small assembly of Mennonite Brethren was established at Port Richmond on the north shore of the Island. In 1939, the group moved to nearby West Brighton and adopted the name Beth-Car Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The young men who established the assembly had been working to plant a church in Elizabeth, New Jersey. In the 1950s, the Mennonite Conference of which the group was a part decided to move to a more Reformational stance and changed its name to Bible Fellowship Church. In response the local fellowship changed its name to Bible Fellowship Church of Staten Island in 1959.

Ralph Ritter had been in fellowship at Collingdale Gospel Chapel in Collingdale, PA in his college years, and in fellowship at other assemblies in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts later. In 1991, Bible Fellowship Church of Staten Island asked him to be its pastor. Mr. Ritter responded that he would consider it if they could accept the teachings on the New Testament church. The elders of the congregation readily agreed to this and encouraged him to introduce the Breaking of Bread service, and to follow the Scriptures in every respect.

Thus, Bible Fellowship Church of Staten Island, while still maintaining their conference connections, entered into fellowship with the 'open' brethren. After that, Mr. Ritter called their attention to the Walterick Address of Assemblies with the result that the elders desired to be listed therein and thus identified with the 'open' brethren. The church has a fellowship of 63, with an average attendance of about 40.

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Massachusetts

A series of tent meetings in Fall River, conducted by David Scott and John Blair in 1887, resulted in the planting of an assembly in that town in the southern part of the state. The believers met in various homes and in a store front until they purchased a building in 1904, the Fall River Gospel Hall.

When this building was sold in 1951, the assembly decided to build a larger and more suitable chapel in South Swansea a few miles to the northwest. Bethany Gospel Chapel was designed and built by members of the assembly, with assistance of Christians from other assemblies. Seating for 150 was provided in the main auditorium. At the opening in November 1952, more than 200 were present. Though several people came over from the Fall River Gospel Hall, Bethany Gospel Chapel was a new work, started by David Ward and Harold Harper. William Horner and John Bramhall are also remembered as helping in the start-up.

Those in active leadership over the years include William Horner, Paul Shaw, Charles McCoy, Robert Spender, James Harshaw, Peter Blackwell, James Klink, Richard Clarkson, and James Donaldson. Bethany Gospel Chapel has commended workers to the Phillipines, to prison ministries, and Carlos Cerqueira to work at the Portugese assembly in Pawtucket, RI. About 200 are in the assembly at Bethany Gospel Chapel.

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The assembly known today as the Mount Auburn Gospel Hall in Watertown had its start in 1875 as the Newton Gospel Hall in nearby Newton. In the 1880s, the assembly moved to Tremont Street in Boston, and then to a location on Cliff Street, where it took the name Cliff Street Gospel Hall.

The Cliff Street Gospel Hall was very much Gospel oriented, having many campaigns, some for as many as ten weeks at a time. Many souls were saved through these efforts, which included street meetings and cottage meetings. During World War II the young people of the assembly along with some of the older Christians would go to the Boston Common and invite service men to come back to the Hall for supper and then have them stay for an informal Gospel meeting. Some would stay for the regular night preaching service. Many of these service men came to trust the Lord, and many British service men from assemblies were encouraged by this effort.

The Cliff Street assembly had conferences every Christmas, with no pre-arranged platform speaking but as many as fifteen preachers invited. During the World War II years, as many as sixty young people would be at the Lord's Table. The seats were arranged in a square around the table, and the first two rows would be all young people. People would be in their seats fifteen minutes before the service started. These Breaking of Bread meetings were wonderful worship meetings, where a deep feeling of reverence pervaded.

The Cliff Street Gospel Hall moved to Mount Auburn Street in Watertown in 1960 and for a time was known as the Mount Auburn Gospel Center before taking its present name, Mount Auburn

Gospel Hall. About 65 adults and youngsters are in the assembly today.

Two assemblies were hive-offs of the Cliff Street Gospel Hall: Countryside Bible Chapel in Lexington, and Village Bible Chapel in Framingham.

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Countryside Bible Chapel at 480 Lowell Street in Lexington came into being as a local assembly during the years of 1958 and 1959. Those who were the chief impetus for the new work in Lexington were John Pollard, Jack Fulton, Douglas Wacome, Robert Herrmann, and a number of other young couples who met for home Bible studies and prayer in Lexington. An assembly was formed and met for a year in the V.F.W. hall on Woburn Street while a new building was completed on 5.5 acres in the Countryside area of Lexington. The assembly at Beech Street Gospel Chapel in Cambridge sold its building and joined the new work. The main leaders at Beech Street at that time were W. Herbert Marshall, William MacDonald Sr., and Samuel Jackson. They along with John Pollard were recognized as the elders of the new assembly.

God blessed the work and a larger auditorium was added in 1968. A residence was later built next to the chapel. To help with preaching and teaching, William Anderson was asked in 1984 to join with Countryside Bible Chapel. He and his wife Virginia and family were the first occupants of the chapel residence. Following them, Stan and Rhonda Schultz, former missionaries to Zaire, served in that role; Jed and Betty Snyder serve the assembly today.

Other elders have included William Armerding, Jack Fulton, Tom Serpliss, Douglas Pollard, Eric Brosius, Bill Martin, Don Moberger, Ronald Sanderson, and Jed Snyder. About 150 are in fellowship. An active ministry continues among all ages.

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The Village Bible Chapel in Framingham came into existence in 1958, the result of the efforts of seven families. Its early meetings were held in the Old Town Hall. The assembly constructed its own chapel at 1341 Edgell Road in 1963. Several have been commended by Village Bible Chapel to the Lord's work abroad. Average attendance at Sunday meetings is about 130.

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The Missionary Study Class meetings in the Boston area were held once a month. Six different area assemblies took turns having the responsibility for the meetings. This was a real blessing to the Lord's people for inter-assembly fellowship, and the offerings for missionary workers was a real help in the furtherance of missionary activities.

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In 1907, Jonathan Dalzell and James Scott – immigrants from Ireland and Scotland – held open-air Gospel meetings in Worcester. They had known about assemblies in the “old country” but had not been affiliated with them. In the summer of 1908, a tract came to their attention and they wrote the author in New York state. He referred them to the Cliff Street Gospel Hall in Boston, and soon the Worcester Gospel Hall was formed.

Among the early brethren from Boston giving assistance to the fledging assembly were John Gill, Damon Fales and William Farquhar. In 1909, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Yarrington, and their son and his wife, came into fellowship, as did Mr. and Mrs. Mark Stevenson. A somewhat later group included Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Shaw and Mrs. John Barrie, the daughter of one of the founders, James Scott.

E. A. Martin joined William H. Hunter in a tent-work evangelistic effort in 1909. Months prior to this Mr. Hunter had been giving some help as he came and went from the North Grafton Assembly, established earlier. At the close of this tent season the assembly convened at 338 Pleasant Street. Worcester Gospel Hall moved through several locations until 1946 when the Christians purchased a building at 23 Stanton Street, having 54 in fellowship at that time. When on Stanton Street in Worcester, use was made of the name Bethany Gospel Chapel. After selling that building in 1959, the Christians rented space until 1961, at which time they built the chapel at 242 Clark Street, where Bethany Gospel Chapel still is located. At that time, 65 were in the fellowship, representing seven nationalities.

In addition to those mentioned above, John Dickson, W.E. Matthews, James Waugh, Samuel McEwan, Charles Keller, William McClure and others were used of the Lord in establishing the spiritual foundation of the assembly. The assembly has commended workers to the field abroad and in the U.S. About 65 adults and children attend Bethany Gospel Chapel today.

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Good News Bible Chapel in Attleboro was established in 1935 by Arthur and Ceinwyn Stebbings, Eugene and Hilda Quarnstrom, and Walter and Florence Jacobsen.

In the early 1930s, the Stebbings were living in Pawtucket, RI and were in fellowship at Pawtucket Gospel Hall. Mr. Stebbings had a printing business in Attleboro. Through his business, he came to know the Quarnstroms and Jacobsens, who were Attleboro residents and had become dissatisfied with their denominational affiliation. The three couples began meeting together in their homes to study the Scriptures.

In 1935 the three couples decided to begin a fellowship in Attleboro. In the first week, ten people met to Break Bread. They met in homes until they moved to a store front at 201 Pine Street in 1936. From 1938 to 1950, they rented space in the Oddfellows Building on Bank Street. From 1936 to 1950, they took the name Christian Assembly of Attleboro. From 1950 to 1954, they met in a converted garage at 32 Hazel Street, and there took the name Good News Bible Chapel. In 1954, the assembly purchased a church building at 138 South Main Street and remained there until 1976. The assembly's present location is 235 West Street.

Among those active in leadership have been Albert and Rhea Johnson, Elmer Pierce, James Ruddell, Ken Brasier, and Alden and Fern Stebbings. The assembly has commended workers to South America and Alaska. About 300 adults and children attend Good News Bible Chapel.

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The assembly meeting today at Andover Bible Chapel began as a result of tent meetings held between 1890 and 1900 in the general area of Methuen and Lawrence. Believers came together as an assembly in early 1900 and met in various rented quarters until a building at 9 Center Street in Methuen was purchased in 1906. This became known as the Methuen Gospel Hall, and then Methuen Gospel Chapel in 1959. In 1964, the assembly moved into a newly constructed building on previously purchased land at 266 Lowell Street in nearby Andover, its current location and where it took the name Andover Bible Chapel.

The signers of the 1906 purchase agreement were John D. Dewhurst, Archibald Stewart, James Thompson, Albert Smith, Thomas Wilkinson, George E. Knight, and Joseph Taylor. Leading brothers include William C. Watson, Donald L. Banks, William Walker, William Dewhurst, and Robert A. Watters. The assembly has commended workers to the Navajo Indians in Arizona, to Faith Academy, Phillipines; and to Pittsboro Christian Village administration. About 70 adults and youngsters attend the assembly today.

Sources:

Questionnaire responses and other correspondence
Brief History of Countryside Bible Chapel, by John Pollard, 1998
Letters of Interest, November 1953, p. 3; November 1957, p. 26

Connecticut

The Hartford Gospel Hall began in 1907 on Asylum Street, the result of a number of workers spreading the Gospel. The assembly Christians met next on Park Street, then Witmore Street, from there to Farmington Avenue, and lastly to the current address at 685 Broad Street, Hartford. The Gospel Hall is the mother of a number of assemblies in the area. Fritz Bjork, Nick Vendetta, and A. Reagor have been among the leaders of the assembly. The Hartford Gospel Hall has commended workers to ministry in the U.S. and Canada. About 20 adults and youngsters now attend the assembly.

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An assembly in Manchester was meeting in the early 1920s, renting the Town Hall for their meetings. Around 1925 they built the Manchester Gospel Hall at 415 Center Street, where they presently meet. They conducted many Gospel campaigns and many souls were saved; they held street meetings every Saturday night in the down town. Today there are missionaries on the foreign field who have been commended from this assembly.

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The assembly meeting at Prospect Bible Chapel, Hartford has its roots in the 1920s, when it was known as the Gospel Hall Society. In 1934, it was incorporated under the name The Scripture Truth Church and at that time it developed a set of Fundamental Articles for the church to operate under. John P. Barclay served as President, Duncan M. Surgenor was clerk, and Thomas Waugh was the treasurer. Overseers were Charles Austin, James Surgenor, Carl Martinson, J.C. Amont, William Gardener, and William Surgenor.

In November 1934, the Christians purchased a building at 576 Prospect Avenue and called their assembly Prospect Gospel Chapel. They have met at that location since then. In 1983, the name was changed to Prospect Bible Chapel.

Leaders of the assembly over the years include Charles N. Miller, Alexander Brown, James Serpliss, James Gardener, Marcus Harvey, Thomas E. Woods, James Daniels, and J. Victor Congdon. The assembly convenes an Annual Conference each September, and a Young Peoples Conference each March.

Mrs. T. Ernest Wilson (Elizabeth Smith), a missionary to Angola, was commended from this assembly, as were Gordon Reagor and Neil Dougal to the U.S. and Canada as evangelists. Others have been commended to serve at His Mansion and Emmaus Bible College. Miss Flora Barclay who served the Lord for many years in China was also from this assembly.

About 60 adults are currently in fellowship, with 30 children in the Sunday School. Two assemblies have derived from Prospect Bible Chapel: Fellowship Bible Chapel, first meeting in Rockville and then in Enfield, and which no longer exists; and Manchester Bible Chapel.

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Manchester Bible Chapel was started in 1988 through the efforts of Jack and Ruth Spender and

Don and Jean Woods, with a nucleus of 11 persons, including some from Prospect Bible Chapel in Hartford. Its initial meeting place was in the Robertson school; since then the assembly has occupied a series of rented spaces. Elders have included Don Woods, John Zine, Mike Yenor, Rusty Hammel, and Mike Giacalone. As many as 80 have been in fellowship, though now attendance is about 20.

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In 1931, a few Christians began to meet weekly for Breaking of Bread, Bible study, and fellowship on Whitney Avenue in North Haven. The MacWilliam and Thomson families were the key people in starting the assembly, and provided the leadership in the early days. In 1937, the assembly moved to a building on Newhall Street in New Haven and took the name Gospel Hall, Newhall Street. In the 1960s, the assembly built West Woods Bible Chapel at 165 Hillfield Road in Hamden, north of New Haven.

At its largest, the assembly had about 300 in attendance, but a split over a charismatic issue has reduced the number to about 50 today. A number of other assemblies in the area have been started by people from West Woods Bible Chapel – New Haven, North Haven, Branford, and Cheshire.

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In 1972, Joseph and Andrea DePino returned to Connecticut after Joe was discharged from the U.S. Navy. Just several weeks prior, they had been wonderfully saved. They checked the church listings in the local newspaper, and as a result came to West Woods Bible Chapel in Hamden.

The DePinos were anxious to share their new-found faith with young people they had known, most of whom were Roman Catholic. Their temporary home was a trailer in Branford on the east side of New Haven, and it was there that they started inviting friends to a Bible study. Just at this time, Herbert McCaulley had to retire from secular work because of a heart condition and the elders at West Woods Bible Chapel asked him to teach the young people. When the numbers increased, they joined with another study group in a home in Branford. These young believers attended West Woods Bible Chapel and Broke Bread there on Sunday mornings, still having the studies on Sunday evenings as well as some week nights in Branford.

As growth continued, they felt the time had come to start functioning as an assembly. Jack Spender came out from West Woods and gave teaching regarding the Lord's Table. Thus, Branford Bible Chapel was established as an assembly in 1973. For several years the assembly met in the gun club, the local armory, the historic Academy on the Green in Branford, and public schools.

The need to have a permanent building became a reality when after much prayer and searching, property was purchased in North Branford. The existing house was very useable and was remodeled. Most of the construction was done by the men in the assembly and the assembly met in its own building for the first time on the Sunday before Christmas in 1991. Mr. McCaulley had been commended to minster full-time in the assembly, where he remained

until the Lord took him in 1997. Ken Hardisty was on furlough from the Philippines at that time and stayed until returning to that field in July 1999.

The brothers who faithfully ministered in the beginning were Herbert McCaulley, Harold Hardisty, Jack Spender, Joseph DePino, and Ernest Wegener. The current elders are James C. Baker and Joseph DePino. The assembly has commended workers to the Philippines and to Friends of Israel. About 80 attend the Breaking of Bread, with quite a few more attending the preaching service.

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Westville Bible Chapel in New Haven has its roots in a Bible study in the home of Ralph Kirchhofer in 1976. Those involved in the study started Breaking Bread together in the spring of 1977. West Woods Bible Chapel in Hamden was helpful in getting the work at Westville off the ground. In 1978, the assembly moved into the Edgewood Club building at 201 Alston Avenue, and in 1984, purchased the lot and building. Jack Spender, who taught an early Bible study on New Testament church principles, was influential in starting the Westville assembly, along with Ralph and Lunda Kirchhofer, Peter and Pam Herndon, Dill and Katie Ewen, and John and Karen Cramm.

Joe Pratt, Ed Anthony, Eric Broadbent, and Wally Van Wyck have also served as elders. Full-time workers Jack Spender and Ken Hardisty are supported by the assembly. Westville Bible Chapel has about 80 adults and youngsters in attendance.

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From its beginning in 1979, the Cheshire Bible Chapel in the town of Cheshire about 15 miles south of Bristol, had a vision for a work in Bristol to serve the families who traveled down from that area. In 1983, the Bristol Bible Chapel began in the Bristol Boys and Girls Club building and has continued to meet there since. Six or eight families from Cheshire Bible Chapel, including one elder and two deacons, along with Jack Spender, initiated the assembly in Bristol. Those active in leadership at Bristol Bible Chapel have been Ronald Russell, Brian Sorel, and Daniel Symolon. About 80 adults and youngsters attend the assembly.

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The present Groton Bible Chapel has its roots in a Sunday School work begun in 1919. Herbert and Bella Mackenzie had immigrated to the U.S. in 1900, and were followed in 1906 by William and Florence Ward, both families settling in Rhode Island. Both families had been in assemblies in the British Isles, and initially fellowshipped at the Westerly Gospel Hall in the town of Westerly, RI at the Connecticut state line. In 1917, both families were employed and lived in Groton, about 18 miles away in Connecticut, but continued at the Westerly assembly. Desiring to start an assembly where they lived, they began an afternoon Sunday School in a rented store front at 452 Thames Street. The work attracted many people, among whom were the Chiapperini, Post, Gore, Orkney, and Page families.

In 1920, evangelists John Rankin and Hugh McEwen held tent meetings in the town. Many were

saved, and many joined in the Sunday School work. The Deady, Weiser, Whipple, Conghlin, and Gregg families came at this time, as well as Joseph Ward from England. The Christians began to Break Bread as the Groton Gospel Hall in that year in the store front. In the mid 1920s, William and Mary Campbell joined the fellowship and became leaders. For the remainder of the 1920s and 1930s, the church stayed at about 20 adults in fellowship. The Sunday School work remained as the chief outreach and focus of work.

By the late 1930s, some in the assembly felt the need to move the assembly from its separatist stance to the mainstream of evangelicism. World War II brought more into the fellowship who shared this view. In 1949, a new Groton Gospel Chapel was completed at 81 Poquonnock Road.

David and Elsie Ward were commended as workers for the assembly in 1948. Hilmar and Ruth Burgess came in 1949 to join the work, and Bob and Barbara Campbell came in 1956. These dedicated workers, with others, had much to do with the substantial growth of Groton Gospel Chapel. The afternoon Sunday School was still a major feature of the assembly, but in the mid to late 1970s, had evolved into a Family Bible Hour comprising 500 to 600 adults in two services.

In 1959, the Christians purchased a 3.5 acre lot, knowing that needed expansion at their present location was not possible. Ground breaking for the Christian Education wing of the new chapel took place in 1961. Construction and dedication of the sanctuary occurred in 1973, and final construction of the gym took place in 1985. A name change to Groton Bible Chapel took place in 1973.

Among the many workers commended by the assembly, we mention Carlos Cerqueira, commended to work among the Portuguese in Rhode Island. The assembly has yearly evangelistic crusades and strong missions and visitation programs. About 750 adults and youngsters attend the assembly today.

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Community Bible Chapel in Brooklyn, near the eastern edge of Connecticut, was begun in 1987 by David Bell and Steve Chuiek. The small assembly (up to 30 adults and youngsters) has met in homes and other locations over the years. David Bell and Steve Chuiek have served as the leaders.

An assembly was established in South Norwalk in 1952, following Bible studies led by David Ward in the home of Cliff and Isabel Foley. Harold Harper gave help in establishing this new work, which became the South Norwalk Gospel Chapel . Due to the high cost of living in the area, young couples who had been saved were forced to move, and the assembly was discontinued in 1995.

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Waterbury Christian Fellowship began to meet in September 1997. The assembly has been meeting in the Sheraton Hotel. The work started as a home Bible study in the home of Paul Forcucci, with Jack Spender teaching the studies. It started as an outreach to Kennedy High

School, where Mr. Forcucci was teaching. The group has had the support of Cheshire Bible Chapel since the beginning.

The principal people initiating the assembly were Paul and Maria Forcucci, Jack and Ruth Spender, John and Foida Monroe, and Juan Torres. Waterbury Christian Fellowship is now waiting for the Lord to identify elders to lead the assembly. About 65 adults and children are in the assembly.

Sources:

Questionnaire responses and other correspondence

The 75th Anniversary of the Groton Bible Chapel, 1919-1994, by David Ward

The History of Concord Bible Fellowship, by William E. Houston, 1999

Letters of Interest, October 1953, p. 5; November 1953, p. 3; May 1957, p. 3 February 1982, p. 6

Rhode Island

The Pawtucket Gospel Hall has its roots in a Gospel series held in Central Falls, near Pawtucket, in the late 1800s. The assembly was formed soon after that. The Pawtucket Gospel Hall was opened April 9, 1916. It served for nearly three-quarters of a century, ultimately turning its property over to a Portuguese group of Christians in mid 1981.

Knowing that one out of every seven people living in south eastern Rhode Island and Massachusetts are Portuguese, T. Ernest Wilson contacted the Christians at Buttonwoods (see below) about Carlos Cerqueira, forced out of Angola and seeking the Lord's will for place of service. John Farrell was able to arrange for his entrance into the country, a job among Portuguese-speaking people, and housing. The Pawtucket assembly offered their building for times when they were not using it. So the Cerqueira family began their work of ministering to the Portuguese and establishing a Portuguese-speaking assembly. (See Ethnic section. Other assemblies in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that conduct meetings in Portuguese are also discussed in the Ethnic section.)

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The Providence assembly started soon after the Pawtucket work began. It was called the Providence Assembly of Christian Brethren and met in various rented facilities, primarily in upper rooms. It was eventually termed the Providence Gospel Hall. Hugh Thorpe, an itinerant worker, helped in the start of the Providence work. The assembly was composed of Scottish and Irish brethren who did not always see eye to eye, and in 1924 or 1925, the assembly divided.

The Irish group moved to the northern part of the city and subsequently built their own building on Rochambeau Avenue, calling it the Rochambeau Avenue Gospel Chapel. The leading brother in the Rochambeau work was George Megaughin.

There was no fellowship between the two assemblies, and most New England assemblies chose to interact with the Rochambeau group.

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The Scottish group continued in rented rooms in the center of Providence and kept the old name, Providence Gospel Hall. The leading brothers there were Robert Brodie, an excellent Gospel preacher who would often preach on street corners, and Archibald Murdoch, who was a Bible teacher often consulted by teachers at the Providence Bible Institute to explain difficult passages. Hugh Thorpe, T. Ernest Wilson, Herbert Webber, and John and Betty McGehee were among the many who ministered at the Providence assembly when in the area.

In 1941, Mr. Brodie died, and Mr. Murdoch took the major responsibility at the Providence Gospel Hall for many years. In 1943, the assembly moved into a small former drug store on Route 1, the major highway through the state. It had seating for 50, and had four Sunday School rooms and a kitchen. This was during World War II, and the Providence Gospel Hall along with other evangelical groups established a Victory Servicemen's Center and helped staff it. The

assembly maintained a high profile in the weekly Youth For Christ rallies. These contacts brought in many young Christians and on Sunday afternoons the Gospel Hall was filled.

When Mr. Murdoch became disabled after the war, Stuart Garver, Registrar of the Providence Bible Institute, provided much of the teaching and pastoral care. John Farrell took an active role in the assembly until he married and moved to New Jersey in 1951, fellowshiping at Woodside Chapel in Fanwood, NJ . Robert Campbell and Dorsey Merrills became leaders in the assembly then, until they both moved from the area. John Farrell and his wife then returned to leadership in the assembly.

Joy Campbell, Robert Campbell's sister, was invited to conduct a series of five 5-day Bible clubs in the Buttonwoods district of Warwick, south of Providence. Interest and attendance were great. Thus encouraged, about 10 people committed to establishing an assembly in the area and had their first Remembrance meeting at a community club house in September 1957. Samuel Thorpe, Sr. and family joined at that time and were a great help.

Area assemblies renewed their fellowship with the new Buttonwoods Assembly and began a coordinated effort in conducting Vacation Bible Schools, with Jim Harshaw doing the teaching. Many children were saved in these outreaches, and the Buttonwoods assembly had to rent space in a school to accommodate all the children. This school was subsequently used for Sunday Schools. Mel Wistner headed the VBS work for a couple of years, with attendance well over 100.

Soon, Frank Stebbings and Jack Fish came into fellowship and added much to the leadership. By the third year, the assembly realized the need for their own chapel, and in May 1961 Buttonwoods Bible Chapel was completed. Work with children and teens grew rapidly and in 1968, a 5000 square foot addition was built. Dick Polcyn and his family were invited to assist in the work in the 1970s. They reached out to young people in the drug culture, and many were saved and have gone on well. In 1980, a preschool program was established at the chapel, and more recently a day care program has been initiated. A Narcotics Anonymous group meets in the chapel every week, headed by a brother in the assembly.

About 100 people attend Buttonwoods Bible Chapel regularly. Douglas Brush, John Farrell, and Wesley Gardner are the current elders.

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Many of the young people reached by the Polcyns at Buttonwoods lived a couple of towns away from the chapel, and began having their own Bible studies there. They soon started their own assembly as a house-church, and later rented a school auditorium in Warwick for Sunday mornings. As Warwick Believers Fellowship, they continue as an assembly. Buttonwoods suggested that they unite with them, but Believers Fellowship has a ministry they feel can be served best as a house-type church. Fellowship is good between the two assemblies. Warwick Believers Fellowship continues to meet at Harold Scott Elementary School.

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Hope Bible Chapel in Bristol was started by Wesley Gardner, perhaps in the late 1960s, and

closed in 1990. The Gardner family then joined the fellowship at Buttonwoods.

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The Christian Brethren of Coventry, a town near West Warwick, was started by Paul Shaw in the mid 1970s. By the late 1970s, the assembly had adopted the name Pawtuxet Valley Bible Chapel. Allen Moores was an elder there. It closed in about 1991. Mr. Shaw fellowships at Buttonwoods and conducts the Sunday afternoon chapel service at the Federal Detention Center.

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When the Westerly Gospel Hall closed its doors, Groton Bible Chapel inherited the old building. The elders at Groton had a vision for many years of reviving a work there, and several attempts were made. In 1984 they approached several men who were involved in ministry at Groton Bible Chapel and asked them to consider hiving off to form a new work in the Westerly area.

A small group of believers thus began meeting on alternate Wednesday evenings in a home to study the word. Among them were Gregory Benoit, Andrew Bonner, Paul Edgerley, Sal Galtieri, and Joe Higgins, and their families. Andy Bonner and Greg Benoit were already ministering to teenagers in the Westerly/Ashaway area. This Bible study grew into a Breaking of Bread service comprising about 30 adults.

In 1985 the new assembly began renting the Ashaway Seventh Day Baptist Church building. This was one of the oldest church buildings in the area, a building that had been moved by oxen a hundred years earlier from the nearby town of Westerly. The Seventh Day Baptist believers met on Saturday and Ashaway Bible Chapel met on Sunday.

The youth ministry continued to grow after the chapel began to meet, and it provided a key source of growth as the young people began to start families of their own. In 1997 Ashaway Bible Chapel moved from the old Seventh Day building into a store-front in downtown Westerly, where it is still meeting at this time, and consists of about 100 people.

Sources:

Questionnaire responses and other correspondence
Historical Remembrances of Buttonwoods Bible Chapel, by John Farrell, 1999

Vermont

Northern New England has often been characterized as spiritually cold; the liberal church there is often the only sign of religious activity. Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine difficult states for the Gospel and in particular a New Testament church.

An assembly in Woodbury, north of Montpelier, first started to function as an assembly in 1947, and was known as the Woodbury Gospel Hall. Edwin Corliss and his wife and brothers and sisters, with their families, were the principal people starting the assembly.

Edwin and Nina Corliss had been saved in the early or mid 1920s through contact with Nick Vandetta while working in Connecticut. Concerned for his relatives who had never heard the Gospel, Mr. Corliss returned to Vermont and invited Mr. Vandetta and others to come preach the Gospel. His sister, Flossie Parker, made her home available for this purpose. By about the mid 1920s, many in the extended Corliss family and others had accepted Christ.

Through the influence of brethren preachers such as Samuel Rea, Sr., the Christians desired to gather to the Lord's name alone. Flossie and Glenn Parker gave the building across the road from their home in Woodbury to be used as a hall in 1946; local Christians remodeled the building, and within a year, the first Remembrance meeting was held there. Many locals were saved and the Sunday School was active.

People from the Hardwick area, five miles north, began coming to Woodbury to fellowship in the meeting. In 1960, property was purchased in Hardwick and a hall was built on Lower Cherry Street. The assembly continues as the Hardwick Gospel Hall. Until the 1980s, various members of the Corliss family were the leaders of the assembly. Since then, leadership has been taken by Royce Griffith, Robert J. Rea, Jr., and William Scott. About 45 adults and youngsters attend the assembly today.

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Rutland is a city of modest size in central Vermont. Bethany Bible Chapel in Rutland started in 1994 in the home of Robert and Bonnie Lucas. Having lived in Philadelphia for several years while Robert attended the Philadelphia College of the Bible, and fellowshiping at Ardsley Bible Chapel, they had felt a burden to return to Vermont and start a work in the area.

They and another brother began the work, but it never grew beyond a few. When this brother left, the Lucas' had sole responsibility for the work, and soon just Robert and Bonnie were Breaking Bread each Lord's Day. Their home now serves as a haven of rest for the Lord's servants who are passing through the area. Their witnessing activity is mainly on a one-to-one basis and through weekly Bible studies. Mr. Lucas is active in a teaching ministry throughout the northeast, and Bonnie Lucas writes a newsletter for women entitled *Abigail Voices*, which is mailed to about 500 women throughout the US, Canada, and Australia.

Sources:

Questionnaire responses and other correspondence
50 Years, Kept Safely Kept, A History of Hardwick Gospel Hall, 1997

New Hampshire

Historically, New Hampshire has been a difficult state in which to establish assemblies. In the far past, assemblies have existed at Nashua, Keene, and Manchester. However in 1953, there were no assemblies in the state. Arthur Dewhurst pioneered extensively in New Hampshire, seeing quite a few saved, but little assembly activity. Four assemblies are listed in recent Walterick Address Books.

An assembly developed in Barrington probably in the early 1950s. It grew out of the Sunnyside Christian School and was started by Mr. and Mrs. Phillip E. Strout. About 25 gathered to Remember the Lord on Sunday mornings. People came from long distances to attend the Barrington Assembly, which also attracted a few students from the University of New Hampshire and the Sunnyside School. The assembly continued for perhaps two decades.

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Concord has had an assembly since the late 1960s. While living in Honduras in 1962, William (Nick) and Barb Houston met missionaries Bill and Kay Tidsbury in a home Bible study. The Houstons were young Christians and were instructed by the Tidsburys in the way of the New Testament church, and soon the Houstons were in fellowship in a Spanish-speaking assembly in the city of Progreso. The Houstons began using their home as a hospitality center for missionaries in Honduras.

In 1964, the Houstons decided to return to their home area of Contoocook, New Hampshire and spread the Gospel to their friends and families. Arthur Dewhurst came up from Massachusetts to help with Bible studies in their home. These studies grew to about 30 persons in regular attendance, and a few were saved. Mr. Dewhurst wanted an assembly established there, but the Houstons felt they needed to go back to Honduras to work with the Tidsburys and other missionaries and to work with the assemblies there.

However, in 1964, the Tidsburys returned to their home area of British Columbia to help establish an assembly in Dawson Creek, and the Houstons joined them there. The assembly work in Dawson Creek went well and grew to about 30 believers. In 1968, the Houstons returned to New Hampshire, to the Concord area where Arthur Dewhurst was working with three families in establishing an assembly meeting in the Pineconia Grange Hall Assembly on Ormond Street in Concord. The Houstons joined in the effort, and the Lord added more Christians.

For several years, the assembly took no name as they continued to meet at the Grange Hall. The Houstons were active in pastoring the assembly, which was growing slowly. After Mr. Dewhurst became elderly, James and Janette Harvey came and were valuable in the assembly. Jack and Nina Pollard and Dave and Ron Ward from Massachusetts gave significant help. Bruce and Cindy Lawson joined the fellowship in the 1970s and were active leaders. Bruce Lawson was an elder for about 20 years.

In the late 1970s, with the help of a loan from Stewards Foundation, the believers purchased an

acre of pine grove on the east side of Concord, and put an A-frame building on it. At that time they took the name Pine Grove Bible Assembly.

The Dale Gagnons arrived at the assembly after that, and helped in several ways, including pastoring, administration, music, and hospitality. Mr. Gagnon became one of the leaders, along with William Houston, Jim Blanchard, and Pete Stohrer, although the assembly had no recognized elders at that time. Many gifted believers were added in that decade.

A split over leadership issues occurred in 1979, with some families staying at the Pine Grove facility, and others meeting in the Houston home. The latter group soon began renting the city's Ward Seven Building on West Street for assembly meetings. Midweek Bible studies met in various homes. In 1986, this fellowship purchased a small church building at 21 Dunklee Street on the south end of Concord where it continues to meet as the Concord Bible Fellowship. The church has grown to about 100 in fellowship, half of which are young adults and children.

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His Mansion Ministries, formed in 1971 to help reclaim the lives of troubled youths, moved in 1979 from Wauregan, CT to Deering, NH, northwest of Manchester. Before long, people from the area began to meet for worship with the Mansion family, and so in October 1979, the Christians formed Wolf Hill Chapel in Deering, in which Stan Farmer, Hal Moore, and Tom Turi were the founding elders. Later the name was changed to Long House Bible Chapel to reflect the commonly used name of the property.

In 1981, desiring more visibility to the surrounding towns, they moved to nearby Hillsborough and met in the Hillsborough-Deering High School cafeteria, giving their assembly its present name of Contoocook Valley Bible Chapel. Rob Christenson joined the leadership team in 1982. The church grew and needed larger facilities. The abandoned Contoocook Valley Inn, a historic coach inn in the center of town, was purchased in 1983 and renovated. The church first gathered there in 1985. Contoocook Valley Bible Chapel is very much a community church and because of its origins, young people have tended to be a significant part of its composition. About 130 persons attend services each week. Contoocook Valley Bible Chapel has an active interest in missions, commending several of its members to serve the Lord at home and abroad, on short and long term missions.

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Calvary Bible Fellowship in Westmoreland in southwest New Hampshire began in 1993, not having derived from another assembly. David Calhoun, Robert Rummell, and Dale Hubbard were those who started the meeting, and are the recognized leaders, waiting for the time when the assembly will be able to recognize elders. About 40 adults and youngsters attend the meeting.

Sources:

Questionnaire responses and other correspondence
Letters of Interest, October 1953, p. 5; May 1957, p. 3

Maine

The Madison Gospel Hall, north of Augusta, began in 1951 through the efforts of Ervin Wacome, Sanford Wacome, Ralph Crouch, Effie Emery, and Nina Henry and their families. The group met first for four months at a schoolhouse at Blackwell Corner, then for 12 years on Main Street. In 1964, the assembly moved to 84 Old Point Avenue, and from 1986 to the present have been at their current location on Highway 148, Madison. Those active in leadership have included Ervin Wacome, Gene Aubrey, and Gerald K. Paine. About 10 adults and children attend the Madison Gospel Hall.

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Grace Fellowship Bible Chapel in Union, a small town east of Augusta, began as a home Bible study. Not then aware of the brethren assemblies, several people had left their denominational affiliations, or were new believers, and met to search the scriptures. Later they were helped by the believers at Spring Hill Gospel Hall in Westbrook, near Portland. In 1970, the believers identified with the brethren. After meeting in homes in Union, the group met in space in the Union Odd Fellows Hall, then at a Grange hall in nearby Warren, and since 1983 have met in their own building in East Union. The leaders have been William Street, Roy Beverly, Joe Paradise, and Donald Sabins. The assembly has commended workers to serve the Lord in New Guinea. About 40 adults and youngsters attend on a typical Sunday.

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