

# In His Name

A HISTORY OF ASSEMBLIES OF CHRISTIANS

WHO HAVE GATHERED IN THE NAME

OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

FOR THE PAST HUNDRED YEARS

IN THE CITY OF TORONTO, ONTARIO.

**JOHN S. ROBERTSON**

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Published by the Committee of

**"FOOD FOR THE FLOCK"**

**853 BLOOR ST. W.**

**TORONTO, CANADA**

**"IN HIS NAME"**

by JOHN S. ROBERTSON

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FIRST PRINTING MARCH, 1960

PRINTED IN CANADA

## PREFACE

Without the help and encouragement of many of the Lord's people, this story of the Assemblies, in Toronto, could never have been completed. We would have liked to present a more comprehensive treatment, but such a task would have overtaxed the author's capacity. It is his sincere hope that another will take up the challenge and supply what is wanting in this volume.

Our interest was first awakened in 1941, when the late Mr. Albert Jackson gave us a brief summary of the history of Central, at our Annual Fellowship Tea. When the writer's mother-in-law, Mrs. Samuel Cleland, was suddenly called home, in 1942, we were made to realize that links with the past were being severed yearly. Only a few, who have a personal knowledge of the Assemblies sixty years ago, remain, and we are greatly indebted to Mr. Fred Watson, Mrs. Robert Telfer, Mrs. Robert Hamilton and Miss Eva Watson for their recollections.

Little documentary evidence has been preserved, but we would like to thank Mr. Gordon Ironside, Mr. Arthur Mallory and Mr. Ernest Turnbull for their contributions. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge

receipt of a diary and an Assembly record given to us by the late Mr. Fred Quirk.

The number who provided pictures is legion. We are grateful to Mr. William Pell for permission to use the pictures from the book on the life of Mr. W. J. McClure and to Letters of Interest for publishing our request for same. Indeed we would like to thank all who responded to our appeal.

Wherever possible, we have sought to give credit for information given, in the body of the text. We fear that someone may have been overlooked. If such be the case, we beg to be forgiven.

The painstaking and unstinted labour of our brother Boyd Nicholson in preparing the manuscript and pictures for publication is gratefully acknowledged and we would like to thank him especially for the manner in which he has captured the spirit of the text in his book cover design.

Finally we would like to say how much we appreciate Mr. James Gunn's contribution, in the chapter, "As I Recall It." Going back over more than fifty years, our brother recaptures, with nostalgic longing, the spirit of love and fond fellowship that made those days so precious.

As this work goes to press, we are humbled by the thought that it cannot help but reveal the author's

limitations, but throughout our research we found abundant evidence that ours is a God that never fails. May He continue to bless the testimony of those who seek, in all simplicity, to gather, "In His Name." May the invocation of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13:20-21, come to us with renewed meaning and significance as we face the future: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

J. S. R.

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**In His Name**





## Chapter One

### THE FIRST MEETINGS

At the very outset, it should be made clear that the following is meant to be a purely historical account of the beginning, growth and development of those Assemblies, in Toronto, that have sought to meet together in the firm assurance of the Lord's promise that, "Where two or three are gathered together, in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20). That there have been divisions among these Assemblies is only too well known. To seek, to explain, in detail, the causes and results of these cleavages is neither profitable nor edifying. Mention will be made of them, only in so far as is necessary, to maintain the continuity of the narrative. Particular attention will be paid to Central Gospel Hall and those Assemblies most closely linked with it historically.

Although the history of the Assemblies, in Toronto, does not yet cover one hundred years, it is no easy task to trace its development, with positive certainty. Testimonies appeared in a number of locations, for brief periods, as immigrants, moving to the New Land, sought to meet after the pattern they had been taught in the Homeland. In many cases, we have no way of knowing what this pattern was, or who the

Christians were. Their abhorrence for any name that might be interpreted as sectarian was not shared by the compilers of the City Directory, where their places of meeting were designated variously as: "Church (Plymouth Brethren), Tabernacle, Hall, Gospel Rooms, Gospel Hall." In some instances, a place is listed as Plymouth Brethren with a pastor named, obviously a mistake on someone's part. These facts, plus a lack of documentary evidence, has made our task a difficult one. However, advertisements appearing in the Toronto Evening Telegram have proved invaluable in fixing dates and locations; for there, the nomenclature is clear, having been selected by the believers themselves. Needless to say, our best source of information has been those among us who, because of age or family connection, have been able to throw light on what did take place in the early days.

Perhaps we shall never know the name of the first person, in Toronto, to embrace the truth of, "gathering in His name," nor is it at all likely that time will ever reveal the first place where Christians met, in this City, to, "remember the Lord," in simple New Testament fashion. Writing from here on September 17, 1862, Mr. J. N. Darby had this to say, "I have had meetings at houses where no one dreamed of." From this, we gather the saints had no Hall. How-

ever, a book on, "Lectures on the Second Coming," by J. N. D. shows that they were delivered in the, "Meeting House, Alexander Street," March through June, 1863.

In the spring of 1865, Mr. Darby returned to the City for a Conference. At a later date he wrote, "There are not more than 250 brethren walking intelligently and happily in all Canada." He further spoke of his converts, one of whom was the Governor of the Jail and he predicted that more meetings would open up. In 1866, mention is made of a Church of the Plymouth Brethren, in the City Directory. This marks the first recognition of such by this publication. It was on Alexander Street, between Yonge and Church Streets. Under street listing it is named, "Primitive Brethren Church," a somewhat humourous, though inaccurate, appellation.

The late Mr. Robert Harvie of Wesmoreland Grace and Truth Hall is the only Christian I have met who could recall this Church. At the time of our interview, (8 March, 1948), Mr. Harvie was in his 92nd year and still able to go to his place of business every day. He had been associated with the baptists when he first came to Toronto, but God led him to take his place with Christians meeting in the Tabernacle, 14 Albert Street. This was an Exclusive meeting, but

it had no fellowship with the Alexander Street Church.

The Albert Street centre first appeared in the City Directory of 1873. It was designated, "The Tabernacle." Dr. Mulvany, in his book, *Toronto: Past and Present*, had this to say: "Brethrenism is well represented in Toronto, the meetings being held in the old octagonal meeting house on Albert Street. The system is low-church protestantism pushed relentlessly to its logical consequences, no ministry, no Sabbath, no sacrament, no prayers." Such was the indictment of one who might have known better, had he cared to stop in and see how the Christians sought to obey the Lord as they found instruction from the Word.

We have spoken to two others who knew, from first hand, something about 14 Albert Street. Both were identified with Markham Street Tabernacle at the time we contacted them. Mrs. Webb had attended the meetings there before joining with Mr. McKenzie on Elizabeth Street, and Mr. Bark had been a Sunday School scholar in this centre of worship. Both confirmed the observation of Mr. Harvie that the main auditorium was circular in form. Mr. Bark added that Lord Cecil had met with the Christians there.

During the latter part of the decade beginning with 1870, The Tabernacle seems to have been the lone centre of Assembly activity, sufficiently large to attract the attention of the publishers of the Directory. It was in this period, however, that Mr. Donald Munro visited Toronto.

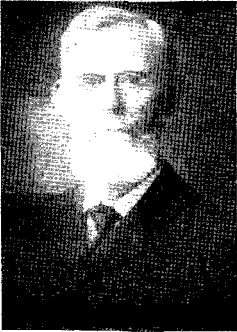
Mr. John Ritchie, in his book on the life of Donald Munro, recorded this visit in these words: "In January 1875, Mr. Munro and Mr. Smith came to Toronto. There was but one small meeting of Christians, but no suitable place for the preaching of the Gospel. After looking about for some time, they found a hall in Bay Street which they could rent for fifty dollars a month. They did not have that sum between them and they would not begin until they were able to do so, clear of debt. They were confident that if it was God's will that they should preach there, the money would be sent for the rent. Walking along the street with his heart lifted to God in prayer for guidance, Mr. Munro met Mr. John Ironside who handed him a letter he had received for him. It had come a long distance by mail and had reached Toronto that morning. When opened, it was found to contain twenty-five dollars which they used for the rent of the hall, and commenced meetings at once. They continued preaching the Gospel and teaching the truth for

five weeks, and the Lord gave rich blessing with the Word. A number of bright cases of conversion resulted, many of the Lord's people were restored, revived and refreshed to follow on in His ways, and a number were gathered unto His name."

No mention was made by Mr. Ritchie of either the location or the personnel of this, "one small meeting," so we must look elsewhere for that information.

Mr. E. Schuyler English, in his book, *H. A. Ironside, A Biography*, tells how the home of John Ironside became, "a haven of rest for itinerant preachers of the Gospel." Says he, "Among the most frequent visitors to the Ironside home in Toronto were two Scotch evangelists, who usually travelled together. One of them was very tall and wore a long brown beard; the other was quite short; his beard was long also, but it was black, and his eyebrows were bushy and very shaggy. His name, a very common one, was John Smith: but not so his sobriquet, which was 'Hell-fire Jack'." The first mentioned was, of course, Donald Munro.

John Ironside, who came to Canada as a youth, took his training in the Merchants' Bank. When he moved to Toronto from Western Ontario, he found Christians of like views meeting on Elizabeth Street.



DONALD MUNRO



JOHN SMITH



WALTER MCKENZIE



JOHN IRONSIDE



HENRY IRONSIDE



ALEXANDER MARSHALL



DONALD ROSS



T. D. W. MUIR



To understand the place of this testimony in our narrative, we must return to the work of J. N. Darby in the City.

Among Mr. Darby's early converts here, were a Mr. and Mrs. Walter McKenzie, grandparents of Miss Carpmael of Central. Mr. McKenzie, described by Mrs. Webb as a man of decided opinions and firm views, disagreed with Mr. Darby on questions of local discipline, and when their views could not be reconciled, he moved out to establish a testimony along more open lines. It was to this centre that Donald Munro and John Smith came. Further confirmation of this is borne out by two letters in the possession of Mr. Gordon Ironside of Orillia.

The first letter, dated March 8, 1878, was written by John Ironside to his brother Henry, father of Gordon, and reads in part, "Brother Dowdell has left and joined the Baptist church again. I believe his pride was hurt by Mr. McKenzie speaking to him of his addresses not being to edification." The same epistle indicates that there was at least a speaking acquaintance with other meetings in the City, for it continues, "E. I. Checkley, one of the clerks at the bank has, I believe, left the Church of England and broken bread with the Exclusives and I have been speaking to him.

Consequently expect to go with him on Monday to see Mr. Grant about the ground of gathering."

The second letter was written in the same year, on the occasion of the sudden passing of John Ironside. It was written by John Smith who took the funeral. He wrote, "I was never in a more solemn meeting. The only unsaved at the funeral were the bank clerks who were all there from the manager down. At the grave, Brother McKenzie prayed in the Holy Ghost and very feelingly." Among those named as present at the funeral by Mr. Smith were James, John and Jennie McArthur. The latter was the mother of Mrs. Addison Taylor and the Welstead sisters, Georgiana and Grace, all of whom are at Central today.

An advertisement appearing in the Toronto Evening Telegram of March 15, 1879, fixes the location of the meeting in that year. There it is stated, "Mr. Donald Ross of Scotland will continue his meetings in the Elizabeth Street Hall at the head of Walton Street." Consequent advertisements show that Donald Ross was there for at least three weeks.

There is no record that Donald Ross ever returned to the Elizabeth Street Hall, and our thought on the matter is that his visit to the City marked the beginning of a move towards the establishment of a

centre embracing the principles of what are commonly called the, "Open Brethren." As early as 1876, Mr. Darby had described the situation in Toronto as one of confusion, and we know that in the early 80's there were two separate Exclusive groups meeting, one at Yonge and Maitland and one at Yonge and Alexander Streets.

In May 1879 Donald Ross preached with Mr. T. D. W. Muir in a tent at 644 Yonge Street, opposite Charles Street and later Mr. Moyse of Australia joined in this venture. The following year Mr. Alexander Marshall conducted a Gospel campaign first in the Opera House and later in the Temperance Hall on Temperance Street. Mr. Henry Ironside was his co-worker for a time in these meetings.

Sometime during this period, Brock Street Temperance Hall emerged as the centre championing open principles.

## Chapter Two

### **BROCK STREET TEMPERANCE HALL**

Both Brock Avenue Gospel Hall and Central Gospel Hall had their roots in Brock Street Temperance Hall. This building stood on Brock Street, at the

corner of Little Richmond. Christians in the east-end of the City, early, associated themselves with the believers here and in later years their labours led to the building of Broadview Gospel Hall.

In 1880, Spadina Avenue, south of Queen, was called Brock Street. Hence the name of the Hall. Later, Little Richmond was renamed Farley Avenue, and the Christians often referred to their centre as the Farley Avenue Hall. The use of this designation avoids confusion with Brock Avenue Gospel Hall which came later, as we shall see. Farley Avenue was the first street south of Queen, on the west side of Brock. It has, long since, been swallowed up as commercial property as the City grew.

The late Mr. Albert Jackson, in an address at the inauguration of Central's Annual Fellowship Tea in 1941, attributed the opening of Farley to a desire on the part of some, then in fellowship on Elizabeth Street, to open a testimony in the west-end of the City. He had this group moving to Dennison Avenue in 1876 and to Brock Street the following year. With Donald Ross at Elizabeth Street in 1879, it would appear that Mr. Jackson's dates might be a year or so early. Mr. Fred Watson, whose father was Assembly correspondent for a number of years at Farley,

thought the move followed a Gospel campaign by Donald Ross.

Although Mr. Jackson expressed the view that the move was not a division, Mrs. Webb had some reservations on the degree of fellowship that existed at that time. In the course of years, the two groups followed divergent lines. Dr. Hoskins, Q.C., who was a son-in-law of Mr. McKenzie, built a hall on Buchanan Street which he called Beulah Hall. This attracted many Christians and it grew to be a very large meeting. When the property was sold to the T. Eaton Company for their College Street store, a new building was erected at 25 Charles St. E., where the name Beulah Hall was retained.

Our first positive proof that the Christians were at Farley comes from "Notes on Workers," in the March issue of "Barley Cakes," 1882. Mention is made of, "Special Meetings," in Brock Street Hall by Mr. John Smith, Mr. J. Bain and Mr. J. K. McEwen. We learn from the same source that Alexander Marshall was in Toronto in 1881 and Mr. Douglas Russell in 1882. In October of that year it was announced, "Brother Marshall has returned from Scotland and plans to make Toronto his headquarters," and in a later number, "Brother Marshall has got his home in order and is now temporarily settled in Toronto." The first

newspaper advertisement is in the Telegram of January 27, 1883, where the speakers are announced as Mr. James Campbell and Mr. William Matthews.

The student of history, soon, realizes the part played by men of strong will and conviction in the current thought and practices of their time. One readily notes the shift of emphasis as one forceful personality succeeds another. We, who claim the Lordship of Christ, would be the first to decry any such thing in the Assemblies of God's people, but anyone who would deny it does take place must be either wilfully blind or incapable of discernment. Our story will reveal that, from the time the Christians first moved out to Farley down to the present, changes have taken place. Sad to relate, the human will has sometimes outrun Scriptural conviction, and all these changes have not been to the glory of God. These have been, not so much in fundamental truth, as in point of view. It is not our intention, and indeed, it is beyond our wisdom to unravel all the conflicting courses that have resulted from these. We must merely point them out to retain the thread of our history.

There was a noticeable degree of tolerance among both the local Christians and the men who sought to minister to the needs of the saints, in this period we

have been considering. In most cases, there was a shying away from the sects, although J. W. C. Fegan of the Boys' School, Deptford, England, who was invited to speak at Farley in 1884, was the guest speaker in the Queen Street Baptist Church on his return to the City, two years later. Mr. John Davidson, who aided Mr. Marshall in his tent campaign of 1884, felt free to preach at Beulah Hall. Even as late as 1892, Mr. T. D. W. Muir shared the Gospel with Mr. J. J. Sims of Buffalo in the Assembly Rooms, Yonge and Maitland, and this meeting was the one attended by Mr. F. W. Grant.

No doubt, all were not in full agreement with this practice, and it may have been something like this that prompted Donald Ross to say of the Conference held here in 1887, "We were reluctantly present there; but the pleasure we had in seeing so many professedly gathered to His name rebuked our unwillingness to be present and the Master was speaking." Such an honest confession could not help but draw the saints closer together. Would, that that spirit had prevailed! How needful for all of us, the warning of the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 1: 10-13!

The year 1886 was an eventful one for those at Farley; for in that year Donald Munro was married and came to make his home at 22 Russell Street in

Toronto. What that meant to the Christians here will never be fully known nor appreciated. One of his first acts was to pitch a tent on Parliament Street, in his first year here, and later the same summer, on College Street. This was to prove a yearly exercise that served to bring the Gospel, in all its saving power, to this city of churches.

The Farley Avenue Assembly was very small at this time, and Mr. Munro's presence was most welcome. No doubt, it was he who was responsible for its first conference, already mentioned.

The Conference became an annual event that served to launch the activities of the year. In 1888, it began with a prayer meeting in the Hall, followed by two days of, "special meetings for Christians." This was in January, and the fact that, in succeeding weeks, James Campbell, William Matthews, J. Hali-burton and David Oliver were at Farley for Gospel meetings leads us to believe that they were the Conference speakers. Others who followed in later months were John Grimason and J. M. Carnie.

The late Mr. William Stubbs was able to give us a picture of the local scene of those days. Born in King Township in 1852, Mr. Stubbs came to Toronto as a youth. He was a baptist but, like Mr. Harvie, he soon





JAMES CAMPBELL



WILLIAM MATTHEWS



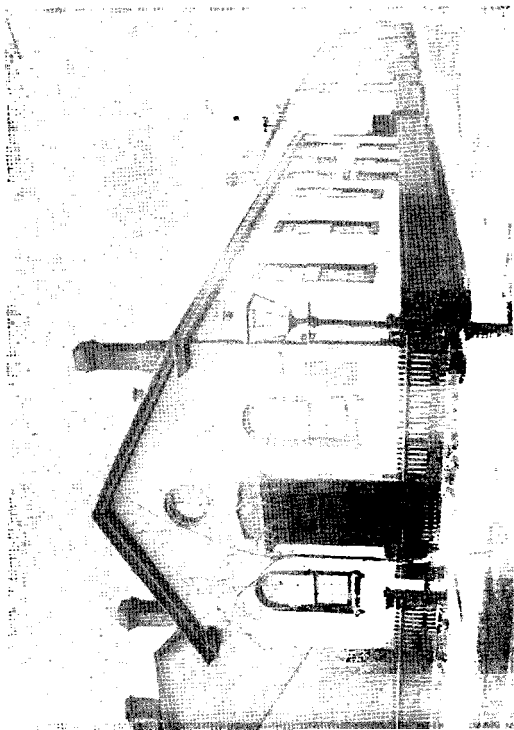
DOUGLAS RUSSELL



GEORGE WATSON



JOHN KNOX McEWEN



BROCK STREET TEMPERANCE HALL



JOHN GRIMASON



JAMES LYNN



BROCK AVENUE GOSPEL HALL

saw that the Lord would have him with those, "gathered to His name." At the time of our visit in 1947, Mr. Stubbs was in his 95th year and completely blind. His mind was clear, but, in his reminiscing, he covered the whole field of his Assembly life without thought of sequence of time.

Among those he best remembered were: Mr. George Watson, Mr. Tom Holmes, Mr. George Ironside and a brother he called Sandy Taylor. His recollections revealed that we haven't changed much over the years. The saints had to bear with a brother who insisted in getting up on Lord's Day, after the meeting appeared to be over, to give his little word. Then, there was a sister, we forbear to mention the name, whose voice was heard on the oversight through her husband. Saddest of all, was the elder who ignored the outstretched hand of his brother on Sunday because he had failed to get his own way at the business meeting a few nights before. What wonderful people we would be if we learned the lesson our Lord would teach us in Luke 22: 24-27!

To the names, already mentioned, Mr. Fred Watson was able to add those of Mr. and Mrs. John Berrie, Mr. and Mrs. W. Dewsbury and Mr. and Mrs. J. Tough. The last named brother called to Mr. Watson's mind the name of Mr. Wolfe, a noted evangelist who

first visited Toronto in the 80's. This man was not with the Assemblies, but it was through his preaching that a number, who eventually found their way to those, "gathered out," were reached and saved. Mr. Tough was one, and Mr. Albert Jackson was another. Mrs. William Beers thought that Mr. John Monypenny was saved at meetings conducted by Mr. Wolfe.

The Watson family has been associated with the Open Brethren, in Toronto, since 1888 when Mr. George Watson moved here from Bolton. His first contact was with Donald Munro and John Smith, who on the invitation of a troubled parishioner, preached in the Methodist Church at Bolton. They were made very welcome and a number of souls were saved, but, when they had the audacity to teach the eternal security of the believer, they were asked to leave.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Skeeles who arrived in Toronto in 1872 broke bread at Farley. In 1890, their daughter Jennie May, began to keep a record of all who attended the Sunday morning meeting. This very interesting book shows 128 names on the roll. Mr. Thomas Cowan, father of the late George Cowan of Central, was a regular attender, with his wife. Two young ladies from Sutton are named. They are Sophia and Edith Curtis. The former was the mother of

Gladys Kitcher, Hillary Robertson and John Cleland, all of Central, and the latter was the mother of John Vince, of Eglinton Gospel Hall. Under the M's, with Mr. and Mrs. Donald Munro, is Mrs. Mallory, mother of Arthur Mallory of Central, and under the K's, Mr. and Mrs. J. Kennedy, with their daughters Maggie and Jennie. The list also includes Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kion as well as Mr. and Mrs. James McArthur.

Another interesting feature of the book is its listing of visitors. While most came from such neighbouring points as Hamilton, Orillia, Barrie, Warminster and Bolton, a Mr. Cook from Philadelphia is recorded, and a Mrs. Holabird and her daughter from California. Among the visiting preachers noted are Mr. C. W. Ross of Chicago, Alexander Marshall, William Matthews and John Grimason.

Our sister appears to have acted as librarian for the Assembly, for the titles of some thirty-nine books appear including: The Cities of Refuge, Moody's Sermons, Notes on Exodus, The Believer's Pathway (four volumes) and The Gospel in Ezekiel. Among the most avid readers were Mr. Watson, Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Barrington and Mr. Gordon.

## Chapter Three

### **BROADVIEW AND BROCK**

The arrival of Donald Munro, in Toronto, gave quite an impetus to the work. He was indefatigable in his efforts to win souls and to instruct believers in the truth. After the Conference of 1888, held in Victoria Hall in January, he began special meetings in Farley, using a huge chart to illustrate his prophetic studies in the Book of the Revelation.

Two other small meetings had sprung up by this time, and Mr. Munro visited them. One meeting was on Walton Street, at Yonge. We have met no one who had any recollection of this centre. The other was in the Red Lion Hall, on Yonge Street above Bloor. Mrs. Robert Telfer thought she might have been to this Hall with her husband. On one occasion, Donald Munro addressed the saints there on the subject, "The Common Ground for Gathering for all Saints." Both of these meetings were of short duration.

There had been considerable exercise among the Christians in the east-end of the City and they were anxious to see a testimony started there. As a result, Donald Munro began Bible Readings in a hall at the north-east corner of Queen and Bolton Avenue, in



October 1890. Early the next year, Mr. James Kay of Portsmouth, England, took up the challenge and he began Gospel meetings in the Smith Block, where he was joined by Mr. R. Jamieson. Following these preparations, a testimony began at 639 Queen St. E., on September 27, 1891.

Among the more active of the local Christians in this area, was Mr. James Lynn. In his capacity as a letter carrier, he was in a position to know when boats carrying immigrants to the New Land would arrive. He would visit the newcomers to this strange country and invite them to the meetings. Only eternity will reveal how many owe their salvation to this simple ministry.

Mrs. Robert Telfer remembers Mr. Lynn for his many acts of kindness; for it was he who called regularly at the home of Mrs. Telfer to put out the ashes and perform the many tasks requiring the strength of a man. While her husband was away preaching, Mrs. Telfer found Mr. Lynn a real friend and helper. The late Mr. W. R. Payne, who came to Broadview Gospel Hall in 1903, told the writer a story that reveals the true value of the service rendered by this dear saint of God. "When the father of the late Eddie Adams of Danforth Gospel Hall arrived in Toronto, he was led to the home of Mr. Lynn through an address

in a hymn book containing the songs of Zion he was accustomed to singing in the Homeland. There, he was hospitably received and invited to stay until he could find a permanent place for lodging and board." Such gracious acts were the prime characteristic of this beloved brother. It was he who first rented the Gospel Rooms at 639 Queen Street West.

Mr. Robert Telfer was married in 1892 and, on coming to Toronto to take up residence, he identified himself with this east-end meeting. In April of the same year, he began a Gospel campaign there, using his chart, "The Future of the Human Race." These meetings continued throughout May and were followed by meetings for Christians by Donald Munro. Mr. W. J. McClure followed with more teaching from the Word, and thus believers were soundly taught.

The testimony continued to grow, and in 1897 it was decided to seek more commodious quarters in Poulton's Block, north-west corner of Queen and Bolton Avenue. Here the name East-end Gospel Hall was used. In 1901, the move was made to the present location on Broadview Avenue, just north of Queen Street. This was preceded by Gospel Tent work at Broadview and Paul Street. The speakers were Robert Telfer and Robert McClintock. Broadview Gospel Hall opened its doors December 29, 1901, and the

first Gospel address was by Mr. G. W. Ray, F.R.G.S. from, "the savages of Brazil."

Over the years, Broadview has had many able and willing workers. Such men as Mr. Thomas Breckles, Mr. James Roy, Mr. William Dobbin, Mr. John Clarke, Mr. James Mahaffey and Mr. Adam Ross sought to give help and guidance to the believers there. Mr. R. Boam is the correspondent today and Mr. David Garvin, the Sunday School Superintendent.

At the same time that interest in the east-end began, a number at Farley was exercised about the establishing of a testimony in the west-end. John Grimason was asked to conduct meeting in Murray's Hall, Queen West and Northcote Streets. This was in January, 1891. Further work, in that area, continued, and on November 6, 1892, eleven souls sat down to, "remember the Lord," at 1180 Queen Street West. These included Mr. and Mrs. George Watson, Mr. and Mrs. William Stubbs, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Skeeles and the young ladies, Miss Minnie Watson and Miss May Skeeles. By the following Sunday the number had risen to seventeen.

In July, 1898, this group moved to a hall on Brock Avenue, south of Dundas Street. This building lacked a basement auditorium, and in 1928, a move was made

to the present Brock Avenue Gospel Hall, north of Dundas.

William Stubbs and George Watson continued to care for the flock at Brock but others joined to give help. As time went on, Mr. Adam Walker and Mr. William Agnew arrived and shared in the burden, with Mr. Robert Hamilton adding his kindly counsel in the oversight. Mr. Hamilton served as Superintendent of the Sunday School for a time and successors in that office included Mr. William Palmer, Mr. Robert Bunting and Mr. Ormer Sprunt. The present Superintendent is Mr. Gary Seale, and Mr. William Lutley is Assembly correspondent.

Before the move to Queen Street West, the saints at Farley were to learn that, "the Lord provides." In Mr. Munro, they had an able evangelist and teacher. Now as Fred Watson so well puts it, "A real shepherd came along." This was Colonel William Beers of England. On his arrival in the City, the Colonel looked in vain for 66 Grant Street, the home of Mr. George Watson. He had no way of knowing the name of the street had been changed from Close Street. Since no one had bothered to change the street signs, the bewildered Colonel could not find his brother's home. He finally got in touch with him by mail and the meeting of these two took place at Farley, where



WILLIAM STUBBS



JAMES KAY



BROADVIEW GOSPEL HALL



COLONEL BEERS



DAVID OLIVER



JOHN MacFAYDEN



BENJAMIN BRADFORD



W. H. HUNTER



McBEAN'S HALL



W. P. DOUGLAS



DR. MARTIN



a warm hand shake sealed a sincere and lasting friendship.

The success that followed the opening of Broadview and Brock was a sure and certain sign that the Spirit was at work, in Toronto. Those left at Farley began to take thought on moving to a more central location, and on November 5, 1893, the meetings began in a building on the north-west corner of Elm and Teraulay Streets. The occasion was marked by special meetings by Robert Telfer and John Monypenny.

#### Chapter Four

### **CENTRAL GOSPEL HALL.**

The year following the move to Teraulay and Elm saw the three meetings uniting for the Conference in January. It was held in Richmond Hall, 25 Richmond Street.

The same year was marked by a visit of two missionaries from China. They were Mr. Murdith and Mr. Blandford. The former spoke at 639 Queen East; the latter at 1180 Queen West. On the same night, Mr. Trevor Francis, author of that beautiful hymn, "Saviour We Remember Thee," was at Teraulay and Elm. Later in the same year, Mr. W. P. Crombie

shared the Gospel with Colonel Beers there. A plaque honouring this evangelist is found on the west wall of the present Central Gospel Hall. Miss Carpmael relates this story in connection with this momento: "A number of Christians at Beulah Hall were interested in providing for the needs of Mr. Crombie and they instituted a fund for this purpose. When he died, they used the money left in the fund to purchase the plaque, and it was placed on the wall as a memorial."

In January 1895, the saints at Teraulay decided to call their place of meeting, Central Gospel Hall, and from that time on, the name has remained. Teraulay was the name given to the present Bay Street, north from Queen to College Street, where it ended. Since then, the name has been transferred to another street. As befitting the occasion of renaming the Hall, Donald Munro preached, the first Sunday of the New Year.

Assembly enthusiasm was never higher than in those days. The advertisements of the period invited the unsaved, "of every denomination," to come and learn how to be saved. Mr. Munro delivered a series of addresses on the, "Letters to the Seven Churches," and, in June, helped in the tent work. Both local and visiting brethren took part, and it was at this time that Robert McClintock and C. J. Stephens, two young

men at Central, began to use their gift in the spread of the Gospel.

The tent work carried on into September, with Mr. James Goodfellow, Robert Telfer and Colonel Beers helping. With the arrival of the cold weather, a room at 778 Bathurst Street was rented and the Gospel effort continued.

The late Mr. Thomas Robinson, who came to Toronto in 1895 to seek employment, remembered this place. Since it opened directly onto the street, it was not deemed suitable and was soon given up. Mrs. Fowler, nee Elizabeth Kitchen, recalls attending Sunday School there, with the Mallory children.

Mr. Robinson was saved as a young man and, when he assayed to join with the Christians, "gathered to His name," he was received with nothing more than his confession of faith. In Toronto, he sought fellowship at Central, where he found Colonel Beers the real spiritual leader. Other local believers active in Assembly affairs were Mr. Walter Weston, Mr. William Allison and Mr. George Ironside.

Summer had become indelibly linked with tent work, in the minds of many of God's children, so it is not surprising to find Donald Munro and Robert McClintock teamed up in this work in the summer of

1896. This time the location was College and Manning Avenue. So successful was the campaign there, the Central brethren decided to move their place of worship to McBean's Hall, north-east corner of College and Brunswick Avenue. Their first meeting was September 12.

Some interesting facts, concerning the testimony here, are to be garnered from a small black book, now in the possession of the writer. It was the property of Arthur Mallory whose father acted as Treasurer at McBean's Hall for a number of years. The book contains the financial accounts of Central in the years 1897 to 1901.

In terms of our highly inflated currency, the sums handled were very small. Collections for the General Fund ranged from six to twenty dollars, and the usual gift to a visiting preacher was eight to ten dollars, a considerable portion of the weekly offering. The cost of the Sunday School was correspondingly low, the summer outing never exceeding fifteen dollars. Enclosed with the book was a letter, made out to Mr. W. Allison as a receipt, for the picnic of 1900. The cost of the pavillion at the Long Branch Park Grounds was three dollars, and there was an additional charge of one dollar and twenty-five cents for milk.

The highest single item of expense was the rent of the Hall, which rose from twenty-five dollars a month in 1897 to twenty-eight by 1901. An additional six dollars is recorded for the rent of a hall on Yonge Street, in Yorkville. This was called the North-end Hall, but it is not to be confused with the one on Bathurst Street which had the same designation. A Sunday School work was carried on at the Yonge Street location, with Mr. William Vince as Superintendent.

At McBean's Hall, the room in which the meetings were held was on the second floor. A stairway from Brunswick Avenue led up to the room. Over the door hung a gas-lit sign with the name Central Gospel Hall on it. A rough sketch of this lamp is to be found in the little black book, already mentioned. Arthur Mallory recalls that the lamp found its way to their cellar when it was taken down and it proved large enough to conceal a small boy when he and his friends played hide and seek.

Many of the Lord's people of the present day remember this hall and the stirring messages that resounded from its platform. Among those best remembered are Mr. John McFayden, Dr. Martin, Mr. William McLean, Mr. Edward Stack, and Mr. John Ritchie. Missionaries too put in their appearance and Mr. Charles Swan of Africa, Mr. Kinghorn of China

and Messrs. Robert Crane and John Mitchell of Venezuela were among Central's visitors.

It was from McBean's Hall that the body of Donald Munro was borne to its last resting place. His funeral attracted saints from every Assembly in the City. Others from places far and near who had listened to his ministry joined in paying their last respects to this man of God.

## Chapter Five

### **SWANWICK AND JUNCTION**

Until near the close of the century, there had been but three Assemblies, in Toronto, following open principles. There were, of course, other meetings. In addition to the ones already mentioned, there was a meeting place of Exclusives on Gladstone Avenue, and one of a different branch on Westmoreland Avenue. Both of these meetings still carry on in the same locations to this day, although the latter one has swung over to more open principles.

Mr. Ernest Guest, in a letter to Mr. Andrew Johnston of Danforth Gospel Hall, wrote in October 1950: "I believe it was in the spring or summer of 1899 that a few Christians gathered in His name and also

started a Sunday School. The meetings were held in what is known as Brotherson's Hall. It was situated on Danforth Avenue, just west of Dawes Road, and was over a harness shop, a wagon shop and part of a blacksmith shop. It was reached by narrow creaky stairs not more than three feet wide." His letter went on to speak of the difficulties of the time. The Hall lacked all conveniences, and water was obtained from a pump across the road. Light was provided by coal oil lamps, and heat came from a small stove. Mrs. A. R. Myers added the information that the floors were so cold in winter, "there were foot stools provided for the sisters."

Mr. E. B. Steen appears to have been the most active brother in getting the testimony started, although he was greatly encouraged by others, and help was forthcoming from the East-end Gospel Hall, then at Queen and Bolton.

Before arriving at their present quarters, 2237 Danforth Avenue, the Christians met in one or two other places. For a time they were in the railway Y.M.C.A. building, next door to the York Railway Station (now Danforth). From there, they moved to Morton's Hall, 82 Swanwick Avenue; then to Snell's Hall, Gerrard and Main Street, and back to Swanwick, where they now had gas lights but still no water.

Our brother James Gunn tells us how, as a boy he took the \$4.00 monthly rent to Mr. Morton, while on his way to school.

A change became necessary at this time, and the property east of the hall was purchased. The Hall was moved to the west side of the lot, where it was converted into a bungalow, and a new hall erected. This was a big undertaking for a small Assembly, and the late Mr. Rupert Phillips arranged for a mortgage. Scarcely had the Christians moved in when they had to enlarge the building to about twice its original size.

Many, in the City today, found their way to this young Assembly. Among those who contributed to its growth and development were: Mr. Robert Steen, Mr. A. R. Myers, Mr. James Gunn Sr., Mr. David Miller, the Sheldrake brothers, Leonard and Frank, Mr. Harry Cox, Mr. Alex Sinclair, Mr. William Baillie and Mr. George Hall.

In point of number, Danforth is one of the largest Assemblies in Toronto. It is blessed with many young people and there is a real interest in the Word. Space does not permit us to deal more fully with the trials and triumphs of this growing testimony, but we must remain ever thankful for its sober and intelligent contribution to the work in the east-end. Among the older





GEORGE IRONSIDE



DANFORTH GOSPEL HALL



WEST TORONTO GOSPEL HALL

men, most active in its affairs to-day, are Mr. Reynold Woodward, Mr. James Russell and Mr. Andrew Johnston.

It was about the same time that the work began in Brotherson's Hall that others began to be exercised about new fields in West Toronto. Fred Watson tells us that, in the summer of 1899, Robert Telfer and Robert McClintock pitched a tent on Dundas Street West. The meetings went on for about twenty weeks, with a move to a store on Dundas, just west of Pacific Avenue, when cold weather set in. The believers first broke bread there.

The late Mr. W. R. Payne moved from Broadview Gospel Hall to the Junction Hall in 1908. His letter of commendation was read by Mr. Taylor who was the leading brother at that time. Among those best remembered by Mr. Payne were: Mr. John McCartney, Mr. Edward St. Clair, Mr. Joseph Downey, Mr. William Robertson, Mr. Mawhinney and Mr. James Day. The last named is still found with the saints there. Mr. Robert Bruce who served the Lord for many years in Northern Ontario left Broadview for Junction about the same time as Mr. Payne.

The first Junction Hall was built at 3001 Dundas Street West, on land purchased by Mrs. Helen Johnson, the price being four dollars a foot. The hall,

which was erected on posts, had to be enlarged shortly after it was occupied. The saints continued there until 1938, when the present West Toronto Gospel Hall was built on Pacific Avenue.

This Assembly, like Danforth, is a very large one and has many young people. It is particularly fortunate in having young men gifted in the Gospel. Among the older ones who have a care in shepherding the flock mention should be made of Mr. George Shakespeare, Mr. Fred Radford, Mr. Earl Jeffries and Mr. Herb Radford. Mr. Alex McCready acts as correspondent, and Mr. Jack Phillips is the Sunday School Superintendent.

## Chapter Six

### **TWO GREAT LOSSES**

At the turn of the century, there were five open Assemblies in happy fellowship in the Toronto area. This was the situation when Mrs. William Beers came here as the bride of the gracious Colonel, in 1901. Her husband proved to be the shepherd, while Donald Munro was the evangelist and teacher, at McBean's Hall. Mr. George Ironside and Mr. George Smith were active on the oversight, while Robert

McClintock and Charles J. Stephens were young men with a gift for the Gospel. Mr. Alex Robertson was the Superintendent of the Sunday School.

Mr. George Pinches, in a letter to the writer, tells of his arrival at Central in July 1902. He remembers the district as a very fine one with a number of select homes in the neighbourhood. The Bible Class was very large and was taught by Mr. Robert Lavery, but on his move to Winnipeg, Colonel Beers took over. He asked Mr. Pinches to relieve him. "I was shocked," wrote Mr. Pinches, "when asked to teach these men, old enough to be my father. To add to my burden, they were in the Book of the Revelation. However, God gave us wonderful help." Like Mrs. Beers, our brother remembered those days as happy ones indeed.

In the years that followed, many began to arrive from overseas and some sought fellowship at Central. Mr. Samuel Moore came in 1905. Inadvertently, he gave his letter of commendation to a brother Robert Laird, who had preceded him to Canada by one year. To the astonishment of all, this brother read the letter and then gave it to Robert McClintock, who usually performed this service.

There were arrivals weekly, and among those who came at this time were: Mr. James McMullen, Mr. James Lyon, Mr. Frank Parks, Mr. William

McBride, Mr. William Hawthorne and Mr. Charles Arey. Mr. Moore estimates that there would be about one hundred and fifty in fellowship before 1910.

Before the century was ten years old, Central was to suffer a great loss in the passing of Mr. Munro. Worn out by a life of incessant labour for God and God's people, this servant went to be with the One he loved on the tenth day of September 1908. In accordance with his own wishes, three of his closest associates took part in the funeral service, John Smith, Robert Telfer and Colonel Beers. At the graveside, T. D. W. Muir read from the Word, and W. P. Douglas prayed.

Closely linked with the work, almost from the beginning, Donald Munro brought to the saints of the City the clear unvarnished truth of Scripture. He never wavered nor yielded one iota on what he believed to be the pattern of Assembly worship, yet he was respected by all. "Had he lived," Colonel Beers was to say a few years later, "the troubles that tore the Assemblies apart would have been resolved without division." Be that as it may, no one can question the sincerity and devotedness of this saint of God, nor help but be thankful for the stability he brought to those, "gathered in His name," in Toronto.

For the record's sake, mention should be made at this time of the beginning of Maranatha Hall.

As early as 1902, there had been a meeting in College Street Hall, south-west corner of Spadina Avenue. Mr. H. A. Ironside, of Moody fame, was a frequent visitor. In 1907, Mr. Alexander Blair preached in a Gospel Hall on Salem Avenue. Since these meetings are in no way connected with Central, we do not propose to trace their history. However, it is necessary to point out that Assembly principles were known and taught in centres other than those we have been contemplating. Thus it was that in 1908 there was a number instructed in the truths we hold most dear, yet, for one reason or another, they had no Assembly affiliation.

One of these was Mr. Stephen Chapman. This brother made known to the Assemblies we have been studying, his intention to open a testimony along open lines. They, however, advised against this and urged him to seek fellowship in one already established. When this advice was not taken, the elders of the five Assemblies refused to recognize the new centre and denied it fellowship on the ground it had been set up in self will. As Fred Watson made clear to us, this was not a division. The decision to refuse fellowship was due to the manner in which the table

was set up. Unfortunately, some who could not get along where they were, moved out and were received at Maranatha without demur. Such acts made any move towards reconciliation very difficult.

It is believed that Mr. Chapman and his fellow Christians, "broke bread," on Concord Avenue before moving to a building on the south-east corner of College and Shaw Streets. This Hall, called Maranatha, was financed by Mr. James Wilkins.

The decision to ignore this centre was accepted by the majority, but, in later years, Central took steps to heal the breach and now has fellowship with the meetings that sprang from this source, namely, Olivet, Markham and Bedford Park Chapel. This move, which we believe is even as the Lord Himself would have it, has not been followed by other meetings involved in the original decision.

The years that followed were trying ones. We would gladly pass over the bitter experiences of those times. Too many in the past, and even more unhappily in the present, have taken sides on the issues involved on the ground, "Who is right?". In any of these cases should not, "What is right?" be the proper approach? Scripture is perfectly clear. I Cor. 1:10, but the mind of man is not. Vain, indeed, is he who runs ahead of



God and seeks to solve such problems according to his own particular will and wish. Many who passed through those troublesome years now agree that what happened was contrary to Scripture and God's will. One leader, in an Assembly still bound by the Orillia decision, frankly states, "Where there is a difference among brethren, division is not the answer." It was the decision to, "cut off," the Orillia meeting that brought Central its second great loss in the early years of nineteen hundred.

Colonel Beers could not, as a matter of conscience, agree with his brethren in this decision. This saintly shepherd, and we have met no one who ever questioned his grace and kindness, returned to the Old Land to seek solace. On his return to Canada, he found the situation had stiffened to the point where he was no longer welcome in the place he had worked so hard to build, so he returned once again to the Homeland, discouraged and broken-hearted. Thus, in a matter of a few years, Central lost two of its real builders, both of whom are remembered, with grateful hearts, by those who knew them best.

"At Antioch, God joined together two lovely characters as a gift for the blessing of the church: Barnabas, the shepherd; Paul, the teacher." Even so it was in Toronto. God united Donald Munro and

Colonel Beers: the former, the profound teacher; the latter, the sympathetic and understanding counsellor.

With the departure of Colonel Beers, the direction and guidance of Central fell into the hands of Mr. James Gordon and Mr. Alex Robertson, who rigidly adhered to the lines laid down by those who had forced the division. At first, this policy, though grievous to some, was accepted by the majority, and the testimony continued uninterrupted. Indeed, the main body of the believers did not become directly involved in the dispute and they continued in happy fellowship, unperturbed by the warring that went on about.

## Chapter Seven

### **BRACONDALE**

In 1910, the saints moved from McBean's Hall to one built expressly to suit their purposes, the funds being provided by Mr. Adam Walker. The new Central was at Brunswick Avenue and Sussex Street.

Among those who arrived, just prior to the move, were Mr. Addison Taylor and Mr. William McCullough. Dr. Taylor is at Central after fifty-one years, and Mr. McCullough was called home in November of 1958. These two young men were closely associated



BRUNSWICK & SUSSEX GOSPEL HALL



BRACONDAL YOUNG MEN



BRACONDALE GOSPEL HALL



120 TYRREL AVENUE

with the work that led to the testimony at Bracondale, the story of which follows, as outlined by Mr. Albert Kitcher.

In 1910, the two young men already named, together with Mr. John Bartholomew and Mr. Norman Kion rented a place at 120 Tyrrel Avenue, in the Bracondale District of Toronto. The building was a one-story structure divided by a partial wall and archway. A wooden plank served as a sidewalk leading up to the single door, at the back of the building. Light was provided by means of coal oil lamps. Some twenty or thirty chairs, to seat the audience, completed the furnishings. An attendance of seven strangers was considered good and did not, in any way, discourage the workers.

The following year, the original four were joined by Mr. Rupert Phillips, Mr. George Kion and Mr. Albert Kitcher. These brethren were interested in children and they began a Sunday School in the old building, having seven scholars the first Sunday. Nothing daunted, they began to visit the homes and invite the people, most of whom were from the working class, to send their children along.

In order to make the place more attractive, the door was moved to the front of the building, and the place painted and rough cast. This done, Robert

McClintock was invited to begin a Gospel campaign, using his chart, Two Roads and Two Destinies. The hearts of all were warmed by the salvation of a few precious souls. Shortly afterwards, the work had to be moved, but God provided a better building on the south side of Tyrrel, just west of the first one.

Still later, another move had to be made, and a tent was obtained and pitched on Benson Avenue, just west of the present hall. The need for something more permanent was now apparent, and Mrs. William Williams, mother of Mrs. John Wilkinson of Central, advanced the money to build the hall. The tent, which had been moved to the Benson-Arlington site, was taken down and Bracondale Gospel Hall rose in its place.

Greater interest and enthusiasm followed. The Sunday School, with Albert Kitcher as Superintendent, grew and an attendance as high as one hundred and thirty-five was reached. Weekly Gospel meetings were carried on and special efforts by Mr. Leonard Sheldrake, Mr. Tom Wilkie, Mr. George Gould Sr., Mr. George Gould Jr., Mr. Fred Watson, Mr. William Smith and Mr. Harold MacKay bore fruit.

In addition to this, weekly gatherings for prayer and Bible Study were convened on Tuesday evenings. The writer recalls many happy hours at these, where

help in the Word was given by Mr. Sam Moore, Mr. William McCullough, Mr. George Craik and Mr. William Hawthorne.

A note in our diary of January 5, 1939 reads: "Tonight and Tuesday night prayer meetings were held in Bracondale. They are on behalf of the Gospel effort that is to start Sunday, January 8th." Thus began a very successful series of Gospel meetings by Mr. W. G. Smith and Mr. Harold MacKay. The prayer meetings began with just a few, but grew until the basement room was full, and late-comers had to find a spot on the stairway or crowd into the furnace room. With so many on their knees, crying unto God, blessing could not help but follow.

The diary record continues: "It is always good to hear young men pray. Henderson Moore, Doug Howard, Charles Taylor, Somers Peat and Matt Fraser all took part to-night . . . It just warms your heart to be in a prayer meeting where the prayers are short and pointed. You can enter into the presence of the Lord with the speaker instead of being lost in the multitude of words."

These prayers were most surely answered. Children for whom parents had long been praying took Christ as their Saviour at those meetings. Family

circles were completed, and we had much cause to praise God.

The prayer meetings continued throughout January and on to near the end of February. This was followed by meetings for the newly saved by Harold MacKay. It was quite evident that the time was ripe to open a testimony in Bracondale.

On Sunday March 26, 1939, ninety-two were present at the, "worship meeting." Of course, some were visitors, but the majority had made up their minds to meet there. Most were from Central, but a few from other meetings joined the number.

For a short time after this, Albert Kitcher and Ernest Turnbull who had worked long and faithfully in the Sunday School continued in that work, but there was a number of young people in the new Assembly, eager and willing to serve the Lord. These took over, with Albert going to Westmount and Ernest returning to Central.

Bracondale continues to serve the neighbourhood on the Hill with the Gospel. Mr. Sam Moore is the real leader but he is assisted by his son Henderson, Mr. Herbert White, Mr. Edward Hannah and Mr. George White. Mr. Robert Young is the Superintendent of the Sunday School. There would be about one hundred in fellowship.



## Chapter Eight

### TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

The outbreak of World War I brought a new test to the Assemblies. Towards the end, conscription was introduced, and young men were called into the armed forces. While they openly confessed their sympathies to the Allied cause, they could not, as a matter of conscience, take training that had but one end in view, the killing of their fellow man. A number of newspaper clippings, taken from the daily issues of that period, and given to the writer by James Buchan of Central, tell in graphic detail the treatment of those involved.

Robert McClintock and George Stephenson appeared on behalf of the draftees, to give character evidence and to support them in their claims for exemption. Under cross questioning, Mr. McClintock readily admitted that, "a man would not be put out of the church for fighting," but he stoutly maintained the right of each believer to act in accordance with his own conscience and the Word, as God revealed it to him.

Ottawa was petitioned, but the pleas fell on deaf ears. As a result, those who firmly resolved to refuse

military training were court-martialed. The sentences meted out were severe, and, in one case, a number were sentenced to ten years in Kingston Penitentiary.

The Globe of May 1918 records the departure of five, who were to serve terms in Burwash, under a banner heading, "Go to Prison with a Song." This report reads in part, "A demonstration of a unique character and the first of its kind that ever took place at the Union Station was witnessed by passengers going to and from the trains. Five conscientious objectors en route to Burwash to serve two year terms for refusal to join the colours, handcuffed to a chain, stood on the platform and lustily sang, 'We'll never say good-bye in heaven,' this vocal effort being reinforced by a large number of their faith who were on hand to give them a rousing send-off." This exuberant outburst prompted the Sheriff to remark, "These are the first men I have ever had who were glad to go to jail."

These young men stood steadfast in the face of tremendous pressure and witnessed for the Lord. With the cessation of hostilities, steps were taken to procure their release, and they returned to their home Assemblies to carry on where they had left off.

Although Mr. McClintock had argued that it was the right of each believer to judge the question of mili-

tary service for himself, there were some who were not satisfied to leave it with the Lord, but needs must act as conscience for their brother. As a result, one or two who did don the uniform were subjected to severe criticism for their action. This baneful attitude of intolerant interference with the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of another brother has been the cause of much ill-feeling, and even open strife, among those who should be seeking to maintain unity in the bonds of Christ. Indeed, this has been the enemy's most potent weapon in sowing discord and causing division among us.

While the foregoing was cause for sorrow, it was during these war years that one or two in Central saw an opportunity to serve the Lord in North York. In 1916, Mr. Burford and Mr. Hubert Lucas Sr. started Sunday School classes in their homes. Mr. Thomas Street took an interest in this work and had a hall built in 1922, to be used in Sunday School work and as an outlet for the Gospel.

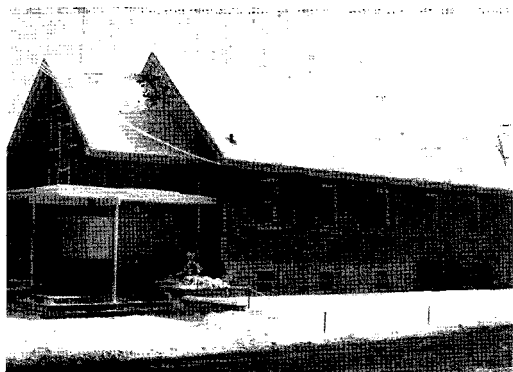
In the same year, Mr. McClintock and Mr. George Shivas had a series of meetings in the new hall, and the following year, Mr. Joseph Pearson took up the challenge of reaching the unsaved. The success of this latter campaign encouraged the Christians in that area, and they set about plans to open a testimony.

Thus on June 15, 1924, some twenty-seven met for the first time in the Lansing Gospel Hall to, "break bread." Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. H. Lucas, Mr. Thomas Street, Mr. and Mrs. George Stephenson, Mr. George Kion and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Wilkinson.

Since then, the Assembly has grown until it now numbers about seventy to eighty in fellowship. Mr. Street has since been called home, but Mr. Lucas is still very active in Assembly affairs. His son Hubert is Sunday School Superintendent and with Mr. Ernest Marsh, Mr. L. Grainger, Mr. Charles McCarthy and Mr. Robert Peat seeks to guide and direct the activities of the saints.

Jack Wilkinson, mentioned in connection with the first, "Remembrance Feast," at Lansing, came to Toronto in September 1921, from Rochester. Four years later, he moved to Sherwood Avenue, in North Toronto, where he observed many children and teenagers wandering the streets at night, with nothing to claim their interest.

After waiting on the Lord for some time, he felt led to start week-night meetings for children and, through a neighbouring doctor, he was able to rent a store on Yonge Street, near Sherwood, for one dollar



LANSING GOSPEL HALL



CONFERENCE 1911

a night. Enlisting the help of Arthur Mallory, a fellow Sunday School teacher at Central, the two of them began Children's Meetings, on November 3, 1925. About thirty-five children attended the first night and the following week saw ninety present.

Four months later, the store was rented and they were forced to look for other quarters. Mr. William Kilner wired a new room for electric lights, only to find, after one night's session, the owner had cancelled the oral contract and once again they were without a place to meet.

This might have discouraged less determined men, but help was forthcoming. Mrs. Gordon Ironside, whose husband operated a store at the time, offered them the use of a room over the store. This, they used for several months.

In spite of the problem of accommodation, interest and attendance grew, and the workers were able to get a room in the old, "Town Hall," on Montgomery Avenue, north of Eglinton. This was rent free, and promised for a year by the kindly Chief of Police. The one year stretched into three or four, but when other parties began to eye the building as a possible site for their activities, the authorities began to charge a rent of ten dollars per night. By this time, the Sunday

School had reached the two hundred mark. Central assumed responsibility for the cost.

The stay in the Town Hall ended when the City decided to tear it down to make room for garages for the growing north-end police division. With the loss of this building, it became necessary to transport the children down to Central by street car. This was made easier by the fact that the father of one of the scholars was an Inspector of the Toronto Transportation Commission.

For about a year, approximately one hundred children travelled by street car to Central. Then arrangements were made to rent the Orange Hall, north of Eglinton and west of Yonge. With the rent only twenty dollars a month, the financial burden was lightened. In the new quarters, the Sunday School passed the two hundred mark, and it became necessary to have two separate sessions to handle the classes. A most encouraging note was the teen-age group, taught by Mr. George Cowan. This class often exceeded thirty-five, and many who were saved in that class are going on well in the Assemblies throughout the City to this day.

A Gospel testimony was added to the Sunday School effort and carried on until the outbreak of World War II. At that time some of the young men



who had shared this burden were called into the armed forces.

In 1946, a number of brethren, who had been associated with Maranatha Hall, on College Street, approached the Central brethren with a view to taking over the North Toronto work. They had sold their hall and had been meeting in the West-end Y.M.C.A. Moved by their plight and seeing the advantages of the proposal, Central agreed. The Maranatha brethren joined by some from Central began to, "break bread," in the Orange Hall and continued to do so until 1953, when Bedford Park Chapel was built.

## Chapter Nine

### **SUNSHINE AND SHADOW**

In the first quarter of the present century, the Assemblies of Toronto were most fortunate to have three excellent Gospel preachers as residents of the City. They were Robert Telfer, Robert McClintock and Fred Watson. They were very active in tent work and in reaching the unsaved through special meetings. Of course, others came along to help.

Nearly every year saw some well-known speaker arrive here to bring God's messages to God's people.

In 1900, Mr. Richard Irving joined Robert McClintock under canvas and in the same year Dr. Edwin Martin made his first visit to Central. In 1901 it was James Kay and William McLean; in 1902 Edward Stack and William Matthews; in 1903 J. Haliburton for tent work and John Monypenny for ministry. In 1904 Mr. Ben. Bradford and Mr. David Oliver were together in the Gospel, while later in the year, Mr. W. H. Hunter came for ministry meetings.

Mr. James Phillips of Danforth tells how he was saved in Gospel meetings conducted by William Matthews in south Broadview in 1907. Some twenty-one souls were reached, including Tom Telfer, son of Robert Telfer, George Cowan, Norman Mahaffey and Chester Spreeman, brother of John who labours in Quebec.

All of the Lord's servants found a welcome here during those years, and conference time was a source of real blessing. At the start, the conferences had been held in January, but in the late 90's the time was changed to the Easter week-end. In 1898, Broadway Hall, 450 Spadina Avenue was the scene of the Conference and in January of the next year, Mr. Swan of Central Africa had special meetings there, sponsored by the three Assemblies. In that year the Conference was shifted to the Guild Hall on McGill Street. This

building was used off and on until 1916 when Massey Hall became the venue of the Annual Conference.

In 1909, Mr. John Ritchie was in Toronto. His addresses to the Christians in the Guild Hall were published, together with others he made while on this side of the ocean. This book, now out of print, may be found on the shelves of many who were there to hear this able speaker.

A well-known picture, taken at the Conference of 1911, shows a number of the speakers. Mr. John Trew Dickson, who arrived from the Old Land the year before, is there. He tells how his letter of commendation was read, for the first time on this side of the Atlantic, in Central and how he preached the Gospel, for the first time on this continent, from the platform of Brunswick and Sussex. Others in the picture, not already named, are Mr. Robert McCrory, Mr. Binch and Mr. J. Silvester.

The saints, in Toronto, looked forward to these yearly gatherings with pleasure and anticipation. Others came from far and near to enjoy feeding upon the Word. The names of all who came to Massey Hall to speak would make a lengthy list, but, strangely enough, it was because others, equally gifted, were not invited that 1932 marked the last year the Assemblies united together for the Conference.

The implications of the Orillia decision had not been apparent to all. When some, who had moved to other centres and sought fellowship in the Assembly in their place of residence, found they could no longer break bread where once it had been their privilege, they began to ask questions for which there was no Scriptural answer. Others, in Toronto, wanted to know why gifted men, whose messages once warmed the hearts of the saints, were not invited and, in fact, were bluntly told they were not wanted. The number of questioners grew yearly.

The late Mr. W. R. Payne told the writer how he was roundly criticized for allowing his children to go to Maranatha Hall to hear the Gospel preached by J. M. Carnie, a very able servant and one who had been a most welcome visitor at Central, in by-gone years. When two of his children professed to be saved at those meetings, some expressed doubt that their salvation could be genuine. Incidents like these multiplied, and the inconsistency of those who sought to build up walls separating God's children became a source of much distress and anguish of soul.

The matter was brought to a head when W. J. McClure asked to meet with his brethren in Toronto, to see why some objected to his ministry here but were not averse to sharing the platform with him in

other places. This meeting took place in Central, in November 1925. What happened at that gathering has no place in our story. It is all on record before God, and we must leave it in His hands to judge. Mention is made of it because it marked the turning point in the thinking of many who attended that night. It took some time to resolve this matter, but God was speaking to some hearts, and they began to realize that it was not God's will that His people should be divided.

In October 1929, Mr. McClure returned to Toronto. He opened with meetings in Central on the Tabernacle and then moved over to Broadview where he spoke on the Second Coming of Christ. His messages so captivated his hearers that they turned out in great numbers to hear him. A theatre seating *twelve hundred was rented for his Sunday addresses.*

This might have been a great victory for God, but unfortunately not all were prepared to hear the plea of our Lord Jesus Christ, "I come to Thee, Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are." John 17: 11.

## Chapter Ten

### REACHING OUT

In the year that Mr. McClure returned to Toronto, Mr. John Alexander Clarke of the Belgian Congo came to the City. His ministry was most refreshing and he won a place in the hearts of God's people. The following year, when he came again, Central was looking for a new site for their hall. Mr. Clarke was able to put the brethren in touch with Miss Carpmael, owner of Beulah Hall, which at this time was empty. Arrangements were made to rent this hall, and, on September 21, 1930, the saints moved in.

That year was a busy one indeed. It began with John Trew Dickson at the Junction Assembly, where he carried on through January and February into March. From there, he moved into Central and carried on until the Conference in Massey Hall. His Sunday meetings were held in the Madison Theatre on Bloor Street.

The summer of that year saw no fewer than three tents pitched for Gospel work. Mr. Dickson, with the help of Mr. W. J. Glasgow, was at St. Clair and Bathurst; Mr. George Gould Sr. and Mr. Tom Smith were together on Gledhill Avenue; Mr. W.



FRED G. WATSON



CENTRAL GOSPEL HALL



JOHN ALEXANDER CLARKE



J. ROY LITTLEPROUD



Gillespie was at Queen and Jones Street. With the approach of cold weather, the meetings on Gledhill were moved into the Community Hall on the same street, with John Alexander Clarke joining brother Gould. Many of our readers will, no doubt, recall these meetings and the blessings that followed.

Following his work in the east-end, Mr. Clarke opened a series of meetings in the New Central Gospel Hall, 25 Charles Street, East. These continued throughout September and into October with Mr. Ingleby of Portugal helping in the later meetings. Before the year was out, Mr. Sam McEwen made his appearance in Central in November, and Mr. Tom Wilkie preached the final Gospel message of the year.

Central never seemed to lack young men with a heart for the Gospel, and at the time when the move was made to Charles Street, Stan. Kilner was exercised about the Westmount area, near Weston. With the help of Len. Pottage, he began to visit the homes there. Their primary object was to take the Gospel to the people, but when Stan discovered that the Westmount Community Hall could be rented for \$5.00 a week, he decided to include Sunday School work in his plans. Mildred Lawrence, who later became Mrs. Stanley Kilner, agreed to help out in this,

and beginning with about seven scholars, the effort was launched.

Matt Fraser and Harold Travis helped in the Gospel meetings, and Alex Peat and Dave Turnbull offered to take Sunday School classes. It would be difficult to name all who, at one time or another, took classes at Westmount, but mention should be made of Douglas Howard, Ernest Sprunt, Naomi Sutton and Louise Adams, all of whom are in full time service for the Lord now. A number of meetings, other than Central, also gave a hand.

The Sunday School grew, and attendance over the hundred mark was not uncommon. A surprising feature was the attendance during the summer months. On one occasion they had 99 scholars in attendance in mid summer, at a time when most Sunday Schools had dwindled to less than half their usual number.

During World War II, the President of the Ontario Motor League, as a patriotic gesture, decided to sell his Pierce Arrow car. The Sunday School teachers, at Westmount, bought it for \$200.00, and, on the understanding it would be used only to carry children to Sunday School, they were given a special ration card for gas. Frequently, twenty or more scholars

would be packed into this vehicle and trundled off to their classes.

For over twenty years, the old Community Hall served as quarters for the Westmount Sunday School and, from time to time, for Gospel addresses. The writer recalls attending some of the Hobby Classes that were started in an effort to get the children out under the sound of the Gospel on week nights, and at a later date helping out in the Daily Vacation Bible School. This old building lacked modern conveniences and was heated by an old-fashioned barrel stove, at one end of the room. Hence as the years went by, it was condemned by the authorities and a notice to this effect posted on the wall. The notice stated that the building might not be used for public meetings except Sunday School. Thus the Lord preserved the work.

A number who had been interested in Westmount *down the years were exercised about opening a, "morning meeting,"* there. The building which had fallen into disrepair was offered to these brethren by the sole surviving trustee, but an examination of the deed showed that a clear title might be difficult to obtain. This was overcome by buying the property next to the old hall and building on it, the original site being used for lawn and parking. Many willing hands

were found to aid in the construction, and under the guidance of Mr. Neil Parrington, Westmount Community Gospel Hall was built.

The first, "remembrance feast," was held September 12, 1954. About forty were present. Most were from Central. To-day there are about eighty in fellowship, with Albert Kitcher, Alex and Somers Peat, Harry Masters, Les LeMaitre, Albert Cowan, John Cross, and Len Virgin most active in Assembly matters.

On the night of October 15, 1954, disaster struck in the Westmount area, in the form of Hurricane Hazel. Following a seven inch rainfall in a twenty-four hour period, floods swept away homes on River Drive. Forty families were left without shelter and a number were drowned. The saints at Westmount rallied to the aid of the stricken and with the help of individuals and Assemblies in the metropolitan area of Toronto over \$6,000.00 was raised to provide for the needy.

Although none of the believers suffered loss, some who did had attended the Sunday School and Bible Study classes. It was most encouraging to find, that in this hour of sorrow, the various Assemblies united as one to meet this tragedy.

The move to Charles Street, if anything, increased Central's interest in the welfare of all the Lord's people, "gathered in His name," and her doors have ever been open to those from other Assemblies who wished to make use of her commodious quarters and central location. Thus it was, in the period of 1931 to 41, a Young Men's Bible Class, under the direction of Mr. J. Roy Littleproud, was held on Saturday evenings, during the winter months, in the basement auditorium of Central.

The meetings had begun as a class for young men in Swanwick, about 1924, with the time of meeting Tuesday evenings. Two years later, Mr. Littleproud, who was an Inspector of the Penny Bank, was sent here to take charge of the Toronto office. He sought fellowship in Swanwick, where his leadership and knowledge of Scripture was immediately recognized, and he was invited to take over the class. For a time, the meetings were held in his home, but city-wide interest necessitated a more central place to meet and the brethren at Central were happy to provide the needed accommodation.

Mr. Fred Holder, now a servant in full-time service for the Lord, and the late Mr. Eddie Adams were two of the original members of the class. Mr. Arnott Porter, who became principal of one of the Secondary

Schools of Scarborough helped Mr. Littleproud in the beginning. The W. A. Porter Memorial Collegiate honours the faithful service of this brother in the field of education.

Mr. Littleproud had been a school teacher and he was very meticulous and orderly in the presentation of his lessons. His assistants were persuaded to follow his methods which employed printed notes, in outline form. Each young man was encouraged to keep these, with his comments, in a note book. The writer still cherishes his as a wealth of Scriptural information.

At various times, such local brethren as Mr. Peter Hynd and Mr. James Irwin delivered addresses. Mr. Hynd also acted as song leader. Much of the material taught in these classes formed the basis of Mr. Littleproud's book, "The Christian Assembly."

The class had a library comprised of books purchased by the young men. These were borrowed for a limited time, and, during the summer, each class member chose two or three for summer reading.

Young men from nearly every Assembly in the City attended and were properly instructed in the things, "most commonly believed among us." It was a real treat to sit down with a hundred or more young men on a Saturday night to hear the truth expounded.

We look back to those days as ones of great profit and spiritual enlightenment.

As early as 1935, it had become apparent that the stage was being set for another major conflict. This was a matter of no little concern to the Assemblies in Canada. Munich came in 1938, and the hope of, "Peace in our time," flickered, but September 1939 dispelled these thoughts.

The first meeting of the Young Men's Class was in October of that year. After Mr. James Gunn had ministered to us from Hebrews, Mr. Littleproud spoke on the problem of military service. He pointed out the teaching of God's Word, in relation to the taking of life, and then sought to balance, against that, our responsibility to the powers that be. He followed with the discussion of a plan, undertaken by responsible brethren in the City, which called upon the Government to provide non-combatant service for conscientious objectors. World War I had not been forgotten, and a real effort was being made to avoid a repetition of what had happened then.

A letter addressed to the Prime Minister of Canada had been drafted and was read to us. From some 250 Assemblies to which it had been sent, hearty endorsement had been received from 220.

The Government did not act in the way we had hoped. However, until near the end of the War, overseas service was purely voluntary. An Army for the defence of Canada was formed, and those called up for military service were permitted to take training in it. Service in this did not guarantee that the trainee would not be called upon to fight, and training in it was the same as in the regular force. Hence many chose to register as conscientious objectors, and they were sent to farms to work.

Some chose to join the regular army and proceeded overseas. Towards the end of the War, a plan for enlisting men in non-combatant units was passed through Parliament and became part of our law. Thus the steps taken in 1939 did bear fruit, though somewhat belatedly.

The work of Roy Littleproud and his associates with the young men of Toronto can never be fully estimated, and it was with sad hearts that we heard he had been injured in an automobile accident, while motoring home from Paris, in January 1941.

At first, his injuries did not appear to be serious, and he was taken to the hospital in Brantford and treated for a broken leg and various cuts and abrasions. He seemed to be coming along very well, and we





ROBERT TELFER



W. J. McCLURE



ROBERT McCLINTOCK

were looking forward to his return, when suddenly on April 9th, he slipped away to be, "at home."

A final meeting of the class was held May 3rd. It took the form of a testimonial to our departed brother. Albert Kitcher led in the singing, giving out favourites of our beloved teacher. This was followed by the customary period of prayer. Mr. Hynd and James Buchan told of the class as they remembered it; then Mr. Porter spoke of Roy Littleproud as he knew him as a boy. An open period gave a number an opportunity to tell what the class had meant to them in their Christian life.

The Lord never leaves His people without help. Just at the time the Young Men's Bible Class ceased, a group of men in our City were looking to the Lord to open the way for broadening the field of instruction in the Word. These men were Mr. R. Edward Harlow, Mr. John Smart and Mr. Ernest Tatham. Here, in Dr. Harlow's own words, is the story of what happened.

"John Smart, C. E. Tatham and I organized evening classes of Emmaus Bible School, which were launched in September 1941, in the basement of Central Gospel Hall. The first night there were 140 in attendance, and the average for the 24-week school year was about 100. Our desire was to reach young people who were interested in a systematic study of

the Word. Mr. Tatham took up Old Testament survey, in which he went through the Old Testament in 24 lectures, Mr. Smart did the same on New Testament and I took the third 40 minute period, lecturing on Child Study and Teacher Training.”

Dr. Harlow went on to say that, in the following year, the Correspondence Department was inaugurated but this had no connection with Central. The evening classes continued there and day school, with about 85 students, was launched in September 1945. In 1946, a building at 81 Harcourt Avenue, was purchased, and the classes continued there until the School moved to Chicago, in 1954. With the move to the Harcourt site, Mr. A. P. Gibbs, Mr. Peter Pell and Mr. Harold Harper gave help as visiting staff members. Others followed and Emmaus grew to be an integral part of the training for young people of Christian Assemblies.

This interest in every phase of Assembly life and effort, both local and world wide, has characterized the policy of Central for a good number of years, and while it has incurred some criticism, our feeling is that we are being but faithful to the Word and being directed by the same Spirit that moved men like A. N. Groves, John N. Darby, John G. Bellett and Dr. Cronin to leave behind the systems of men and go

forth believing in, "the oneness of the Church of God, involving a fellowship large enough to embrace all saints and narrow enough to exclude the world."

## Chapter Eleven

### **THE WAR YEARS**

"O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee." II Chron. 20:12. These were the words of Jehoshaphat as he cried unto God, when the hosts of Moab and Ammon descended upon Judah. What a parallel in our experience as Hitler and his juggernaut swept over Europe and his Luftwaffe began to rain fire bombs on London! In this dreadful hour, King George called upon his subjects to turn to God in prayer. God heard our cry, and what seemed to be an inevitable disaster turned into victory.

In the early days of 1939, war clouds hovered on the horizon and men's hearts failed them for fear. Mr. Crawford Tilsley of India was with us for the Easter Conference and his ministry so exalted Christ, we were able to turn away from the things of time and sense and look only unto Him. As he pictured the

moral beauty and glorious worth of our risen Lord, our hearts were drawn out in grateful praise and adoration.

Mr. Laidlaw, a business man from New Zealand, came later in the year and impressed his audiences with his forthright manner and logical presentation of the truth. Others who made it a year of blessing were Mr. Stenhouse of Chile and Mr. Richard Hill of New York.

Harold Harper and Harold MacKay were with us for the opening of our Young People's Meetings in October. On that occasion, the young people of Danforth joined us and more than four hundred sat down under the able ministry of these two men.

It was in the same year that Dr. Northcote Deck, who had laboured for many years in the Solomon Islands, came to take up residence in the City. His presence in the worship meeting is something we will long remember. We have never heard anyone who could interpret, so well, the moving of the Spirit and minister a word that carried our hearts into God's presence in full and complete adoration.

Dr. Deck's gift was recognized and he was asked to take part in the Conference of 1940, when Roy Littleproud, Peter and Will Pell, John Spreeman,

Leonard Sheldrake, and Isaac McMullen were with us. It soon became apparent, however, that Dr. Deck felt that his gift should not be limited to those, "gathered out," and his willingness to accept invitations elsewhere proved a source of embarrassment. This situation was recognized by our brother and on his return to the City, some years later, after a visit to the countries down under, he sought fellowship in another Assembly.

The War Years saw a number of young men called into the Services. In order to keep them informed of the happenings at home, a number, entitled Central News, was mimeographed and sent to them. Mr. Joseph Stewart who had taken over the Sunday School in March 1941, from Dan Sommacal who had been Superintendent since 1925, wrote the foreword. This was followed by devotional articles, usually written by James Irwin. Mr. George Cunnington added Assembly news, while John McClelland prepared the local happenings, under the caption, Personal Pratings. Mr. David Turnbull ended the script with General News. We recall enjoying this most welcome paper from home, while stretched out on an Army cot far from Christian fellowship.

An entry in our diary of Feb. 22, 1940 reads, "During the past few weeks the number attending

Bible Reading has increased. Last night, there were ninety out. Probably the war and the difficulties of the times are drawing the Lord's people nearer to Himself."

In April of that year, Mr. Richard Irving returned to Central, after an absence of many years. Saved in 1876 through the preaching of John Vince, our brother came to C a n a d a in the 1880's and pioneered in Ontario. He preached the Gospel and established testimonies in the rural areas of our province. It was our privilege to entertain this servant of the Lord, in our home, and to hear from his lips about the work in the very early days. Another who returned to Central, after an absence of many years, was George Pinches. He spoke to us on, "The World's Greatest Crisis." At such a time, his subject was most timely and readily appreciated.

Perhaps the most remarkable visit of the War Years was that of Mr. Sydney Burnham. Within three days of the start of his meetings, five souls had been saved. Before they concluded more than thirty had professed faith in Christ. This was in April of 1944.

No one who attended those meetings could ever forget the fervour of the speaker, or the hushed intensity of the audience. We recall standing at the



back of the auditorium, literally pinned to the back wall by sheer pressure of the crowd, through two and one-half hours of meeting. The starting hour was 8:00 p.m. but anyone arriving after 7:00 p.m. was not likely to find a seat. Mr. Burnham always opened by asking those seated to move closer together so that three could sit on two seats. On one occasion the meeting went on until 10:20 and not one of the more than five hundred present made any move to leave until the closing hymn.

The Spirit of God used this man mightily. Suffering from some rare disease that slowly deprived him of his sight, he spoke as a dying man to dying sinners. He knew that his time on earth was short and he was prepared to redeem it. Within a year he was called Home.

## Chapter Twelve

### **MEMORIES**

As we look back over the twenty-five and more years it has been our privilege to meet with the Lord's people at Central, memory's hall is filled with hallowed remembrances of precious moments spent together. Over the raised platform at the front of the auditorium are the words, "Jesus Only," a constant

reminder of our only source of life and joy. On either side banners proclaim, "Might to Save," and, "Able to Keep." These scrolls, recently re-done by our brother Joe McClelland, are beautifully hand painted with letters of Old English, in red and blue, edged with gold. In themselves, a thing of beauty, they remain a forceful message to every heart attuned to hear His voice.

A whole book might be written about the speakers who have addressed the saints from this platform, and still another volume might be devoted to the messages delivered. Nothing can ever rob us of the joy that has been ours to hear the voice of God as he ministered to hungry souls through the clay lips of His own.

How could anyone forget the gripping story of the sinking of the Athenia, as graphically outlined by Mr. Bowen, a survivor of that awful tragedy? Hugh McEwen's address on, "He is Risen," and Crawford Tilsley's on, "Be ye Holy," were veritable gems from a heavenly collection. Who could help but be moved as Leonard Sheldrake spoke of, "things concerning the King," or as Aubrey Dellandrea spoke on the subject of, "finishing our course with joy."

As our minds turn back the pages of time, we recall as vividly as if it were yesterday, the impassioned



WESTMOUNT COMMUNITY GOSPEL HALL



DON AND NAOMI COLE  
PAUL, STEPHANIE AND ANDY



JOHN AND LOUISE McCLELLAND



ALEX AND GRACE McCLELLAND



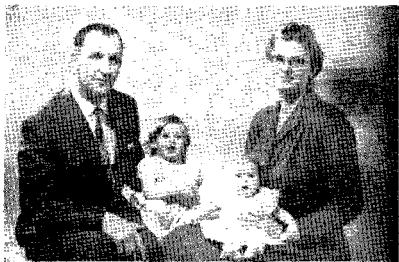
DON AND RUTH SAUER, PAUL (R) AND JOHN



MARJORIE SHAW



GERTRUD KOPPEL



ROY AND KAREN WOOD  
AUDREY AND RUTH





**DR. SOMMACAL'S FAREWELL**

*Standing:* E. TURNBULL, C. BRECKLES, M. FRASER, J. CLELLAND, S. McBRIDE, J. McCLELLAND.  
*Seated:* G. CUNNINGTON, DR. SOMMACAL, J. IRWIN, S. ROBERTSON. (Inset): L. RICKARD.



CENTRAL SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, 1960.

pleas of George Gould Sr., as he sought to win erring ones to Christ, and the austere warnings of Sam McEwen, our father in the faith, as he told of the awful doom awaiting the Christ rejector. The years cannot erase from our memory the dynamic impact these men made on their hearers.

With J. M. Davies and T. Ernest Wilson, it was the message that stands out, the former on Church Truth, the latter on Church Practice. We never ceased to be amazed at the scholarly manner in which James Gunn extracted the truth from the Word, or Robert McClurkin made clear the difficult and threw light on the obscure.

We often envied Peter Pell's wide knowledge of Scripture, as he unfolded the mysteries of Hebrews or drew practical lessons for daily living from the model of the Tabernacle. And again, our hearts were thrilled as our brother Will Pell, whose ear seemed always attuned to the heart beat of the people, rose, as the last speaker at an Easter Conference, to add the final rondo to the heavenly symphony that had engaged our rapt attention.

We will always be grateful to God for those He sent to minister to our need, but we are not unmindful of those in our midst who, hearing the Macedon-

ian call, left our shores to carry the seed to those in darkness in the regions beyond. The farewell for our sister Karen Koppel, on December 14, 1947, is one we will never forget. As the meeting was in progress, a tall stately man slipped into a seat beside the writer at the back of the auditorium and listened intently to all that was said. When the congregation rose and sang, "God be with you, 'Till we meet again," the tears flowed unchecked down his cheek. Only then, did we realize that it was Karen's father. A successful business man, whose heart had not yet responded to a Saviour's love, he simply could not understand how his daughter could turn her back on the luxury of her Rosedale home, to go out to the poverty and privation of Africa. She left for Angola, the need of which had been put before us by Mr. David Long. Two years later, Karen's sister, Gertrud, left to join the Deans in the Belgian Congo.

The Spirit of God had been moving for some time before this event. John and Louise McClelland had been commended to the work in November 1946, in a letter which read in part, "For a number of years, they have been in happy fellowship and a great help in the Assembly and its activities, having shown great exercise and seen great blessing of the Lord in tract distribution, Sunday School and open air work as

well as personal contact." While they left for a while, to labour in North Bay, Ontario, their real burden was for Brazil, and finally in October, 1948, the way was opened for them to take up their service for the Lord in that field. In the same year, John's brother Alex, with his wife Grace, were commended to the work in Angola, after a short time in Simcoe, Ontario.

However, Naomi Cole, nee Naomi Sutton, was the first of our young people to leave for the mission field. Married in April 1947 to Don Cole of Detroit, our sister left for Angola, in July. This seemed to signal a general exodus to foreign areas, and by 1950, we had six serving the Lord beyond the confines of the Homeland. Others jointly commended to the work by Central include Behring and Lois McDowell and Marjorie Shaw. Then too, Miss Lorna Reid and Miss Maude McLaren were in Jerusalem, where they had been for many years.

Nearer home, our brother David Wilson of Olivet Gospel Hall had married Harriet Stewart of Central. They made known to the oversight their exercise about the needy province of Quebec. This young couple left in May 1949 to take up residence at Cherry River, Quebec. Bruce Sommacal also left us at a later date to take up residence in Quebec City, where he

sought secular employment in order to help in the work there.

Don and Ruth Sauer is another young couple engaged in missionary work. Their field is Alaska where Don had served with the American Armed Forces during World War II. On first going to the field in 1952, Don accepted secular employment but now his work is on a full time basis.

Because of the very nature of their work, it is only natural that our missionaries should come first in our thoughts. We must not, however, overlook those whose field of service is right here at home. Coming to Central as a young man, our first contact was with the older men who exercised a shepherd's care for the flock. We remember well Mr. Albert Jackson who baptized us and we recall, with gratitude, the advice of our brother Bert Sutton, when we approached him with a difficult passage of Scripture. Said he, "Whatever its meaning may be, make sure that you do not let it conflict with a passage that is perfectly clear."

In those days, Mr. Anthony Turnbull was to be found at the door on a Sunday morning, and Mr. John Denoon, whose kindly interest in all the Lord's people might serve as an example for us, rarely missed a, "Remembrance Feast."

Dr. Addison Taylor was the correspondent, at the time of our arrival, and brother Sam Sommacal was the treasurer. Since then George Cunnington has served in the former office, now held by Les Rickard, and Stewart McBride has taken over the duties of the latter office.

Much might be said about the Sunday School, the Missionary Classes, the Tract Bands and the Mothers' Meetings but full justice could not be done in such a short work. All these labours of love demand our prayers and active support. We thank God that His people have these many avenues through which they can serve Him, in our pilgrim journey down here.

### **EPILOGUE**

Lord, we remember we are one,  
With every saint that loves thy name,  
United to Thee on the throne,  
Our life, our hope, our joy, the same.

Our story ends; but the testimony carries on. It was not, and is not, our intention to dwell upon the mistakes of the past for as it has been so truly said, "Were we without fault, we could never have claimed Christ as Saviour." We would, in concluding our story,

call upon everyone who really loves the Lord and the Lord's people, to pray earnestly for the unity He, Himself, sought.

There are a number of Assemblies, in the metropolitan area of Toronto, which enjoy a relative fellowship. There are, moreover, a number of centres which practice things peculiar to themselves and the groups of which they form a part. Indeed, one might find representatives of nearly every division that has split the Assemblies down the years, here in our City.

As far as we can ascertain, no major doctrinal difference is to be found among these Assemblies. We would like to be able to say they are all in happy fellowship, but, unhappily, such is not the case. The reason for this is, in the first instance, historical, but the cry of those who place God before personal partiality and prejudice is, "How long! How long! Shall the saints of to-day be forever held responsible for the mistakes of yester year?"

We might entertain the hope that some day we might see the prayer of our blessed Lord in John 17:11 fulfilled and we might be able to sing, in verity, the words of the hymn, quoted above. 'Ere this could happen, there would have to be a turning to God that would match any of the Old Testament, and a complete surrender to His will. All the pride and prejud-



ice of the flesh would have to be renounced. Is this too much to ask? God is for it: satan is opposed. We do well to ask ourselves, "On which side am I?"

If the full realization of John 17 were to grip our souls, there would be a time of repentance such as we have never seen, as heart wept with heart and confession of guilt poured from these proud lips of ours.

Sin, in its origin, was the setting up of a will in opposition to that of God. This disdainful attitude to divine prerogative has characterized mankind ever since. Unfortunately self will can be found in saint as well as sinner. Pride is a deceitful thing and a prime destroyer of unity among those who love His name. One's soul is crushed as one sees how successfully the enemy of souls has exploited these human weaknesses to gain his end, the blighting of our individual and collective testimony.

The past is gone forever; the future lies ahead. It is not our place or right to judge. It is our responsibility to hear His voice and obey. God gives us grace to, "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness, and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." Eph. 4: 1-3.

## AS I RECALL IT

Mr. James Gunn

Memory is the key which unlocks in fancy a vast hall where there are statues exquisitely carved which delight us and weird spectres which haunt us. Within this archive there are filed records of deeds, documents of claims, and evidences of changes.

A retrospect of well over half a century in close association with the assemblies in Toronto reveals events both pleasant and unpleasant, both progressive and retrogressive.

The Sunday School in the south Broadview Gospel Hall which I attended as a very small boy was large; the hall was filled at each Sunday session. Our superintendent was Mr. James Lynn, and the teachers over our class which I best remember were Mr. George Copeland, and later, Miss Orpha Spreeman who became Mrs. Gordon Johnston. She with her husband eventually served the Lord faithfully for many years in Venezuela.

Strange indeed are the circumstances which God uses to impress upon the soul its need. For some time, I had been trying to whistle. My efforts had been most unsuccessful. At the close of school one Lord's Day, as



JAMES GUNN

the superintendent was fervently praying, thoughtlessly, I pursed my mouth and blew my breath. What a shock for a little boy! A loud shrill whistle echoed through the hall. The crowd was startled, but no one but I knew the culprit. Mr. Lynn stopped praying. An awesome silence gripped the place, and then the superintendent prayed again: "Holy Father, remember that bad boy who whistled in Sunday School. He needs to be saved. Reach him in Thy grace before he does something worse."

In the process of time our family moved to East Toronto, and attended the assembly meetings in the hall on Swanwick Ave.

There are so many delightful recollections of those days. Of course, some much more vivid than others. My first Sunday School teacher there was Mr. Leonard Sheldrake. He did not remain long after our arrival for he was moved out to Winnipeg by the company for which he worked. Mr. George Hall assumed the responsibility of the little school formed by only one class. This work he carried on diligently for a number of years. Finally, he also moved away to another section of the city, and Mr. Harry Jackson accepted the task. The school had grown some during those years, and in the mean time I had been saved. It was therefore the joy in one of the earliest effort in

Gospel work to accept a class of boys under brother Jackson's leadership.

The deepest impression left from those days is the experience of being pointed to the Saviour by mother in October 1914. From that time on, there was a desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. This desire first brought me into contact with the Central Assembly, then in their hall only recently opened at the corner of Brunswick and Sussex Avenues.

My first actual contact with Central was at the funeral services of Mr. Donald Munro to which I had been taken by my parents. These services were held in a rented auditorium above a block of stores on the north east corner of College Street and Burnswick Avenue.

The Swanwick Assembly was small, and the hall the brethren rented had few comforts and facilities. When, a couple of years after my conversion, I asked to be baptised, there was no baptistry available near our part of the city. Finally, a baptism was arranged at Central, and the Swanwick brethren requested that I also be baptised along with the others. The pleasure of that evening still remains with me. I was met at the door by Mr. Gordon and Mr. Ironside. Links of friendships were forged that night and have endured throughout the years. Little did I think that evening,

as I followed the Lord in baptism, that a number of years later, I should say farewell for some years to the Lord's people from the same platform at Central. That night likewise remains deeply impressed upon my memory. The Central Hall was full. It was the night of the monthly missionary prayer meeting, but the brethren had changed it into a special meeting, and they commended me to the work of the Lord, and prayed God's blessing upon any effort I might make in the spread of the Gospel.

It was a bright Lord's Day morning, the morning in which I walked with my parents to the East Toronto hall and sat beside my father to remember, for the first time, the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread. The mingled joy and nervousness are easily recalled. Would an accident similar to one I had seen some weeks previous befall me? Would I too drop the loaf or choke on the wine?

The privileges of assembly life were thoroughly enjoyed, and its responsibilities gladly assumed. Fields for Christian service were opened: tract work, Sunday School teaching, and witnessing in the open air meetings.

With these opportunities came the pleasure of accompanying my father as he accepted invitations to

minister in different halls throughout the city: south Broadview hall below Dundas Street; Homestead, now the Pape Avenue Assembly; Brock, then south from Dundas on Brock Avenue; Junction, then on Dundas Street west from Pacific Avenue, and of course Central, at the corner of Brunswick and Sussex Avenues.

On the occasions that we went to Central we generally spent the day with Mr. and Mrs. Jack Morris, former friends from the south Broadview Assembly. They lived immediately across from the hall on Brunswick Avenue. It was in their home that I remember meeting, for the first time, Albert Kitcher. He was quite a hero in my estimation for he kept rabbits and allowed me to help him feed them in their pen at the back.

Easter has been conference time in Toronto for many years. Before I was saved and for a year or two afterward, the United Toronto Convention of Christians was held in the building of the Young Women's Christian Association, on the south side of McGill Street, just east of Yonge Street.

There always was an effort to keep the children, attending the sessions of the large Easter Conference with their parents, well within bounds. Notwithstanding, some of us, feeling older and bigger, relaxed between meetings by engaging in a few pranks.

Above and behind the stage, on the same level as the gallery, was a room full of apparatus for the gymnasium: floor pads, bars, dumb-bells, etc. Among all these were large wicker forms the actual shape of horses. The supposed rider stood in a hole in the back of the form. The outfit being comparatively light was held in position by straps around the waist and over the shoulders. When properly adjusted, the appearance represented a person on horse-back. What the young women of the Association used these for, I do not know; what we used them for, I certainly know.

One day the play, noise, and laughter must have reached the adult crowd in the auditorium. Abruptly our merriment stopped. Mr. Robert Telfer with severe countenance stood in the open doorway. Sternly he remonstrated with us. Finally, he dispatched us all to find our parents and to remain with them for the rest of the Conference.

The meals at those conferences were served in a certain St. George's Hall on Elm Street west of Yonge. Standing one day in the vestibule awaiting my turn to enter, I met, for the only time I can recall, Mr. William Matthews. He had been ill for a considerable period, and was receiving, because of his condition, much attention from his friends. As we stood close together, he put his arm across my shoulders and en-



quired about my name and family. He then asked if I were saved. On receiving a negative reply, he squeezed me closer to him, and quietly said, "I wish you were; it is just so grand." The moral impression was much stronger than the squeeze.

The first year that the Conference was moved into the Massey Hall, although saved, I was not in fellowship. On Lord's Day morning, I took my place in the gallery along with many others. The awe and the holy admiration for the Lord's people gathered in the body of that hall which possessed my soul, produced a deep longing to be with them. I was, the very next year.

A short time before and during the early years of my Christian experience, crises arose in inter-assembly relationships throughout the country. The impact of these bewildered those of us who were young in Christ. Try, as we did, we could not understand them. They deprived us of a fellowship with others which we felt we needed. They placed insoluble problems to our minds. Our questions remained without scriptural answers; consequently, assembly life began to lose some of its attraction and joy. At this crucial time, the Lord provided certain new activities for Him which diverted our minds into other channels.

The believers in Swanwick in those days were so few that we could not provide helpers for the dining room at the Conference. Eventually, Christians began moving into East Toronto and some were being saved so that around 1920 or 1921, we were placed in charge of one long table, the table to the extreme right of the large dining room as one entered. The Swanwick brethren asked that I look after their table and secure a team of young persons to operate it properly.

With zeal, but no knowledge, and with an enthusiasm that supplemented our limited experience, we attempted to serve the people of God. What a help Mr. Samuel Moore and Mr. Alex. Robertson were to us in that new venture! They were in overall charge of the dining room. They showed us what to do, and how to do it, and gave us every encouragement.

It is recalled with pleasure that the presence of one of the Lord's servants at our table was accepted as a compliment, and that, rightly or wrongly, we showed him some little deference.

Two or three exceptionally happy Easter seasons were spent thus making a slight contribution to the work in Conference dining room. Friendships were formed during those years that have endured. Mrs. Gunn was Mayse Graham, one of the young sis-

ters on the first dining room team to represent Swanwick Assembly (Now Danforth Assembly).

At one of those early conferences in the Massey Hall, a newspaper reporter from one of Toronto's evening papers visited the dining room. Nothing escaped his observant eye, and his keen mind soon grasped the splendid spirit of love and co-operation that prevailed.

Pride is a very wicked thing, but when we read the description in the next evening edition of the large number of meals, hundreds of them, the inexperience of the helpers, the simplicity of the organization, and yet the remarkable efficiency of the operation, to say that we were not proud of the good impression we had made and the excellent reputation we had built for the Christian Convention in Massey Hall, would be equally wrong.

After a number of years absent in the work of the Lord from the Toronto Conference, I returned. Others with excellent proficiency were doing our former tasks. They were the hosts, I their visitor, a visitor free from all responsibility except that of receiving the ministry of the Word of God. How I enjoyed it!

Mr. W. J. McClure, Mr. T. D. W. Muir, and Mr. Chas. Ross who had not been at a Toronto Conference for many years, were present at those last few gatherings in the Massey Hall. So were Mr. C. F. Hogg and Mr. John Alexander Clarke of Africa. These brethren ministered the Word of God along with others whom we considered more local and provincial because they lived and fellowshiped within the more immediate area. What refreshment of soul and mind! What instruction! Our souls were blessed as we sat together under the salutary ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Particularly at the sessions on Good Friday, Saturday afternoon and evening, and on the Lord's Day the hall would be filled to its capacity, and so also would be the first gallery. Few ever entered into the second gallery, and even when they did, it really was not necessary.

The warmth of Christian intercourse during the intervals between the sessions of those conferences must not be underestimated. The pleasure of meeting so many fellow-believers, of eating together, and conversing together provided the opportunity for spiritual affinity to unite many hearts and lives into a formidable fellowship that contributed to both personal and assembly testimony. The exchange of thought, the comparison of experience, the sympathetic under-

standing of problems, the words of counsel, fortified and cheered many a weary pilgrim.

While all the sessions for ministry during those conferences were characterized by the so called open platform, the gospel meetings in my time, never were. I was informed that at the very early Toronto conferences the platform at the Gospel meetings was also left open, but had eventually to be closed because of certain abuses unseemly before the unconverted. The Gospel meetings were arranged to produce a proper exercise among those servants of Christ entrusted with the responsibility of preaching the Word of the Cross, and to add the necessary decorum and dignity to the entire service.

At the second to the last of those united conferences, I was asked to open, with a short message, the Gospel meeting for Mr. Samuel Keller and Mr. W. P. Douglas. This was a great honour which I did not expect and although I appreciated it very much, I found myself considerably disturbed. It would be most improper to give the impression that all day was spent in deep exercise of soul; there was that, without doubt, but a deep-seated nervousness bothered me. The very anticipation of the gospel meeting disturbed me emotionally. The fear of such a large audience was added to the fear that I might not be able to make myself

heard in such a large auditorium, and these resulted in inward conflict and alarm. Had it not been for the kind counsel and encouragement of an excellent friend and brother, Mr. Roy Littleproud, I would have asked to be excused.

The hour arrived and the three of us took our places on the platform. The desk was well back toward the middle of the stage; consequently, the floor protruded many feet in front of us. It almost seemed as if it might fold upward and stifle one's breathing. My heart raced and my brow was damp. Vision became dim, and although there were hundreds of friendly sympathetic faces turned upward toward us, none were recognized by me.

The dread moment arrived. "Time is up, brother," said Mr. Keller, "you had better start."

*My knees seemed weak, but they did carry me to the rostrum.* Timidly I announced the opening hymn, and almost simultaneously discovered Roy Littleproud sitting in the gallery immediately in front of me. For just a moment our eyes met. He appreciated my confused state for I had confided in him. What his smile of reassurance and the gentle nod of his head meant to me! They were as the infusion of courage.

I now had heard my own voice in the great vaulted hall; he had heard it distinctly and had responded with a smile. A mental quietness resulted; the cowardice seemed to change into confidence, and poise returned. For a few minutes I sought to speak in the Gospel of the work of our Lord Jesus from Isaiah chapter 53.

My only opportunity of speaking in Massey Hall may be recorded as a very real experience, but not as a very pleasant one.

Within two years the large annual conference had been disbanded. It is improbable that it will ever be revived. We may never again sit as a united body from all the assemblies in the Toronto area; nevertheless, this retrospect of the years that are past, makes me glad that I lived in the days of the convention of Christians gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus at Massey Hall, Toronto, Canada.