

SCATTERED ABROAD

TRANSFERS LEAD TO UNANTICIPATED NEW CHURCH GROUPS THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA.

In the Apostolic Faith Church organization, circumstances such as immigration, job transfers, and schooling have resulted in a number of “house churches” springing up throughout North America in areas where there are no Apostolic Faith churches. New communities are being reached with the Latter Rain Gospel through the efforts of these small groups gathering in private homes or rented facilities.

This follows the pattern of what occurred in the era of the Early Church. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, early believers gathered at the Temple or in synagogues. However, as Christianity expanded, they separated from their Jewish roots and began assembling in the private homes of wealthy individuals who had houses large enough to accommodate about fifty people. Biblical examples of Christians who used their homes for church services were Gaius (Romans 16:23), Justus (Acts 18:7), Stephanas (1 Corinthians 16:15), and Priscilla and Aquila (Romans 16:3-5). As persecution caused the early Christians to scatter, house churches sprang up throughout the Roman Empire. For close to three hundred years, meeting in private homes for teaching, worship, and prayer was a common practice. Following are some of the locations where groups are meeting today.



Key West, Florida

Ellison Ashe was born and raised in Key West, but moved to Los Angeles, California, to pursue his education. There he also found the Gospel and was saved at the Los Angeles Apostolic Faith Church. He returned to Key West with a burning desire to share the Good News in his hometown, and eventually settled there permanently with his wife, Barbara, and their children. They distributed church literature and held services on street corners with the whole family participating. Later Ellison opened a business and held services in his small storefront office.

NUMBER OF GROUPS

We currently have around 24 groups who meet in rented facilities throughout North America.



STARTING YOUNG

Our group in Key West recently outgrew the 15-passenger van used to pick up students for Sunday school.



Left to Right: Sunday school children in Key West, Florida; Three attendees of the Reston, Virginia, dedication; Beginner Sunday school students Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Over the years, the group consisted mostly of the Ashe family and a man who brought his four grandchildren. Ellison's daughter, Rebekah, began overseeing the group in 2016 following her father's retirement, and in June 2016, they held special meetings in a hotel conference room. This resulted in more people attending their services, especially Sunday school. The group then began looking for a larger facility, and in October 2016, a local church offered to let them use their building rent free as long as they held their services at different times than the ones already being held at the location. Rebekah and the group made flyers and distributed them throughout

the neighborhood while praying for at least one new Sunday school student. That first Sunday they had two new children, and as of January 2017, their Sunday school had grown to over fourteen. They rent a van every Sunday to pick up the students, and two teachers have been added to teach different age groups.

The Key West church group has also held a mini-concert, and from time to time they have fellowship dinners following Sunday morning services. The response to these efforts has been positive, and they are seeing visitors and the parents of the Sunday school children attending their Sunday services.

Pullman, Washington

In 2010, Olusola Adesope secured a position at Washington State University in Pullman. Since there was no Apostolic Faith Church in that area, he and his family commuted to Yakima, Washington, for services on Sundays—a seven-hour round trip. After two more families moved to Eastern Washington, the Adesopes began holding Sunday school in their home, and watching the live webcasts of the Apostolic Faith church services in Portland, Oregon. As university students began attending, the group outgrew the Adesope's home, so they rented two rooms at a community center for Sunday school and watching the webcasts.

The group started holding regular church services in 2014, and soon they also had choir and orchestra members who faithfully participated in meetings. The average attendance is now around thirty-five people. In January 2016, the group started having special prayer that they would find a more suitable facility to rent, and in May 2016, a local pastor from another church offered to let them use a facility adjacent to his church which



was not being used. Chairs were also provided, and the first service was held on July 24, 2016. The size of the Sunday school rooms and sanctuary allow for growth, and the prayer is that many more will be added to the group as Jesus tarries.

Queens, New York, and Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Our Spanish-speaking church in the Bronx, New York, recently started outreach ministries in Queens and Lebanon. The group in Queens started with one family who attended services in the Bronx when they could, but a lack of transportation prevented them from coming often. Members of the Bronx church began visiting their home for a mid-week prayer meeting, and their numbers grew until a larger space was needed. There are now about eleven who meet in Queens, and Aldo George, their group leader, commutes from the Bronx to join them for services.

Another Spanish-speaking family showed interest in attending Apostolic Faith services, but the four-hour drive from Lebanon prevented them. Again members of the Bronx church made regular home visitations, and now they have moved to a sanctuary that can accommodate their group of about twenty-five. Eliseo Charleston, the group leader in Lebanon, had been making the four-hour drive from the Bronx every weekend to attend their services, but God provided jobs for him and his wife in



Lebanon, and they were able to relocate their family of five to that area. The vision of the Bronx church is to start other Spanish-speaking outreaches in areas where there are no Apostolic Faith churches as God opens the doors.

Reston, Virginia

The Apostolic Faith work in Reston began when a member from our Washington, D.C., church began witnessing to clients and friends who frequented his auto repair business in northern Virginia. He told his pastor that he sensed a hunger for the Gospel in that area, and the decision was made to hold a service in a rented chapel on Sunday, November 4, 2007. Around sixty people attended that service, with many coming from the Washington, D.C., church. The Reston group began holding weekly Sunday evening services at a rented chapel with assistance from the Washington, D.C., church members, as well as Wednesday evening Bible studies at a community center. Evangelical outreaches were conducted every Saturday, which yielded positive results as more people began attending the services. Over the past several years, the group has been holding annual concerts and picnics, and several have been saved. In 2016, they were able to rent a facility close to where most of their members reside, and they now have Sunday school and morning services in addition to their evening services. They have also started holding open-air meetings in various locations with Spanish interpretation. The average attendance is about eighteen people, and on January 22, 2017, they held a service commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Reston work, with around ninety-five in attendance.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

An Apostolic Faith pastor who visited Calgary in 2010 advised the Apostolic Faith families living there to meet as often as possible to encourage one another. At that time, there were three families, and they began meeting every Sunday in their homes to study the Sunday school lessons posted on the Apostolic Faith Church website. In 2011, the group rented a room at a community center in the northeastern part of Calgary. While they mostly focused on Sunday school, they held worship services whenever they had a visiting minister.

In 2012, the group found another facility that was more private and would accommodate up to twenty-five people. The following year, they began having annual Christmas programs, which proved to be a great outreach to the community. By 2014, with the addition of several attending from Edmonton, Alberta, the Calgary group once again began to look for a larger facility. In August of that year they started holding services in a sizable facility that accommodates up to seventy people, and is large enough to hold combined meetings with Fort McMurray and Edmonton. Four young musicians faithfully provide instrumental and vocal selections and they have an average of thirty who attend every Sunday. Although families come and go from the area, often for employment reasons, they are thankful they have an Apostolic Faith group in Calgary in which to worship.

Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada

The Apostolic Faith work in Fort McMurray began over ten years ago when a number of Apostolic Faith church members from Newfoundland, Canada, moved there for jobs. The average age of the population in Fort McMurray is thirty-two, and it has been instrumental in the development of the Canadian petroleum industry.

In May 2016, Fort McMurray experienced a devastating wildfire that destroyed many homes and businesses, and displaced thousands of people. Life is slowly returning to normal in the area, and the church group in Fort McMurray is thankful for the outreach opportunities to spread the Gospel, including Sunday school and holding services at the Northern Lights Health Center, a care facility for long-term patients.



Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Winnipeg was one of the locations visited by the founder of the Apostolic Faith Work, Florence Crawford, in the winter of 1907-1908. Although a work in Winnipeg was not established at that time, it did begin when Samson Jimaza, a youth minister from Lagos, Nigeria, migrated to Winnipeg in 2008. The closest Apostolic Faith Church at that time was in Thompson, Manitoba—about an eight-hour drive one way. In 2010, another couple relocated from the United Kingdom to Winnipeg, and they began meeting with Samson in his apartment for church services. Not too long after, two more families arrived from the United Kingdom, and in 2011, several others arrived from Nigeria. At that time, the group numbered ten adults and four children.

In April 2012, the group found a facility to rent, and their numbers continued to grow. Newcomers included a woman from Norway and her two children. By 2013, several college students from Nigeria were part of the group, and visitors attended almost every Sunday. Today, their Sunday attendance fluctuates from forty to sixty people. The group also holds Tuesday evening prayer meetings in various homes, with up to thirty in attendance. Families in the church volunteer on a rotational basis to provide lunch for everyone who attends the Sunday morning services. The group is blessed to have vocalists and instrumentalists who are dedicated to the service of the Lord, including music teachers who are able to teach others to play and read music. They held their first annual Christmas program in 2015, with around eighty in attendance. In 2016, they had another impressive turnout in spite of a forecasted snowstorm, which afterward dumped over a foot of snow!

These are just a few of the Apostolic Faith groups that have sprung up over the years as Apostolic Faith church members relocate to areas where there are no branch churches. Although small in number of attendees, their zeal to spread the Latter Rain Gospel has resulted in souls being saved. They are evidence that it does not require a church building and large congregation to preach the Gospel and impact a community. One by one, these small groups are sharing their testimonies and winning souls for Christ. The prayer is that the Latter Rain Gospel will continue to spread across North America and the world as Jesus tarries.