

# Missions

## Cuba

The Lord's Work  
Over 80 Years

A Family's Legacy  
for Christ

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Emmaus Ministry in  
the **Middle East**





# Thinking It Through

BY WARREN HENDERSON

## Little Bethlehem

Having foretold kingdom age events, Micah shifts his focus to the birth of Israel's future Deliverer and His work. The Messiah's birthplace would be the same as David's, Bethlehem, located just south of Jerusalem: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2) Israel's Messiah would be the eternal God incarnate—the One who literally stepped out of "the days of immeasurable time" into time! At that time, the Son of God, the living Word, would take on flesh to become the world's Savior (John 1:1, 14, 3:16). Micah affirms the deity of Christ, who would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) in the small town of Bethlehem of Judah.

The phrase "little among the thousands" literally means "too small to be among." Each tribe was divided into its thousands of soldiers. Places too small to form a thousand by themselves were united with others to do so. Bethlehem was so lowly that it was not counted among the possessions of Judah when Joshua divided the land.

As there was a Bethlehem in Galilee, naming the county, Ephrathah, ensured that there would be no confusion as to which town Micah was speaking of. Luke records the story of Joseph and Mary venturing from Nazareth to Bethlehem for a census and that Mary gave birth to the Lord Jesus and laid Him in a manger in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4–11). Bethlehem means the "house of bread" and wonderfully represents the work of Christ to save sinners: "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:33)

When the magi came to Jerusalem seeking the one born King of the Jews, the scribes rightly identified the birthplace of the Messiah as Bethlehem (Matthew 2:3–6). When the magi did not return to tell Herod that they had found the Messiah, the king had all baby boys ages two and under in the region slaughtered to remove any rivals to his throne. However, Joseph was warned in a dream to escape into Egypt with his family, which

he did (Matthew 2:13). After Herod's death, Joseph returned to Nazareth and that was where the child Jesus was raised. This created confusion for some because Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, yet He was from Nazareth, not Bethlehem.

Thankfully, the information about the Messiah's first advent is contained in the whole of Scripture. Hosea wrote: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son." (Hosea 11:1) While Hosea is primarily reminding Israel of God's past goodness and calling them to repentance, Matthew quotes Hosea to affirm its messianic fulfillment. Additionally, Isaiah identifies the tribal lands from which the promised Deliverer would come, Zebulun and Naphtali (Isaiah 9:1). Christ's hometown of Nazareth was in Zebulun's territory, and Naphtali composed much of Galilee where the Lord spent most of His earthly sojourn. Clearly, a great light was afforded to those residing in Zebulun and Naphtali (Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 2:2). Because Matthew directly applies Isaiah's prophecy to Christ's ministry in Galilee, we can be assured of its meaning (Matthew 4:13–17).

Through the prophets, God painted a predictive portrait, so that Israel would recognize their Messiah when He arrived. He would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12–13), and in Bethlehem of Ephrathah (Micah 5:2), but would live in Egypt for a time (Hosea 11:1) before being raised in Nazareth in Zebulun (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 2:23). Jesus Christ fulfilled each of those prophecies, and dozens more, to emphatically prove that He was Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world.

Little Bethlehem wonderfully foreshadows both Christ's advents. In Genesis 35 and Micah 5, a Son is born. In Ruth 2, a Savior (i.e., a Kinsman Redeemer) and the Lord of the harvest appears. In 1 Samuel 16, a Sovereign is anointed (the Shepherd and King of Israel). While the Son, the Savior, has already come to seek and save the lost, the latter aspect of Christ's rule is yet future. May all humanity rejoice in God's incredible message and life-giving Messenger from "little Bethlehem"! ■

*Warren Henderson is a commended worker based in Kansas.*

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COVER PHOTO: Cuba—©iStockPhoto.com/Nikada



# Cuba

The Lord's Work Over 80 Years



**Top (L-R):** Amid the increasing conflict of the Cuban Revolution, the La Salud assembly held meetings in the 1950s; Along with many men, women of all ages worshipped at the La Vibora assembly in 1956, and now, a new generation continue to meet there; Cubans are coming to salvation, and Bible studies, like this one in Pinar del Rio, help new believers grow.  
**Above:** The El Velado assembly in Havana still meets after 74 years and a revolution; Believers gather together in the chapel at El Velado in Havana to worship the Lord.

BY ANONYMOUS

Since Christopher Columbus discovered Cuba in 1492, it remained under colonial rule, first by Spain and then the United States, until its independence in 1902, following the Spanish-American War. From its independence, unstable and unethical governments have characterized the country. The American Mafia, which controlled the underworld businesses in Havana, and other influences further corrupted life in Cuba. Governmental corruption culminated with Fulgencio Batista's presidency in the 1940s and 1950s, which ended in 1959 when the Cuban Revolution overthrew his government. Since that time, Cuba has functioned under a Marxist-Leninist communist regime.

## THE EARLY ASSEMBLY WORK

Thomas and Jean Smith were the first missionaries to establish a work modeled after the local church pattern taught in the New Testament and practiced by the apostles. Commended by assemblies in Scotland, the Smiths arrived in Cuba in 1938 after being forced to leave Spain because of the civil war there. Committed to sharing the Gospel and distributing literature, the Smiths saw the first assembly established in 1940. By that time, other workers from assemblies in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain joined the Smiths. These collaborators included Arnold and Kay Adams, David and Agnes Adams, Doug and Kathleen Reid, Vern and Hilda Markle, George and Elizabeth Walker, Kathryn Hamilton, Robert and Effie Leighton, Ed and Pat Doherty, and others.

## THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

During the Cuban Revolution, some of the missionaries began to leave the country as the safety of foreigners became increasingly uncertain. Not long after the fall of the Batista government, missionaries were forced to leave Cuba. The last of the assembly missionaries left in 1961.

Of the assemblies established when the missionaries were in Cuba, six remain today. Most of them were allowed to continue functioning uninterrupted. In Havana, there are two assemblies: El Velado, built in 1944, and La Vibora, founded by Vern and Hilda Markle in 1948. About 40 miles south of Havana, located in a small agricultural town called La Salud, stands the assembly that George and Betty Walker established in the 1940s. David and Agnes Adams settled 100 miles west of Havana in Pinar del Rio where they established an assembly and a printing ministry in 1946. Near La Salud is the meeting in El Gabriel, which closed during the 1960s as several



of the brethren in that area were arrested and sent to a forced labor camp for more than 17 months. The El Gabriel meeting is now reestablished. In eastern Cuba, in Bayamo in the Sierra Maestra mountain range where the revolution was born, an assembly was established in 1954.

## THE WORK SINCE THE REVOLUTION

Despite the official communist doctrine of atheism, the island remains predominantly Roman Catholic, with nearly 60 percent of the population identifying themselves as Catholic—although few rarely, if ever, attend Mass. Since Fidel Castro took over the country, three popes have visited Cuba, with one visiting for three days most recently in 2015. Only about five percent of Cubans identify themselves as Protestant or evangelical.

The government allows meetings in recognized chapel buildings. Services are held openly in the various chapels with open doors and windows and loud speakers allowing passersby to hear the singing and messages. Gospel literature can be distributed with caution and discretion. Bibles are readily available through the Bible Society.

While Cubans of all ages are coming to Christ and growing in their faith, there is a lack of brethren who can teach the Word. In some assemblies, one man is forced to do all the teaching,

and in others, men from surrounding assemblies are brought in to do the teaching. Some meetings have only one recognized elder. A shortage of literature, education, training, and desire, among other things, have been the cause for this.

Americans can travel to Cuba, however, there are some restrictions. A religious visa, which usually takes 60 to 90 days to process, can be requested by the Cuban brethren. As more freedom in entering the country is permitted, the main concern is that false teaching, some of which has already reached the assemblies, and resulting divisions will increase.

## CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Since the communist takeover, believers in Cuba have lived in a country where a totalitarian government rules, and the condition of the economy is such that everything is in short supply and rationed. Two different moneys are used in the country—one for nationals and another for foreigners. Even basic items, like toothpaste, toothbrushes, aspirin, bandages, vitamins, insulin syringes, school supplies, and brooms, are either unavailable, difficult to find, or very expensive. Many items are unobtainable, except on the black market at high prices.

Common commodities, such as eggs, potatoes, meat, and other food products, are often nowhere to be found for months at a time. It is illegal for farmers to kill even one of their cattle without official approval as all livestock are numbered and monitored by the government. Violators can be fined or imprisoned. Although Cuba is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea, seafood is rarely found in the markets since all harvested seafood is used for tourists or as exports. People will wait in lines for hours when they hear a rumor that a small quantity of meat or eggs or potatoes or some other staple has arrived at one of the local shops. Diesel fuel is over \$4.00 per gallon—when you can find it.

Prescription medication is often unattainable, either because there is none available or what is available has been sold on the black market or to pharmacy workers' friends or families. On the day that prescription medicines are to arrive at the local pharmacy, long lines of people, who are waiting to see if their prescription has arrived, stretch for a block or more.

The average monthly salary for a teacher is \$12.00 and for a doctor, \$60.00–\$80.00, depending on whether he or she is a specialist or not. Pensions for retirees in these professions are much less, and for unskilled workers, pensions are scarcely enough to purchase the bare essentials.

Tourism is still the largest industry in Cuba, along with mining and tobacco farming. Many cars from the 1940s and 1950s can still be seen on the roads. All have been converted to diesel

**Left:** The church started by the Adams stands amid the city buildings of Pinar del Rio.

engines over the years. Many houses and apartment buildings were built by the government and are poorly constructed, and most are poorly maintained and, in many cases, dangerous to live in. Purchasing vehicles, land, or houses is virtually impossible, especially for the average Cuban.



Humanitarian aid can be taken into the country, but customs restrictions are becoming more stringent as time passes. Literature can also be taken in or sent via mail, but at times, literature is confiscated and does not reach its

destination. For this reason, it should always be transported in small quantities.

### PRAYER NEEDS

1. Pray that the Lord will continue to bless the Cuban brethren and allow them to maintain the freedom to gather together openly, hold home Bible Studies, and share the Gospel.
2. Pray that the Lord would meet their physical and temporal needs, especially regarding medications and basic commodities.
3. Pray that the Lord would help the brethren to grow daily in the knowledge of the Word and that He would protect them from false doctrines.
4. Pray that the Lord would raise up more godly men to take responsibility in teaching and oversight of the various assemblies.
5. Pray that the Lord would give the brethren wisdom, courage, and boldness in sharing the Gospel.
6. Pray that the assemblies would see young people come to Christ, as the vast majority of the saints are aged currently. Young believers tend to be drawn away to more modern churches.
7. Pray that the Lord would move the hearts of the leaders in the US and Cuban governments so that more freedoms in visiting Cuba, and even for missionaries to live there, would be allowed. ■



**Left:** 1950-era convertible taxis still cruise Cuba's streets, although high prices make cars a rare commodity. **Above (from top):** David and Agnes Adams's former house is now used as a camp; New believers gather at the Pinar del Rio assembly; The Vinales countryside near Pinar del Rio gives a glimpse of Cuba's natural beauty. **Below (L-R):** Signs and monuments throughout Cuba continue to commemorate the island's tumultuous past and overshadow the present; As with most towns in Cuba, the government housing in La Chappa is poorly maintained; After closing in the 1960s, the assembly in El Gabriel has reopened.



# A Home and a Legacy

The Impact of a Family's Work for Christ in Cuba

BY NISA CRUTCHFIELD



*O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare your strength to this generation.*

(Psalm 71:17-18)

In 1940, my parents, George and Betty Walker, arrived in Havana, Cuba, to serve as missionaries commended from assemblies in the Chicago area. They joined Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Smith, senior missionaries from Scotland who relocated to Cuba from Spain during the Spanish Civil War. After spending two years in Havana studying Spanish, the Walkers began to explore areas in a rural Havana province where they could fulfill their calling to preach the Gospel. They ended up in the small agricultural town of La Salud and established a work there that would one day be their legacy.

## STARTING OUT

George began sharing the good news in his broken Spanish by playing his accordion and singing gospel songs in the town's central park. Crowds gathered to hear the only *Americano* they had ever seen. George had a charismatic effect on the children, who responded with genuine enthusiasm to his music and message. Betty, a qualified registered nurse with special skills in midwifery volunteered her



services to assist the only physician in town. They gained the respect and admiration of everyone in the town, and it was not long before a nucleus of believers came to faith in Christ in this predominantly Roman Catholic town.

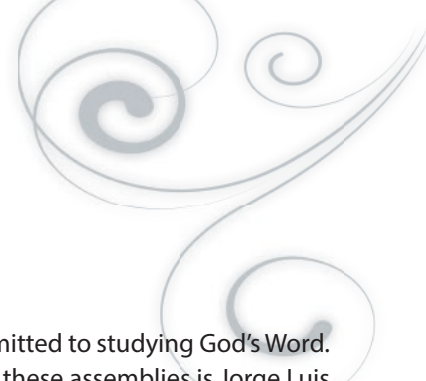
## EXPERIENCING GROWTH

Joined by other missionaries, mostly from Canada, George and his colleague David Adams built the building known as La Sala Evangelica, the gospel hall in La Salud. They also purchased the land adjoining the church building to build the house in which I grew up. Both buildings still stand today and repairs have ensured that, despite 70 years, the buildings are safe and functional.

In addition to the established work in the rural Havana province, George Walker and David Adams traveled the length of the island preaching the Gospel



**Top (L-R):** After 70 years and political upheaval, La Sala Evangelica in La Salud still stands through the care of its members; The cheerful home next to La Sala Evangelica, which once belonged to the Walkers, now greets passersby; Driving from city to city, one can get a true sense of Cuba's vast natural beauty. **Above:** Founded upon their desire to reach Cuba for Christ, as well as their charisma and practical skills, the Walkers' legacy continues today; The continued existence of La Sala Evangelica speaks to the Lord's faithfulness and the believers' hearts.



in a van with mounted speakers. They arrived at the far eastern end of the island in a mountainous region where they crossed rivers and climbed mountains on mules to share the Gospel. This area was the base for the band of guerrilla fighters who ultimately overthrew the existing government and initiated an era of tumultuous change, both politically and economically. Their system of government continues in place today.

## FACING CHANGE

I was born in an area close to Havana three years after my parents, the Walkers, arrived. Because I grew up hearing and speaking Spanish, I never considered myself American. My friends were all Cuban, and our home was a welcoming place for everyone. When my parents were concerned about my future education, I was sent to attend high school in the US. I left Cuba when I was 15 years old, but I was still emotionally tied to my Cuban heritage. When the political situation and tensions escalated between Cuba and the US, my parents and most of the other missionaries on the island were encouraged to leave. The believers, who remained faithful, were subjected to prison, but thankfully, they continued to support the work once they were released. Many went to other countries and served the Lord while in exile.

## CONTINUING THE WORK

One of those who has been at the forefront of the work established by my parents is Alfredo Capote, who is based in the small



town of El Gabriel, not far from La Salud. He was saved through my father's ministry and continues to serve the Lord there in El Gabriel today.



After the missionaries left, many indigenous assemblies sprang up, and they are still thriving today, especially those in the Oriente province at the far eastern end

of the island. Emmaus courses are being used to disciple new believers. There are more than 20 indigenous assemblies with

elders and deacons eagerly committed to studying God's Word.

One of the principal leaders in these assemblies is Jorge Luis Rodriguez, who conducts in-depth Bible study events at least twice a year. He has traveled extensively throughout the island and is a capable expositor and avid student of the Word of God. He also has a humble servant's heart, and I am so grateful for his generous gift of time in driving us to so many places around Havana and Pinar del Rio.

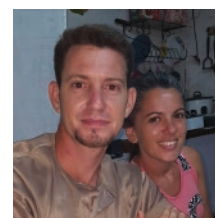
## REVISITING THE WORK

In May and August of this year, I was privileged to make two return visits to the land of my birth. My primary motive in doing so was to reconnect with believers I had known since childhood. Additionally, I was aware of the difficult circumstances the believers are experiencing, and I wanted to go and encourage them, taking vitamins and food supplies, which are in great shortage in Cuba, with me.

On the first Sunday of my first visit, I attended La Sala Evangelica in La Salud where I was baptized as a young teen. The assembly that meets in La Sala Evangelica in El Gabriel joined us in a combined service. It was a memorable experience to meet brothers and sisters I had not seen for 50 years! So many thanked me for coming and many expressed their gratitude for the legacy that my parents left, telling me that, because my parents had brought them the message of the Gospel, their lives were truly transformed.



On my second trip on August 6, I met a young couple who had never met my parents, but the young man said, "I am the result of your parents' legacy because my parents were saved under your father's ministry in La Salud." He and his wife faithfully attend one of the assemblies in El Gabriel. Although their living situation is truly a stark example of life in Cuba, they generously provided a meal for us, much like the Macedonian Christians in New Testament times. Unfor-



**Left (clockwise from top):** Individuals like Alfredo and Maria Capote carry on the work that the Walkers began; God equips men like Jorge Luis Rodriguez with servants' hearts and expository skills to lead Cuba's assemblies; During the revolution, many indigenous assemblies, led by elders and deacons from Cuba, sprang up, and they remain committed to Christ today. **Right (clockwise from top):** Returning to Cuba, Nisa reunites with old friends, including one from her childhood, for the first time in 50 years; In La Salud, Nisa meets with some of her parents' first converts; A second generation Christian as a result of the Walkers' ministry in La Salud, this young man enjoys meeting Nisa.

Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15

Unfortunately, the young man spent three months in prison when the authorities in Cuba caught him trying to escape on a raft.



Also on this second trip, I was privileged to have my granddaughter, Priscilla Logan, with me. Priscilla also has a wonderful missionary heritage, not only from the Walker side of the family and the Crutchfield side but also from the Logan family, who continue to serve the Lord in Zambia. So it is not surprising that Priscilla shares an interest in missions, and despite her limited grasp of Spanish, she endeared herself to the Cuban believers with her patient and kind demeanor.

On the fourth day of our visit, Jorge Luis, our very capable chauffeur to the various parts of the island, and his wife drove us far west to Pinar del Rio. This is the area where David and Ag-

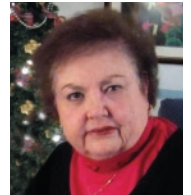
Above: Nisa's granddaughter learns more about the Cuban culture from the local believers.

nes Adams and their children labored. The brethren arranged for me to speak to a group of women in a small ramshackle house just over a mile from the Adams's compound, which now serves as a campsite for conferences and visiting speakers. We stopped briefly to visit the campsite before going on to the ladies' Bible study.

### REMEMBERING THE LEGACY

Frequent electrical outages, unpaved roads filled with potholes, horse-driven carts, and limited food created a physically daunting experience. But what a joy and thrill it was to be able to witness the lasting legacy of God's servants who obediently followed the command to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" and "[teach] them to observe all things." (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:20) ■

Nisa Crutchfield was commended in 1974 by Hollywood Gospel Chapel in Hollywood, Florida.



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# Home with the Lord

## Rose Ellen Brooks

November 16, 1931 – August 2, 2018 • Missionary to the Philippines

In Proverbs 31, King Lemuel writes by inspiration of God, “Her children rise up and call her blessed,” speaking of the virtuous wife. Although Rose Brooks never married and lived her life as a single missionary, she has many who, to this day, “rise up and call her blessed.” It is a tribute to a life devoted to caring for and nourishing the saints and the less fortunate in this world.

Rose Ellen Brooks was born on November 16, 1931, in Manila, Philippines, to missionaries Cyril and Anna Brooks. As a missionary kid, she faced many challenges in the early years of her life. When she was just 10 years old, the Japanese invaded the Philippines at the beginning of World War II. Her family was placed under house arrest and were later interned at a prisoner of war camp in Los Baños, Philippines. On February 23, 1945, the day they were scheduled to be executed, they were rescued with 2,147 other prisoners in a daring raid by US paratroopers and Philippine guerrilla troops. These experiences changed her life forever as she experienced the faithfulness of the Lord in very challenging circumstances.

Following their wartime experiences, the family was repatriated back to the States and, during this time of furlough, became naturalized citizens of the US. When her parents returned to the Philippines in 1949, she remained in the States

*She has many who, to this day, “rise up and call her blessed.”*

to finish her high school studies at Bennet High School in Buffalo, New York, in 1950. Following graduation, she attended nursing school at Deaconess Hospital in Buffalo. Having completed her training, she worked on the staff of InterVarsity Nurses Christian Fellowship, for which she traveled and spoke to nurses in the US and Canada. In 1966, she was commended to the work of the Lord in Pakistan as a missionary nurse, and she faithfully served as a midwife for 13 years.

In 1979, when her parents were getting on in years and their health was compromised, she returned to the Philippines to care for them. Following their deaths in 1986, she remained in the Philippines to continue the work that Cyril and Anna had begun with Bible School of the Air, the first overseas use of Emmaus Correspondence School courses. She continued in this work until she was no longer able to do so, due to old age and many infirmities. She was also greatly involved in San Juan Gospel Chapel, a work that was also started by Cyril and Anna before the war. She will be sorely missed by the Lydians, a ladies’ group that she had been a part of for decades. She also fostered three girls and a boy with special needs for decades—they were her Filipino family.

She fell asleep in the Lord Jesus on August 2, 2018, and was interred beside her parents in the Philippines. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” was placed on the stone that marks her gravesite.



Ken Hardisty

# May We Introduce

## Ian & Heather Walton

*Serving in Belize*



### Ian's Testimony

I was blessed to grow up in a Christian home where going to church was twice, or sometimes three times, on Sundays and every Thursday evening for Bible study. We would also regularly attend children's meetings and special gospel outreach meetings. When I was growing up, my family had the privilege of hosting many full-time workers, including missionaries, in our home, and I always found it very interesting to listen to their stories and hear their missions reports. At the young age of seven, I realized my need of a Savior. After an evening of soul trouble and talking with my dad, I accepted Christ as my Savior. A number of years went by, and I went to college, and in my second year, Heather and I became reacquainted and began dating with marriage in view. We were married in May 1998.

### Heather's Testimony

I grew up as a missionary kid in both Kenya and Burundi. I, too, was brought up in a Christian home, and I realized that I needed to be saved at age three. I had the privilege of attending Rift Valley Academy for most of my high school years and, to this day, attribute my staying grounded in my faith during my teen years to that school. Upon returning to Canada, I completed high school and then studied nursing with missions in mind.

### Together

After our marriage in 1998, we went through many times of unemployment and moving. During one such time in early 2010, Heather's dad said to Ian, "Do you think that God is calling you to missions?" At the time, Ian's answer was "no way," but it was the start of God's working in his heart. By early spring, we as a couple had discussed and prayed about missions work at length and approached our elders with our burden. Our thought was that God was calling us to Africa, but that was not to be. With closed doors in 2010 and 2014, we continued to pray, seeking God's will and timing and keeping as our focus Psalm 37:7, which reads, "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him." In the early months of 2017, we decided that we wanted to take a short-term missions trip as a family for Christmas. Plans started taking shape, and soon we had decided that Belize would be our destination. Through much prayer, we soon realized that this might be more than just a short-term mission trip. We approached our elders with the possibility of long-term missions and received their blessing. We, along with our two sons, Jaykob (17) and Caleb (15), arrived in Belize this fall. We work with the four assemblies in the immediate area of Belize City, assisting in discipleship, gospel outreach, and youth work. Heather volunteers in the local hospital, and we will serve in whatever else the Lord leads us to. We value your prayers as we seek to live our lives for His glory. ■

### 2018 TAX RECEIPTS

December gifts to CMML and MSC Canada will receive a receipt for 2018 income tax returns if they are postmarked by December 31, 2018.

### HOLIDAY NOTICE

The CMML office will be closed December 24, 25, & 31, 2018, and January 1, 2019. The MSC Canada office will be closed December 25, 2018, through January 1, 2019.