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John M. Young

Amridge University, johnyoung02@amridgeuniversity.edu

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## **“Longing for a Better Country: The Stone-Campbell Movement and the Search for Atlantis”**

By John Young, Associate Professor, Turner School of Theology, Amridge University

According to Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Critias* dialogues, the historical Athenian leader Solon once journeyed to Egypt, where he learned from priestly record keepers that a powerful maritime society had conquered an enormous swath of the ancient world thousands of years prior. Despite the military might of these mysterious people, who had subjugated and enslaved all previous opponents, Athens fiercely and successfully resisted their onslaught. Shortly thereafter, this island kingdom, known as Atlantis, was destroyed by a combination of floods and earthquakes and sank into the sea, never to return. Over time, the tales of the heroic ancient Athenians, their opposition to the tyranny of Atlantis, and the destruction of the island were all lost to the ages, even disappearing from the historical memory of the victorious Athenians. Or so the story goes.<sup>1</sup>

Although hunting for Plato’s mythical lost kingdom using supernatural abilities might seem an unlikely pursuit for anyone associated with the Stone-Campbell Movement, not one but two figures with SCM ties played key roles in the psychic-archaeological search for Atlantis during the twentieth century. Edgar Cayce, widely known as the “Sleeping Prophet” for his apparent knack for experiencing visions while unconscious, spoke frequently of Atlantis—which, he claimed, was once home to gigantic beings wielding highly advanced technologies like crystal-powered death rays. A Kentucky native, Cayce also maintained close ties to the Disciples of Christ throughout much of his life, even teaching Sunday School classes and reading the Bible regularly. Cayce’s speculations on Atlantis would prove influential for another notable and notorious figure in the hunt for the lost continent: Maxine Klein Asher. Better known for her creation of American World University (and her not-entirely-coincidental ownership of the World Association of Universities and Colleges which accredited the infamous diploma mill), Asher wrote several books about the mythical continent throughout her lifetime. Not simply an armchair Atlantologist, however, she also personally oversaw a 1973 expedition off of the coast of Spain which, she believed on the basis of her own purported psychic abilities, was where the continent had sunk beneath the waters long ago. This excursion in and of itself was not all that unusual in the world of Atlantis speculation. What separated her expedition from the rest of the

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html>; Plato, *Critias*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/critias.html>.

pack was that Pepperdine University somewhat inadvertently sponsored the trip and some of the students who accompanied Asher on her journey.

In 1877, the “Sleeping Prophet,” Edgar Cayce, was born near Hopkinsville, Kentucky.<sup>2</sup> As a preteen, young Edgar began taking an active role in the life of the Liberty Christian Church, a congregation of the Disciples of Christ; he was baptized in the Little River in late 1888 at the age of 11. According to Cayce biographer Sidney D. Kirkpatrick, “During the next eight years, Edgar would miss only two services,”<sup>3</sup> and Cayce’s devotion even supposedly caught the attention of Granville Lipscomb, an elder at the congregation.<sup>4</sup> Edgar is also mentioned by name in the church’s congregational history, which describes him as “one of the most widely known and respected clairvoyants in history.”<sup>5</sup> Kirkpatrick further places Edgar at several Disciples congregations throughout his first few decades, including the Ninth Street congregation in Hopkinsville, the First Christian Church of Louisville, Kentucky; the First Christian Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky; and the First Christian Church of Selma, Alabama.<sup>6</sup>

Part of a deeply religious family,<sup>7</sup> Edgar was a devoted student of Scripture and gave considerable thought to becoming a minister within the Disciples tradition. However, as Henry Warner Bowden observes in the entry on Cayce in the *Dictionary of American Religious Biography*, “as a sixth-grade dropout in rural Kentucky, he had neither the finances nor aptitude for training in such a career.”<sup>8</sup> Still, he remained active in congregational life, teaching Bible classes and, at the First Christian Churches of Bowling Green and Selma, serving as a deacon.<sup>9</sup> Cayce’s time within the Disciples was not always pleasant, however; at Bowling Green, he was once removed as both teacher and deacon until a friend successfully lobbied the elders to return him to those roles. Admittedly, the evidence for this account has some issues; Cayce biographer Kirkpatrick writes that

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<sup>2</sup> “Cayce, Edgar,” *Atlantipedia*, July 29, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/cayce-edgar-2/>.

<sup>3</sup> Sidney D. Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce: An American Prophet* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000) 34.

<sup>4</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce*, 35. Admittedly, I have been unable to place Granville (presumably Granville Lipscomb Jr.) in Kentucky. His son, Alexander Bigby (A.B.) Lipscomb, did work in the area for a time, but A.B. was only a year older than Cayce, and it seems unlikely that he would have already been in any sort of leadership position, much less the eldership.

<sup>5</sup> J. Brooks Major and William T. Turner, “A History of Liberty Christian Church,” <http://www.libertychristianchurchky.org/about/>.

<sup>6</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce*, 49, 74, 175-176.

<sup>7</sup> Jess Stearn, *Edgar Cayce: The Sleeping Prophet* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967) 26.

<sup>8</sup> “Cayce, Edgar,” in Henry Warden Bowden, *Dictionary of American Religious Biography*, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993) 106.

<sup>9</sup> “Cayce, Edgar,” *Dictionary of American Religious Biography*, 106; Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce*, 102; Minnie Priestler Dorman, “A History of the First Christian Church at Selma, Alabama,” MA thesis, Butler University, 1945, 27.

There is every reason to believe that [the friend] cited no less an example than Alexander Campbell, the co-founder of the Disciples of Christ Church, who was reported to have had a number of psychic visions and examples of precognition. In 1807, while he and his family were sailing to America, he had a dream in which their ship, the *Hibernia*, was sunk. As he had predicted, their ship was wrecked and Campbell and his family were safely taken to shore. During Campbell's college years, he was visited by an angel who told him much about his life to come: his travels, his two marriages, and the large audiences to whom he would preach. All of what she told him came true.<sup>10</sup>

In any event, Cayce's involvement with the supernatural branched far and wide beyond the usual bounds of Disciples orthodoxy. In his early twenties, he lost his voice but ostensibly cured himself through self-hypnosis. His (usually involuntary) trance-like states from which the "Sleeping Prophet" derived his nickname also seemed to give him the ability to heal others, and he eventually began to experience visions of past and future which he called "readings." These messages, numbering in the thousands, "produced ideas totally at variance with his Christian upbringing, such as reincarnation and contact with the dead."<sup>11</sup>

To that end, Cayce gave as many as six hundred readings on the subject of Atlantis. Most notably, he asserted that Atlantis would be rediscovered in 1968 or 1969,<sup>12</sup> approximately forty years after he gave his first reading on the subject, in which he claimed that the temple of the "Poseidians" was located near the Bahamian island of Bimini.<sup>13</sup> A few aerial expeditions to the site undertaken by Cayce devotees in the late 1960s did turn up some unusual structures which the initial searchers interpreted as "either paved roads or the tops of huge walls."<sup>14</sup> Geologists subsequently determined that the structures were naturally occurring formations and that the "Psychic archaeologists, with their typical lack of care, had misidentified the natural limestone fractures as indications of huge masonry blocks. They had also misread a depth finder in such a way as to discover a phantom underwater pyramid."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce*, 112.

<sup>11</sup> "Cayce, Edgar," *Atlantipedia*, July 29, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/cayce-edgar-2/>; Stearn, *Edgar Cayce*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Ferro and Michael Grumley, *Atlantis: The Autobiography of a Search* (New York: Bell Publishing Company, 1970) 24; for additional context, see Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Catastrophic Cartographies: Mapping the Lost Continent of Lemuria," *Representations* 67 (Summer 1999) 95-96.

<sup>13</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Edgar Cayce*, 375.

<sup>14</sup> L. Moody Simms, Jr., "From Atlantis to UFO's," *Social Science* 51, no. 2 (Spring 1976) 98.

<sup>15</sup> Marshall McKusick, "Psychic Archaeology from Atlantis to Oz," *Archaeology* 37, no. 5 (September/October 1984) 50.

Cayce's readings on Atlantis contained a number of unusual claims about the island empire and its inhabitants. According to journalist Mark Adams's excellent overview *Meet Me in Atlantis*, "The Atlanteans had... a massive crystal that Cayce said provided them with healing powers as well as energy to operate sophisticated aircraft and submarines—'but they powered the stone too high.' This act of arrogance set off geological turbulence worldwide."<sup>16</sup> (As another chronicler of Cayce's Atlantis readings observes with understatement, "With all this technology at their disposal it is incredible that they could have lost a war with anyone, particularly the relatively primitive Athenians.")<sup>17</sup> Edgar Cayce's thousands of readings, Atlantean or otherwise, are now located at the Association for Research and Enlightenment, an organization founded in 1931 in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to promote the teachings and life of the "Sleeping Prophet," who passed away in 1945.<sup>18</sup>

The second act of the Stone-Campbell-Atlantis story began nearly three decades later on the Pacific coast, from whence in 1973 Maxine Klein Asher, at least partly under the supervision of Pepperdine University, launched an ill-fated expedition to Cadiz, Spain, in search of Plato's lost continent. Fifty-seven years Cayce's junior, Asher was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1930.<sup>19</sup> She would go on to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology from UCLA and a master's in history from California State University, Northridge, while also serving in a variety of teaching and teaching-related roles in and around Los Angeles.<sup>20</sup> By the time of her death in 2015, Asher was known primarily for her founding of, and association with, several diploma mills and bogus accrediting agencies; this involvement was documented in 2004 by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which recounted that "After starting American World, Ms. Asher faced questions about its standards... [So] Ms. Asher found a solution. She created her own accreditor."<sup>21</sup>

Whatever one's estimation of that claim, according to her C.V., Asher began working as an "Educational Consultant" with Pepperdine University in 1972 and

<sup>16</sup> Mark Adams, *Meet Me in Atlantis: My Obsessive Quest to Find the Sunken City* (New York: Penguin Group, 2015) 84. Cayce actually claimed that there were "three major cataclysms of Atlantis—50,700 B.C., 28,000 B.C., and the last of approximately 10,000 B.C...." See Ferro and Grumley, *Atlantis*, 122.

<sup>17</sup> "Cayce, Edgar," *Atlantipedia*, July 29, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/cayce-edgar-2/>.

<sup>18</sup> "Cayce, Edgar," *Atlantipedia*, July 29, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/cayce-edgar-2/>; Adams, *Meet Me in Atlantis*, 84. For much more on the ARE, see Ann W. Duncan, "Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment: 'Nones' and Religious Experience in the Twenty-first Century," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 19, no. 1 (August 2015) 45-64.

<sup>19</sup> "Asher, Maxine Klein," *Atlantipedia*, May 31, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/asher-dr-maxine-klein/>; Scott Smallwood, "Maxine Asher Has a Degree for You," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 25, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Maxine Asher, letter to the editor, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 16, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Smallwood, "Maxine Asher Has a Degree for You."

started the "Ancient Mediterranean Research Association," or AMRA, that same year.<sup>22</sup> Although *Atlantipedia* would later contend that the organization "seems to have been founded simply to promote the modest Atlantis related output of Dr. Asher,"<sup>23</sup> at least in its earliest months, AMRA was co-directed by the noted professor, educational leader, and future United States ambassador to Mexico Dr. Julian Nava, and many of the organization's records are contained in his personal papers at California State University, Northridge, as a result of the legal proceedings leveled at him in the wake of the Cadiz expedition.<sup>24</sup>

Giving little sense of the chaos that would soon ensue, the *Malibu Times* reported briefly on October 20, 1972, that "A search for the lost Continent of Atlantis is being staged now, headed by Maxine Asher" and that "Informative classes regarding the search will be revealed by Dr. Robert Gordon of Pepperdine University" a few days later.<sup>25</sup> The student paper of Pepperdine's Los Angeles campus, the *Inner View*, reported on January 19, 1973, that some of the school's students would also be making the trip to Spain. The *LA Times* provided substantial coverage of Asher's publicity-generating talks throughout the early months of the year, occasionally noting some sort of Pepperdine connection<sup>26</sup> and, slightly more troublingly, her claims to psychic powers.<sup>27</sup>

In the weeks and days immediately preceding the trip, the expedition generated a substantial amount of news coverage, often with a mildly mocking tone. Writing in the *New York Times* on July 5, Everett R. Holles reported that "An expedition of oddly assorted explorers will leave New York by plane tomorrow for the Gulf of Cadiz, southwest of Spain, where they believe that psychic vibrations out of the void of millenniums will guide them to the Lost Continent of Atlantis." Holles described Asher as a "specialist in audiovisual techniques at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles" and bemusedly noted the involvement of "Dr. Julian Nava, professor of ancient Mediterranean history at California State University in

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<sup>22</sup> "Asher, Maxine: Biographical data, 1973," Box 11, Folder 5, Julian Nava Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Oviatt Library, California State University, Northridge.

<sup>23</sup> "Asher, Maxine Klein," *Atlantipedia*, May 31, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/asher-dr-maxine-klein/>.

<sup>24</sup> For the collection's finding aid, see "Nava (Julian) Collection," *Online Archive of California*, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8tf03jv/>.

<sup>25</sup> "Search for Atlantis," *Malibu Times*, October 20, 1972, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP01/id/12725>.

<sup>26</sup> For instance, Gerald Faris, in "Pepperdine Scientist to Lead Search for Lost Continent: Atlantis Hunt Also Lures B.H. Doctors," *LA Times*, April 26, 1973, writes that "There's one scientist, Mrs. Maxine Asher of Pepperdine University, who thinks so, despite the almost overwhelming opinion of the scientific community that Atlantis is, and always was, a product of the fertile imagination of the Greek philosopher Plato."

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, "Atlantis Myth to Be Topic of Meeting," *LA Times*, May 7, 1973, which notes that Asher would be speaking at the "Orange Coast Chapter of the Psynetics Foundation" regarding the "scientific psychic expedition to take place off the coast of Spain later this summer."

Northridge.” According to Holles, Asher specifically cited the work of Edgar Cayce as influential in her beliefs regarding the nature of Atlantis, though she disagreed with Cayce as to its location; additionally, Holles wrote, “Mr. Cayce’s granddaughter, Gail, is a member of the expedition.”<sup>28</sup>

It did not take long for reports of a seemingly substantial archaeological find to emerge from the expedition. On July 19, the *Washington Post* reported that “Scuba divers hunting the legendary continent of Atlantis off Spain’s coast say they have found what could be a clue to the lost civilization just 16 miles from shore.” According to Asher, “film shot by two divers was being rushed into processing in the hope of confirming the divers’ reports” of distinctly human-made architectural features.<sup>29</sup> Yet just three days later, the *New York Times* added that “A spokesman for the expedition acknowledged that the black and white photographs ‘showed nothing,’” Asher’s continued claims to a discovery notwithstanding.<sup>30</sup>

On July 27, both of the Pepperdine student newspapers indicated that the Spanish government had quickly intervened to stop the expedition because—again, Asher’s claims notwithstanding—she had not obtained the correct permits and authorizations.<sup>31</sup> By early August, all of the students on the expedition had abandoned the trip, with some having already decamped to Ireland.<sup>32</sup> In late September, John D. Couturie, an executive with Hughes Aircraft whose son William had been hired (but not paid) to film a documentary of the trip, filed a million-dollar lawsuit against AMRA and its leaders.<sup>33</sup> Most significantly, Celeste Durant of the *LA Times* reported on November 7, “A judge in Cadiz, Spain, has issued a warrant for the detention of Mrs. Maxine Asher... the warrant alleges that a check that was supposed to cover the group’s expenses was returned for lack of funds.” (Fortunately for Asher, she had already returned to California by that time.)<sup>34</sup>

Pepperdine hurriedly began doing damage control. A mid-September article in the *Inner View* contained several strong remarks from Dr. Robert Gordon, who

<sup>28</sup> Everett R. Holles, “Psychic Group to Seek Lost Continent,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1973, <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/07/05/archives/psychic-group-to-seek-lost-continent-there-are-proofs-advanced.html>.

<sup>29</sup> “Divers Report Clue to Atlantis,” *Washington Post*, July 19, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> “Team Plays Down Atlantis Claims,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1973, <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/07/22/archives/world-news-briefs-3-states-recognize-new-afghan-regime-guyana.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Frank Suraci, “U.S. expedition claims discovery of lost Atlantis,” *Graphic*, July 27, 1973, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP05/id/4083/>; “Spanish police stop search for Atlantis,” *Inner View*, July 27, 1973, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15730coll31/id/896>.

<sup>32</sup> “Last Atlantis Hunters Quit Site in Spain,” *LA Times*, August 8, 1973.

<sup>33</sup> “2 File \$1 Million Suit Over Hunt for Atlantis,” *LA Times*, September 28, 1973.

<sup>34</sup> Celeste Durant, “Spanish Judge Issues Warrant for Head of Atlantis Expedition,” *LA Times*, November 7, 1973.

denied that the school had been involved with the dive itself and emphatically indicated that "Pepperdine University will not be engaged in any further relationship with the Ancient Mediterranean Research Association (AMRA)."<sup>35</sup> Similar statements appeared in the *LA Times* in early October,<sup>36</sup> as well as in the *Graphic*, where Gordon said that Pepperdine had given its approval only to "a course in ancient Mediterranean history to be taught by Dr. Julian Nava."<sup>37</sup> The school also established a five-person committee to review the course's content which consisted of Gordon, Robert Holland (from the psychology department), Frank Pack (religion), Richard Brudos (continuing education), and Roe Darnell (the registrar). Finally, the administration belatedly made the decision to either refund students' expenses or to grant them six "pass" credit hours for their troubles.<sup>38</sup> Though the incident was briefly mentioned in Mark Adams's book and was cited in a 1987 *LA Times* piece as evidence of the school's broader struggles during the 1970s,<sup>39</sup> it has largely been forgotten in the intervening decades.<sup>40</sup>

Asher's involvement with Pepperdine was both more substantial and more direct than the school's public statements let on. Asher was the sole listed instructor for a Pepperdine continuing education course on "The Problem of Atlantis, Part I," which was taught from early February through early April 1973. Asher, Robert Gordon, and Pepperdine Executive Vice President (and future President) Howard A. White all also signed an "Agreement for Associate Educational Services" which reads, in part, "In order to achieve the stated aims and purposes of the School of Continuing Education and Pepperdine University, Pepperdine agrees to enter into a contract with Maxine Asher... to jointly provide educational services."<sup>41</sup>

Though most of her future energies would be devoted to American World University and related endeavors, Asher did not lose her interest in Atlantis or in

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<sup>35</sup> Carol Clark, "Involvement with Atlantis denied," *Inner View*, September 13, 1973, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15730coll31/id/137>.

<sup>36</sup> Pat Bryant, "Atlantis Hunt College Credit in Doubt," *LA Times*, October 4, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Patrick, "Credit controversy continues: Atlantis class finds law suit," *Graphic*, October 5, 1973, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP05/id/6193>.

<sup>38</sup> Laura Patrick, "'Atlantis' decision disclosed: White authorizes credits, refunds," *Graphic*, November 2, 1973, <https://pepperdine.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/PDNP05/id/4163/>.

<sup>39</sup> "Pepperdine made headlines only once for academics in those years, and those too were embarrassing..." See Judy Pasternak, "Republican, That Is: Pepperdine: Party School by the Shore," *LA Times*, September 19, 1987.

<sup>40</sup> Although he does not mention Asher or Atlantis specifically, W. David Baird, in *Quest for Distinction: Pepperdine University in the 20th Century* (Malibu, CA: Pepperdine University Press, 2016) 206, does note widespread issues with the school's continuing education offerings: "Over the years, its classes and programs had endured much disparagement, with some criticism coming from public school superintendents who found they were paying teachers higher salaries because of questionable credentials earned through SCE courses."

<sup>41</sup> "Summer School Program in Cadiz, Spain: Pepperdine University Materials," Box 15, Folder 31, Julian Nava Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Oviatt Library, California State University, Northridge.

defending her claims to its ostensible discovery. She continued to give public lectures on the subject throughout the 1970s, even as legal proceedings continued against her, Nava, and AMRA.<sup>42</sup> The *LA Times* reported in 1977 that Asher was scheduled to teach a continuing education course at California State University, Northridge on “recent UFO research, explorations for Big Foot, and new energy phenomena receiving psychic research,” including Atlantis.<sup>43</sup> Giving the story another small Stone-Campbell angle, the *LA Times* informed readers over a decade later that Asher would be giving a seminar at the Disciples-connected Chapman College<sup>44</sup> to “present the results of her 30 years of research in a lecture-and-slide program, plus excerpts of a Los Angeles television production, ‘The Lost City of Atlantis.’”<sup>45</sup> As late as 2007, Asher created and sold a six-week course on Atlantis through her own American World University.<sup>46</sup>

Atlantis, of course, remains undiscovered to this day.

Is there a larger takeaway from these two tales, other than an encouragement for school administrators to do their due diligence on all field trip and study abroad proposals? In the case of Cayce, there is an intriguing parallel between the Sleeping Prophet’s appreciation of restoration ideals and his interest in the search for Atlantis. Historian L. Moody Simms Jr., continuing along a line of argumentation suggested by the astronomer Carl Sagan, argues that the “‘need to know who we are and how we got here’—coupled with the fact that many people of late have experienced the ‘withering’ of ‘old beliefs’ and have lost faith in the traditional powers of reason”—has engendered curiosity about mythical civilizations, including Atlantis, which supposedly surpassed our own in some way.<sup>47</sup> Atlantis is a long way from Antioch, literally and figuratively, but perhaps there is a deeper association between the two seemingly disconnected sides of Cayce’s spiritual life than might appear on first glance.

More directly relevant to the Stone-Campbell heritage, however, the stories of Edgar Cayce and Maxine Klein Asher serve as important reminders that our movement is neither as uniform nor as unchanging as we might assume. Several

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<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, “Woman to Report on Search for Atlantis,” *LA Times*, April 18, 1974, as well as “Lecture Series on Atlantis Set,” *LA Times*, April 13, 1975.

<sup>43</sup> “Believer Will Explore ‘Grand Illusions’: Atlantis and Other Places,” *LA Times*, August 7, 1977.

<sup>44</sup> For more on the school’s history, see Terry Miethe, “Chapman University,” in *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, eds. Douglas A. Foster et al (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004) 169-170.

<sup>45</sup> “College schedules seminar on Atlantis,” *LA Times*, April 23, 1988.

<sup>46</sup> “Asher, Maxine Klein,” *Atlantipedia*, May 31, 2010, <http://atlantipedia.ie/samples/asher-dr-maxine-klein/>.

<sup>47</sup> Simms Jr., “From Atlantis to UFO’s,” 97.

substantial works from recent decades—tomes such as the *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* and the *Global History* stand out in this regard—have helped demonstrate just how rich and varied the movement’s history truly is.<sup>48</sup> Others have likewise brought different stories to the fore, allowing readers to learn from experiences which have all too often been downplayed or overlooked entirely. I hope my own work in *Redrawing the Blueprints for the Early Church* has accomplished a similar goal in demonstrating the doctrinal diversity of the movement’s smaller fellowships.<sup>49</sup> But there are still innumerable stories to tell and countless leads to chase down. By investigating these kinds of off-the-beaten-path narratives, I believe that we can arrive at a richer, more nuanced, and perhaps even more enjoyable understanding of our shared history.

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<sup>48</sup> Douglas A. Foster et al, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004); D. Newell Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> John Young, *Redrawing the Blueprints for the Early Church: Historical Ecclesiology in and around the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Florence, AL: HCU Press, 2021).