



# REPLACING WALLS WITH WHEELS

Since the dawn of time, humankind has been wondering about the unknown world and wandering into it. The quest continues today among those seeking a better understanding of the world, Christianity and their place in both.

**DOWN  
ANCIENT  
PATHS™**

Down Ancient Paths, an award-winning educational travel program offered by Ambrose University since 2000, has led hundreds of people on journeys of imagination, exploration, integration and transformation. It inspires participants — undergrad and Seminary students, alumni, members of the clergy and the general public — to open their eyes and minds to the history, theology, spirituality and geography of ancient Christianity by immersing them in places of profound meaning.

These journeys-of-a-lifetime were a lifetime in the making for Dr. Charles Nienkirchen, Professor of Christian History and Spirituality,

and the Down Ancient Paths Founder and Director. “These are not holidays,” he says, explaining that educational travel is for credit, personal enrichment and professional development. “Every student coming out of a post-secondary institution needs some degree of global consciousness. At a faith-based institution like Ambrose University, we want our students to have an understanding of the wellsprings of the Christian faith, and this invariably takes us to the Middle East.”

Delving into global Christian heritage is important at this time when “the tremendous contribution of Judeo-Christian heritage to world civilization is under appreciated,



## Paths yet to TRAVEL

Down Ancient Paths is extending its global reach to include some of the oldest of the youngest Christian traditions. Among upcoming destinations are these journeys-of-a-lifetime.

### FULLY BOOKED

**Magnificent Ethiopia:  
Where the Ancient Christian  
Voices Still Speak**  
January 14–28, 2016

### NEW!

**Milestones of Christian  
Memory in Southern Spain:  
From the Apostle Paul to  
Christopher Columbus**  
March 17–April 1, 2016

**Summer School in  
the “Greater” Holy Land  
(Jordan and Israel)**  
May 1–June 3, 2016

### NEW!

**And Christianity Came  
to Tahiti: A South Pacific  
Odyssey**  
March 2017

**Visit the Down Ancient  
Paths website for details  
on these and other  
educational travel  
opportunities:  
[downancientpaths.com](http://downancientpaths.com)**

under studied, under taught and even under attack, especially in the western world.” But while a “militant form of multiculturalism” tends to erode appreciation for the Christian legacy, Nienkirchen says Down Ancient Paths aims to strengthen Christian consciousness through travel experience.

Travellers venture along the streets of Israel and Jordan, and see the sun rise from the Aegean Sea, crossing from Turkey to the Holy Island of Patmos. They walk in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul in Greece and of pilgrims in Italy. They go to the “Greater” Holy Land and the “Other” Holy Land (usually Turkey and surrounding countries). Their senses go into overdrive marvelling at the beauty of Turkey’s aptly named turquoise coast. In January, some will go to exotic Ethiopia. Past destinations have included India, China, Malta, Armenia, Egypt, Ireland and England, among others.

“Educational travel is a very effective way of taking the walls off the classroom,” says Nienkirchen, who expanded on that concept in May, delivering the closing address to a worldwide gathering of faith-based post-secondary institutions amid the illuminated ruins of Ephesus, Turkey.

*(L) A colonnaded street in Laodicea, Syria. (R) A Roman road north of Antalya (the biblical Attalia), Turkey, walked by the Apostle Paul.*

“If people come back with questions, if they are a bit confused, then they’ve had a good educational experience.”

The impact can be life-changing. Some people who’ve never had an interest in matters of faith acquire one. Some who’ve lost their sense of the value of faith reacquire it. Some delve deeper into what they’ve known. Some just discover things about Christianity that were completely off their radar screen.

“Never in the history of the world has there been a civilization that didn’t find its cohesion in some form of religious belief system,” Nienkirchen explains. “From a Christian perspective, we’re made in the image of God and are spiritual by nature. Down Ancient Paths helps people respond to the intrinsic spiritual nature of their being.”

He, too, continues to grow as student, pilgrim and professor. “I continue to get surprises,” he says. “Travel education as a whole confirms what I know, shows me what I don’t know and forces me to come to grips with the implications for what I don’t know, or what I thought I knew.” □