

The Setting of the Son on Sunbury

A Brief History of Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church Sunbury, PA

by

Pastor Charles E. Cole

October 30, 2010

Let's take a journey back to Sunbury, PA 1897, an area with Indian roots on the banks of the Susquehanna River not far from the coal region.

Historical background for the Setting of the Son on Sunbury:

Here in the beautiful Susquehanna Valley where the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna River join on their journey toward the sea, is situated the city of Sunbury. In 1772 Sunbury was named after Sunbury, England. Prior to that time it was known as Shamokin Indian Town.

The political importance of this site began in 1728 with the advent of Shikellamy, the Oneida Chief, when Shamokin Indian Town became the Indian Capital of the Province of Pennsylvania. The military history began in 1756 with the building of Fort Augusta which became the key frontier outpost for the whole region.

In 1742, the religious history of the Susquehanna Valley experienced the arrival of Count Nicolas Zinzendorf of the Moravian Church, and the subsequent establishment of the first Indian mission in Pennsylvania.

The first Moravian missionaries to take up residence at Shamokin Indian Town were John Martin Mack and his wife. In Mack's diary was written: "In September of 1745, my wife and I were sent to Shamokin Indian Town, the very seat of the prince of darkness. During the four months we resided there, we were in constant danger, and there was scarcely a night but we were compelled to leave our hut and hide in the woods from the fear of the drunken savages."

Many were the missionaries and circuit riders who brought the message of the Cross to the natives in this area. Among them were Bishop Spangenburg, Rev. David Brainerd, Bishop John Ettwein, and Rev. Philip V. Fithian. All of these frontier missionaries

plunged into the wilderness of central Pennsylvania, usually traveling alone on horseback on their errand of love.

Rev. David Brainerd visited this Indian settlement twice; and traveled over the Shamokin Path, September, 1745 and August, 1746.

Chief Shikellamy was a friend of the Moravian missionaries. Shikellamy so admired the Moravians that he permitted them to stay in his home, use horses for work, and helped them build their homes. Shikellamy formally converted to Christianity in November 1748 at the Moravian city of Bethlehem. On his return journey Shikellamy became ill. Despite the efforts of his Moravian friends at Shamokin, the Indian leader succumbed to the illness on December 6, 1748. He was given a Christian burial by the Moravians since he had accepted the Christian faith. (1)

In 1856-1858 God was working in the lives of a group of prayer-minded Mennonites in the Lehigh Valley of PA. They experienced opposition to their enthusiasm over prayer meetings.

(As recalled by Bert E. Brosius, son of C.B. Brosius, uncle of Bert N. Brosius): "Back in 1856, a group of folks called 'Mennonites' began to hold meetings in their homes in the Lehigh Valley area. After meeting for some time, some of them wanted to have prayer meeting during the week, but others objected. A group of bishops met and decided against prayer meetings in homes and congregations" (2) (cf. *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly, pp.14-20)

(As recalled by Bert E. Brosius, son of C.B. Brosius, uncle of Bert N. Brosius): "In 1858, a group broke away and organized, calling themselves the Evangelical Mennonite Society." (3)

(Note: A Brief History of the BFC, A Fellowship of Evangelical Mennonite Revivalists)
"Seven Mennonite revivalists, under pressure from their bishops to give up their style of evangelism, huddled at a farm house in Milford Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. It was Friday, September 24, 1858, just two weeks before the next high council. Should they acquiesce to restrictions upon the freedom of expression they enjoyed in their revival and prayer meetings? No, they would not. And so they established the *Evangelische Mennoniten Gemeinschaft* (Evangelical Mennonite Society). In their new fellowship which would remain Mennonite in doctrine, they would continue enthusiastic evangelism. Within two weeks all seven--elder William Gehman, Bishop William N. Shelly, preachers David Henning and Henry Diehl, and deacons David Gehman, Joseph Schneider and Jacob Gottschall--were outside the New Mennonite association (now the General Conference Mennonite Church). One year later, the first Tuesday in November 1859, they held their first semi-annual preachers conference in the Evangelical Mennonite Meeting House in Haycock Township, Bucks County. Eleven days later they dedicated a new meeting house in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County. Thus began the Bible Fellowship Church. (4)
(cf. *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly, p. 21)

“Thus frustrated in their attempt to bring enthusiastic revivalism into their church, former Bishop William Shelly; Elder William Gehman; two preachers, Henry Diehl and David Henning; and three deacons, David Gehman, Joseph Schneider and Jacob Gottshall; met on September 24, 1858, in the home of David Musselman – a central location in Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County – to form a new Gemeinschaft (society or fellowship).

“Thus the Evangelical Mennonite Society was born. The new Society had three preaching points. David Henning, the oldest preacher, controlled the meeting house in Bangor; Shelly, the former bishop, and Diehl occupied the Flatland meeting house in Haycock Township, near Quakertown; Gehman, the youngest of the three, would soon have a new meeting house in Upper Milford Township, between Zionsville and Vera Cruz. In private homes and in these three meeting houses they gathered to worship enthusiastically and carry on aggressive evangelism.” (5)

“In 1892 William Brunner Musselman became the second presiding elder. A man of boundless energy, he developed the first denominational hymnal; created the Gospel Worker Society, an organization for women's ministries; inaugurated a new magazine, the Gospel Worker Society Herald; and began a printing organization known as Union Gospel Press. Later he moved the press and his organization to Williamsport, Pennsylvania and eventually to Cleveland, Ohio.” (6) *A Brief History of the BFC*

“On February 3, 1892, William Brunner Musselman was elected presiding elder; he was thirty-two years of age and had been ordained only five years. His election to this high office at such a young age is a tribute to his ability. As the second presiding elder of the Mennonite Brethren Christ, Pennsylvania Conference, he energized the organization of the Conference, but his most significant achievements were the Gospel Worker Society and the Union Gospel Press.

“While serving as presiding elder, W.B. discerned a critical need. If men like Hershey, Ellinger and the other travel evangelists did not establish on-going congregations for the Conference, a more effective strategy had to be found. Thus he instituted his Gospel Worker Society (GWS). Detecting a need for Evangelical Christian literature from a non-denominational viewpoint, he launched the Union Gospel Press (USP) to publish literature not otherwise available. The GWS, patterned after the Salvation Army, provided ministry opportunities for single women.

“Shortly thereafter, C.H. Brunner created the Gospel Herald Society for men akin to the GWS for women. The UGP became an important publisher of lesson helps for the International Lessons from a dispensational, fundamentalist orientation and publisher of the Gospel Herald magazine. Many of the women gave their lives to the publication of this literature and the men in the gospel Herald Society sold the magazine.” (The Bible Fellowship Church, Harold P. Shelly, pp. 142,143) (7)

**The Gospel Worker Society in Sunbury, under the leadership of Reverend W.B. Musselman held their first service in the mission hall on South Third Street on October



The Mission Hall - 1897 – 1914 – 39 South Third Street, Second Floor

1, 1897. The mission hall was an old Presbyterian building on South Third Street, not too far from the railroad station at Second and Penn Streets. It was the area where the Sunbury Eagles Club later became located.

“The Gospel Worker Society was organized at Annandale, New Jersey, on January 5, 1895, with seven women members and was headquartered, from about 1899 to 1907, in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. W.B.’s widowed mother Lucy Musselman became Gospel Worker number one. These women labored in York, Sunbury, and Philadelphia where they began missions, some of which later came into the Conference.” (The Bible Fellowship Church, Harold P. Shelly, p. 144) (8)

Local works like this one in Sunbury were headed by the Gospel Workers Society, who at that time were ladies. These women had a burden for sharing the gospel with those in need of Jesus as Savior. The Sunbury work continued for ten years under the direction of the Gospel Workers Society.

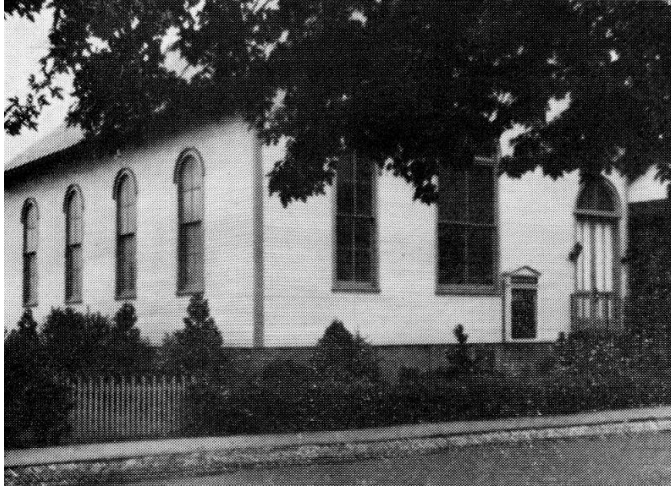
“Eventually W.B. found it impossible to serve as presiding elder, and conduct the business of the Gospel Workers Society. This he explained: ‘The Gospel Worker Society is a Society of women. It was organized by W.B. Musselman also being Presiding Elder [P.E.] in the East Pennsylvania Conference of the MBC.’” (The Bible Fellowship Church, Harold P. Shelly, p. 144; GWS Herald, 25 December 1903, 6) (9)



Gospel Heralds 1914

On October 10, 1907 the Gospel Worker Society Mission was transferred to the Gospel Herald Society. W. G. Gehman was the president of the Heralds which was comprised of men. Some other workers at this time included G. F. Yost, J. T. Anderson, G. M. Reinbold, and R. W. Stanton.

The work continued to grow, and on February 25, 1914, several lots were purchased on the south side of Race Street,



The New Church

“At the Local Conference, February 2, 1924, it was resolved to build a mothers’ room and vestibule over which a balcony shall be erected, and a pulpit recess on the south side of the church. This project was completed with the splendid cooperation of the brethren, under the direction of Pastor R.W. Dickert and C.B. Brosius. This important improvement added much to the usefulness of the Church.

“After the flood of 1936, it was necessary to replace the pews, floors, rugs, piano, and some plaster. Much

of the parsonage furniture was also ruined by the flood water. N.H. Wolf was pastor at this time.” (12)

“Floods hit Sunbury in 1936, 1940, 1943, and 1946. The last three were not as severe as the one in 1936, but every time it flooded the parsonage at 144 N. Sixth Street got hit pretty hard. It was then decided that it was time to get the pastor and family into a new parsonage out of the flood district.



Church Building - Center

“In 1948, the church purchased the lot at the corner of Catawissa Avenue and Greenough Street and began to work on it. Under the direction of C. B. Brosius, a lot of the work was done

by men of the church, such as gathering truck loads of stone from fields and building thick foundation walls, digging sewer and water lines, in addition to other construction needs. The whole project was a pay-as-you-go job, so that no major debt was incurred.

“Mountain stone from Laurelton PA was hauled to build the exterior walls of the parsonage. These stones were hewed out of mountain rock by a native of Laurelton whose name was Mr. Boop. They were then hauled to Sunbury on C. B. Brosius’ GMC flat-bed truck. Several nights a week for many weeks, Clayton Brosius, Bert E. Brosius, Bert N. Brosius, and Norman F. Zellers would go to Laurelton Mountain, load the truck and bring the stones to Catawissa Avenue and unload them. In 1952, the parsonage and garage were completed, and Pastor E. W. Bean and his family moved into the new parsonage. The only work done by men outside the church was plumbing by William Kuebler, a local plumber, and the masonry work by Clayton Gass, a local mason. The

total masonry charge was \$500.00, and the total project cost of the parsonage was \$20,000.00.

“The Local Conference voted unanimously on January 24, 1953 to enlarge the church building. The plans called for an additional 50 feet in length in addition to other needs. From January 24, 1953 to April 17, 1955, under the direction of C. B. Brosius and Bert E. Brosius, the church on Race Street was remodeled, doubling the size of the church.

“This work was also done by men of the church (14,000 hours of free labor). Much of the work was on a pay-as-you-go basis, with the exception of a loan of \$13,000., interest-free, from a member of the church. This loan was paid off in one year. The addition was 50 feet in length added to the back of the church, as well as a 10 X 22 feet addition in front to provide additional exits from the balcony and basement. Again mountain stone from Laurelton, PA was hauled in to beautify the front of the church. These stones were dressed and laid in place by Bert E. Brosius and Clayton Gass, who then started attending our church regularly until his death.

“During this time period, an organ was donated to the church by Shipman’s Funeral Home, located at Sixth and Race Streets. Prior to that time, all singing was done a cappella or accompanied by piano.” (13)

At an adjourned session of annual conference, on April 11, 1959, the name of the denomination was changed from Mennonite Brethren in Christ to the Bible Fellowship Church. In accordance with the action of the Annual Conference the local church name was changed to Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church (Sunbury, Pa.).

“The church continued to grow but was hampered by lack of adequate parking. The only parking we had available was along Race Street or Sixth Street, and a few cars on a section above the Horn railroad that was being filled with ashes. Mr. Geise, who attended our church but was not a member, lived across the street from the church. He also owned a triangle-sized plot of land next to the Horn Railroad, which was a swamp, because years ago a man by the name of Metcalf had mined clay from that area to make pottery. Mr. Geise offered to sell us that lot, but his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Chester, lived next to that lot, and the son-in-law said, “I don’t want a parking lot next to my house,” so that ended that possibility.

“Only a short time later the son-in-law died of a heart attack. His wife then said, “I will sell you my house, and you can buy the other lot from Dad and make a parking lot.” The house was purchased, and later dismantled by Guy Brown. We began filling in the area with hundreds of loads of fill—even the city helped with the fill. During the time it took to get that all filled in, Mr. Geise passed away. By this time, he was an elderly man and living alone, and we were able to purchase his house and lot also. Now the only house left on the block was a large double brick house on the corner of Sixth and Race Streets.

The huge maple trees that lined Race Street in front of the lots were cut down and removed by Norman F. Zellers.

“As work continued on the lots, Mr. Nace, who attended the church and lived in the upper side of the brick house became ill and passed away. We then purchased that half when it was put up for sale. An elderly lady lived on the Sixth Street side of the brick house, and she soon decided to go to live with her daughter in State College. When her half of the house came up for sale, we purchased it, so that we owned the entire property on the upper side of the street from Sixth Street to the Horn Railroad. That house was also demolished, and in 1965, the lot was paved. Also in 1965, we purchased a new organ for the church, and in 1966, new aluminum windows with stained glass were installed in the church.

“During all these years, the church was headed by a three-man trustee board. In 1969, under the direction of trustee members, Bert E. Brosius, Allen F. Smith, and Arville L. Raker, four acres of ground were purchased from the Druckemillers, next to the Pomfret Manor Cemetery for \$20,000. After the first year it was paid off. Men of the church then began to clear the lot, which really was a jungle. After the lot was cleared of trees, vines, brush, and debris, tent meetings were held for a couple of years during the summer months.

“Under the leadership of trustee members Bert E. Brosius, Merle H. Phillips and Norman F. Zellers, plans were laid out to construct a new church. A Building Committee was formed, consisting of the following members: Merle Phillips, chairman; Ron Acker, secretary; Edwin Brosious; Bert E. Brosius; Clayton Brosius; Robert Haupt; Howard Holdren, Jr.; Donald Hopple; Norman F. Zellers; and Pastor Leroy Heller. During this time, our legal counsel advised us to eliminate the trustee board and incorporate, thus bringing about the beginning of the Board of Elders. Bert E. Brosius was elected as President, Merle Phillips as Treasurer, and Norman F. Zellers as financial secretary.

“On Sunday, April 6, 1975, a ground-breaking service was held for the new church. The architect for this project was Malcolm A. Clinger of Lewisburg. Construction would be done by Keister Construction Co., of Winfield, Pa., at a projected cost of \$433,585.74. Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church moved into a new facility at 1051 Catawissa Avenue (presently 967 Mile Hill Road). The first service in the new church was held on Christmas Sunday, December 25, 1975. On May 2, 1976, a dedication service for the new church was held.

“In order to finance part of the building project, bonds were offered to members and friends of the congregation at an interest rate, slightly lower than the amount the bank was charging at the time. The new building was paid off in nine and one half years.

“Since the pipe organ could not be moved from the Race Street location, a new Baldwin organ was purchased from the Manning Piano Company for use in the new church.

“Norman F. Zellers and Clayton Brosius were appointed to shop for a church bus for future church ministry. A bus was purchased, and a bus barn was built by men of the church. Edwin Brosious, who worked for the gas company, was able to borrow a piece of their equipment to place telephone poles on the top of the wall for a flat roof support. The cost of the garage, as well as an 18-horse-power Massey Ferguson lawn tractor and bus brought the total cost to approximately \$450,000.00

“During the next few years, the sanctuary and overflow became crowded, and Sunday School space was at a premium. In the meantime, the property owned by First National Bank, between our church and the Armory, became available to us. Not wishing to have something undesirable next to the church, and also to allow for possible expansion, the church purchased that tract of 5.6 acres for a sum of \$50,000.

“This tract was also a real wilderness and needed to be cleaned up. Most of the clean-up was accomplished under the leadership of Clayton Brosius, along with donations of time and equipment by Ray Deitrich and Norman F. Zellers. Rather than just leaving the field as it was, Norman F. Zellers sought permission from the Board of Elders to make use of the field. He laid out a softball field to provide a recreational outlet for our young people. Walter Wagner, who was attending our church and who had construction equipment, along with Clayton Brosius as his helper, was hired to remove the top soil, grade down the hill, and then return the top soil, thus making a very beautiful piece of property. This project, at cost of approximately \$30,000, was almost entirely paid off by special donations by ball players and friends interested in the project.

“A new building committee was selected to begin a study for church expansion. This committee consisted of Merle Phillips, chairman; Paul Dubendorf, secretary; Bert E. Brosius, Clayton Brosius, Edwin Brosious, Marlin Derck, Ralph Geise, Robert Haupt, Donald Hopple, Norman F. Zellers, and Pastor Leroy Heller.

“The first meeting was called to order by Merle Phillips on December 10, 1984. Many meetings were held thereafter, discussing which would be more feasible: (1) an addition onto the church on the north side; or (2) a new sanctuary on the west or lower side of the existing church. During these meetings a committee of women was selected to serve as an advisory committee to the building committee. The committee was instructed to elect a chairperson and secretary whose husband was not on the building committee. Mrs. Pat Goodison was elected chairperson, and Mrs. Arlene Geise was elected as secretary.

“The final meeting was held November 25, 1985, with a few minor changes. The architect for this project was Don Wayne Klinger of Millersburg. He was asked to make a detailed drawing and present it to the congregation. After a few months the drawings were completed and presented to the congregation, projecting a cost of \$958,000. The congregation accepted the proposal.

“Because of high mortgage rates at the time, many avenues of financing had to be investigated. Because we had always dealt with First National Bank of Sunbury, and

had a loan for the previous building, they gave us the best rate. Keister Construction Co. of Winfield, PA was the successful bidder, and did the construction.

“A special ground-breaking ceremony was held on August 30, 1987. The Rev. Leroy S. Heller with the Building Committee conducted the dedication. Ground was broken for the new sanctuary and Christian Education facility. Construction was completed so that the congregation could move into the enlarged and new facilities on October 30, 1988.” (14)

Over the years, the church family faithfully gave to the Lord, paying off the mortgage month after month. By April 2000 the debt had been reduced to \$253,000. At this time, Irvin Longacre, Sr, a faithful member of our congregation, went home to be with the Lord. It was his desire to finish paying off the mortgage with assets left to the church. On May 19, 2000 God enabled our church to pay off our mortgage indebtedness completely. What a marvelous provision from our sufficient, sovereign God. EBFC held a very joyous mortgage-burning ceremony on August 20, 2000. Present for this special celebration were present pastor, Charles E. Cole, previous pastor, LeRoy Heller, PA State Representative, Merle H. Phillips, previous lay visitation man, Lamar Fetterman, youth pastor, Jonathan Witmer, and elder delegate, Bob Cox. Pastor LeRoy and Pat Heller and Lamar and Gladys Fetterman who faithfully served the Lord for many years were welcomed back for this Mortgage Burning Service.

Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church also held a 100th Anniversary on October 26, 1997. This was a happy occasion to celebrate God’s provision of grace, salvation, hope and faithfulness to the congregation through the years that the Son had settled in on Sunbury.

Previous and/or current pastoral staff members who participated in the 100th anniversary included: Leroy S. Heller, Charles E. Cole, Dennis J. Lawrence, Bert N. Brosius, and William W. Mull.

“The passing of time brought mergers and revisions in the Conference structure and history of Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church. In 1869, our roots were the Evangelical Mennonites. In 1875 the name was changed to United Mennonites. From 1883 until 1959, we were called the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. In 1959, the denomination's name was changed to The Bible Fellowship Church and we became Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church of Sunbury, Pennsylvania.” (15)

Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church has had a history of pastors that God called to serve the local church. These men who loved the Lord, proclaimed the Word of God, cared for their congregation, and served faithfully. Pastor J.B. Layne served twice as first pastor (1917-1918) and again (1945-1952), Pastor N.H. Wolf served twice totaling 22 years (1932-1945, 1958-1967), Pastor Leroy S. Heller served the longest consecutive time (22 years from 1973-1995), and Pastor Charles Cole has presently been ministering for over 14 years (1996-2010).

The leaders and pastors who have faithfully served the Lord through her history include:

1897-1907 Gospel Worker Society

[October 1, 1897: The Gospel Worker Society (a group of faithful women) under the leadership of W.B. Musselman held their first service in the mission hall on South Third Street.]

1907-1917 Gospel Herald Society

[W. G. Gehman was President of the Gospel Herald Society (a group of faithful men) when the mission in Sunbury was transferred from the Gospel Worker Society to the Gospel Herald Society on October 10, 1907.]

[October 20, 1917: At a special meeting presided over by W.G. Gehman, the church was officially organized as Emmanuel Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church with 50 charter members received into fellowship.]

1917-1918	J. B. Layne, first pastor
1918-1923	V. H. Reinhart
1923-1928	R. W. Dickert
1928-1932	T. D. Gehret
1932-1945	N. H. Wolf
1945-1952	J. B. Layne
1952-1958	E. W. Bean
1958-1967	N. H. Wolf
1967-1972	William Mull
1973-1995	Leroy S. Heller
1996-present	Charles E. Cole

God has also used several other men who have served as ministries assistant, visitation, youth, associate, or assistant pastors. This group includes:

Assistant Pastors:

1980-1983	Steve VanEck
1984-1988	David Carver

Ministries Assistant:

1992-1997	Dennis Lawrence
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Associate Pastors:

2003 to present	Bert Brosius (part-time)
2007 to present	Kurt Francis

Youth Pastors:

1990-1991	Clay Ersing
1998-2004	Jonathan Witmer
2004 to present	Joshua Gibson

The church has had a history of members involved in the life and ministry serving on committees and holding other positions of outreach, worship, children, youth, and adult impact, maintenance of building and grounds. Many men have served as Elders and Deacons and women have assisted as Caregivers. All positions have been important to the ministry. Men and women have been used to impact the church and surrounding communities with the light of life that is in the Son, Jesus Christ the True Light.

Through the years, the Lord has called many of our congregation to full-time service nationally and globally. Some of these include: Luella Rinehart Harley, missionary to Africa; Mabel Glenn Haldeman, (one of the Gospel Workers who later went to Union Gospel Press). Mabel wrote the "Cousin Glennie" articles in the children's Sunday School papers for many years.); Thelma Wolf Smock, pastor's wife, Bert N. Brosius, pastor; Joan Brosius, pastor's wife; Roger Reitz, pastor; Ron & Joyce Acker, missionaries serving in several different locations; Matt Acker, medical doctor to Kazakhstan; more recently, Julie Landau, served as missionary to Eleutheria; Jordan Eyster (grandson of Leroy S. Heller), youth pastor; Justin (and wife Autumn Simmons) Dosch, youth pastor; and Seth Roush, youth pastor. Many other individuals and families have moved or been transferred to other locations and continue to spread the Gospel through Sunday School teaching, children ministries, worship and musical ministries, and providing leadership in other local churches.

Some other interesting facts of history concerning our church include:

*Baptismal services that were held at a variety of locations. These locations included in the Susquehanna River along the east bank, out from Pine Street in Sunbury, later on the west shore at Shady Nook, then at Sandy Beach until the boat club took over, and the church could no longer use that location. Baptisms were subsequently held at Clark's pool along Route 147 south of Sunbury, at Haupt's pond near Augustaville, and finally at First Baptist Church in Sunbury until the new church baptistry was able to be used. This demonstrates the importance of believers' baptism by immersion in our church history.

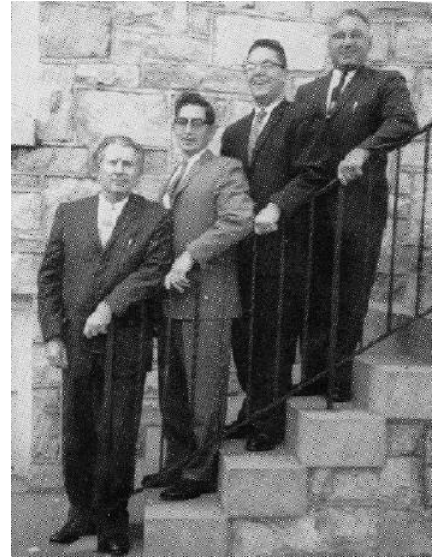
*Pastor N. H. Wolf had a 15-minute weekly program over WKOK for many years, featuring duets by Edith and Esther (Edith Bastian and Esther Wolf), along with a devotional message by the Pastor. Their theme song was "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms".

*For several years, William Miller, who was a member of our church and sang with the Gospel Four quartet, also had a 15-minute gospel program over WKOK, sponsored by his business, Electronic Sales and Service.

*"The Gospel Four Quartet organized in the church in September, 1931. The original members were John Hoffman, first tenor; Truman Bastian, second tenor; Walter Schlegel, first bass; and Clayton Brosius, second bass. These men auditioned by WKOK and presented their first program on November 1, 1933.

“In the early 1940’s, Walter Schlegel was called to work in Harrisburg, Pa. Since that time a number of men have filled in various spots, except for second bass. Men filling those positions were: Horatio Bastian, George Hoffman, William Miller, Jerry Haines, Lloyd Brosious, Robert Miller, Bert N. Brosius, Paul Brosious, Barry Kauffman, Eric Stout, Leroy Heller, Douglas Gaugler, and Norman F. Zellers, who joined the quartet in 1955 and sang with them until the last program, January 25, 1987, when the last of the original members, Mr. Clayton Brosius, went home to be with the Lord, and our radio broadcasts came to an end.

“The Gospel Four Quartet presented 2758 consecutive Sunday morning programs over WKOK. Only 1 program was missed during that time, because of the 1936 flood. Spanning 53-plus years, this was the longest running program over WKOK. Over the years requests were received from all over the local area, as well as some from as far away as New York State. The Gospel Four was privileged to sing at many churches in central Pennsylvania, Bible conferences, conventions, camp meetings, and nursing homes. They also ministered at a number of funerals.



“The Gospel Four, in all their engagements, never accepted any that interfered with the services of our local church. At the time of their initial organization, the men determined that they would not keep any money for themselves (even buying their own music and paying for gas mileage, etc.) Since WKOK never charged the quartet for broadcast time, donations they received were used to support an orphan in Africa.” (16)

*Presently EBFC has a variety of children and youth ministries including EBFC Nursery School (1989-2010), Boys’ Brigade, TWiGGs Girls (previously Pioneer Girls), Revolution Youth, Sunday School classes, and Children’s Choir and Bell Choir. Small Group Bible Studies, Praise Team, YAMS for young adults; and Grief Share ministries have been added to the church. Adult Choir, Brass, vocal and instrumentalists add to worship. There are a variety of age related Fellowship Groups, Adult Sunday School elective classes, Women’s and Men’s ministries, Women’s Missionary Fellowship, short term missions trips, and support of missionaries. Central Penn Christian Training Institute, which has an independent board of directors, continues to use our classrooms two semesters during the school year. This teaching ministry which has been in existence since 1950 has prepared students to serve the Lord in local churches.

When the sun sets in Sunbury, there are many beautiful scenes. When the Son settled upon Sunbury in 1897 and impacted a group of believers, a powerful ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was released on this area to bring light in a world of darkness. Not only has Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church made an impact on Sunbury and surrounding communities but she has also had a global impact through the support of missionaries and short term youth and adult mission trips. Men and women are serving

the Lord in missions, pastoral ministries, and local church ministry opportunities to the glory of God.

“Some day, when fades the golden sun
Beneath the rosy tinted west,
My blessed Lord will say, ‘Well done!’
And I shall enter into rest.
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story-Saved by grace;
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story-Saved by grace.”
“Saved by Grace” Fanny J. Crosby’ George C. Stebbins v.3

Locations for Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church, Sunbury, PA:

Gospel Workers Society held their first service in the mission hall on South Third Street, Sunbury, PA on October 1, 1897. The mission hall was an old Presbyterian building on South Third Street, not too far from the railroad station at Second and Penn Streets. (1897-1907)

On October 10, 1907 the Gospel Worker Society mission at Sunbury was transferred to the Gospel Herald Society. South Third Street (1907-1917) (May 28, 1916 first service held at Race Street)

Emmanuel Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, Race Street at Sixth Street (1917-1953) [October 20, 1917: At a special meeting presided over by W.G. Gehman, the church was officially organized as Emmanuel Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church with 50 charter members received into fellowship.]

Emmanuel Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, (remodeled in 1953), (EBFC, new name April 11, 1959) Race Street at Sixth Street (1953-1975)

Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church [first building at Catawissa Avenue location] 1051 Catawissa Avenue, Sunbury, PA (1975-1988)

Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church [with new sanctuary and classroom additions] 1051 Catawissa Avenue, Sunbury, PA (1988- present) (Address changed to 967 Mile Hill Road as road was renamed for mail routes April 18, 2007)

Bibliography

- 1) 65th Anniversary Booklet of EBFC, 1962
- 2) Information compiled by Bert E. Brosius and updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) *A Brief History of BFC*, web page of Bible Fellowship Church
- 5) *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly, p.21
- 6) *A Brief History of BFC*, web page of Bible Fellowship Church

- 7) *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly, pp. 142,143
- 8) Ibid, p.144
- 9) *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly, p. 144; *GWS Herald*, 25 December 1903, p. 6
- 10) Information compiled by Bert E. Brosius and updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) 65th Anniversary Booklet of EBFC, 1962
- 13) Information compiled by Bert E. Brosius and updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004.
- 14) Information compiled by Bert E. Brosius and updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004 and edited by Charles E. Cole, October 1, 2010.
- 15) *The Bible Fellowship Church*, Harold P. Shelly
- 16) Information compiled by Bert E. Brosius and updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004 and edited by Charles E. Cole, October 1, 2010.

[Information that was used in this presentation of Charles Cole has been gleaned from booklets prepared for dedication of building services, anniversary services, BFC files, personal interaction with church members, and information that was prepared by Bert E. Brosius, a charter member of the local church and continued by Norman F. Zellers, who became a part of the local church in February of 1939. Some material has been edited by Charles E. Cole. This is by no means exhaustive but hopefully it will help the reader get an historical and spiritual perspective of Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church of Sunbury, PA]

Resources:

65th Anniversary Booklet of EBFC, 1962
 EBFC Building Dedication Booklet of EBFC, May 1-9, 1976
 85th Anniversary Booklet of EBFC, 1982
 90th Anniversary Booklet of EBFC, 1987
 100th Anniversary Calendar Booklet of EBFC, 1997
 100th Anniversary Pamphlet of EBFC, 1997
 Shelly, Harold P. *The Bible Fellowship Church*, BFC Historical Society, 1992
 History of EBFC, Sunbury, PA by Bert E. Brosius, updated by Norman F. Zellers, as of April 1, 2004.

(Some pictures were provided by Barry Kauffman)



Mortgage Burning Service Catawissa Ave.



Ground Breaking Ceremony Catawissa



Old Sanctuary Catawissa Ave.



First Building Catawissa Ave.



100th Anniversary of EBFC - October 26, 1997 Coles, Hellers, Mulls, Lawrences