Who was who
in the Bible Fellowship Church

By Jill Davidson

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The purpose of this paper is to highlight the leaders through the years in the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, now called the Bible Fellowship Church. To qualify for inclusion in this paper, the person needed to be in a leadership position or had positions of responsibility and have already departed this earthly life.

Papers were written on most of these people and can be found on the website of the Historical Committee of the Bible Fellowship Church: bfchistory.org. These papers will give more information on the individual. The purpose of this paper is to highlight significant people to help newcomers "catch up" in our conversation about our history.

William Gehman

William Gehman was born on 22 January 1827 in Hereford Township, Berks County, Pa, to Georg and Sarah (Schwarz) Gehman. The family worshipped at Upper Milford Mennonite Church where Gehman was ordained as a preacher. In the late 1850s, traveling evangelists stirred Gehman, along with many others, to seek a more vibrant spiritual life. They initiated home prayer meetings of which the bishops did not approve. The result was the formation of the Evangelical Mennonites, later to become for many years the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, and eventually the Bible Fellowship Church. There were other preachers and deacons from several other Mennonite Churches that were involved, but Gehman was one of the younger ones, outliving the others, thus being involved in leadership for more years.

Gehman owned a farm and listed his occupation as "farmer" on the 1860 and 1870 census. On the 1880 census he reported himself as "retired farmer." For many of those beginning years of our denomination the preachers were not paid full-time by the congregations. This was the traditional Mennonite way. The preachers needed an income.

In those years of his active ministry William Gehman emerged as a leader. He was chairman of conference many times during the 1860s and 1870s. After the merger of 1879 he held the newly created office of Presiding Elder for many years. After 1892 he was the assigned preacher for several congregations: Zionsville; and the Graterford,

Hereford, Zionsville circuit; then the Hereford and Zionsville circuit. After 1896 he no longer accepted a pastoral assignment but continued to preach on occasion such as at camp meetings. He was one of the last preachers that preached in German. Because of his leadership in those early years, he is often considered the founder of the denomination. He was affectionately referred to as "Father Gehman."

As for his family life, William Gehman married Anna Musselman in 1848. The Lord blessed them with nine children. Many of their descendants were in the ministry, foreign missions, or were active laypersons in the local church.

William Gehman passed from this life on 12 April 1918. His remains were interred in the cemetery of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church next to those of Anna who died in 1904.

Eusebius Hershey

Eusebius Hershey was born on 14 August 1823 to Abraham and Anna (Landis) Hershey in Warwick Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was the only son of the nine children born to the Hersheys. In 1841, at age 18, he became quite ill. This brush with death caused him to think about spiritual things and led to his conversion. He joined the United Brethren in Christ Church and began preaching.

In 1851 he married Mary Strayer. They had one child, a daughter, Nancy. They made their home in Rebersburg, Centre County, Pennsylvania, which is West of the Susquehanna River, near Penn's Cave. Their home was near Mary's family, and after a few years they lived with Mary's widowed mother and two of Mary's unmarried brothers, one of whom was blind. While Eusebius was traveling as an evangelist, Mary was keeping house for her family. One of his reports in the Gospel Banner begins with "…found my wife and brother-in-law in usual health." (Gospel Banner, 15 April 1888). Apparently, Mary did not travel with him.

Hershey was an evangelist. In June of 1861 he joined the Evangelical Mennonites, later to become the Bible Fellowship Church. He never pastored a church; he wanted to continually travel, preaching the Gospel anywhere he could. He would post a notice on buildings and telegraph poles to announce a meeting in a church, a schoolhouse, or barn. Sometimes he would preach on the street or anywhere he could get a crowd together. He had a deep, booming voice, easy for an outside crowd to hear him. He traveled through many states and Canada.

Through his reports to the Gospel Banner magazine, we learn that he visited many of the towns where a church was already established, and some towns where a church became established later. Besides the churches, he preached in the gaol and in the

almshouse in Lancaster (and perhaps the same in other cities). He also mentioned using tracts, those small leaflets which contain a Gospel message and a few Bible verses.

In his reports to the Gospel Banner, he declined to give numbers of people converted under his preaching. He explains: "Some preachers count the number justified and sanctified to [sic] high. Better say: so many professed, than to say they were. Paul said they have their fruits unto holiness." (Gospel Banner, 15 April 1888).

He was also a poet. He had some of his poems published in a book which he sold while traveling to help pay his expenses.

An 1891 article in the Lancaster Intelligencer newspaper speaks of his popularity. "At the minor camp meetings he was the star attraction, his 'sermons' being exceedingly erratic. He has also gained celebrity by his poetic effusions." (Lancaster Intelligencer 24 January 1891).

Hershey had a strong desire to travel to Africa to preach the Gospel there. In November of 1890 at the age of 67, leaving his wife at home, he set sail for Monrovia, Liberia. The 38-day voyage was adventurous. A great whale followed them for a while. They were grateful the whale did not go under the ship to upset it. They encountered tornadoes but were not hit. Waterspouts developed near them and dreadful lightning strikes, but both missed the ship. They gave thanks for their safe journey. The ship arrived in the Ivory Coast in December of 1890, and he made his way from there to Monrovia in Liberia. He preached there until his death from malaria on May 23, 1891, at the age of 67. He was the first foreign missionary sent from the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church (now the Bible Fellowship Church). His example inspired others to enter foreign missions.

Jonas Musselman

Jonas Musselman was born on 12 November 1839 to David and Sarah (Hiestand) Musselman of Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County, Pa. Jonas and his older brother Abraham helped their father on the farm. The family worshipped at the Upper Milford Mennonite Meetinghouse. Before they (and others) could be excommunicated for attending fervent prayer meetings, they removed themselves from the "New Mennonites." On 24 September 1858 they met at the home of his parents to form the Evangelical Mennonites, later to become the Bible Fellowship Church.

In 1861, the first year that preachers are listed by name in the conference minutes, Jonas is on that esteemed list. In the US federal census, Jonas always reported his occupation as farmer, even though he continued to preach. It was typical in those years

among Mennonites that the preachers were not full-time and would also farm. Besides preaching, Jonas served as secretary to Conference several times. He also served on the Committee to take charge of the Tabernacle (forerunner to camp meeting).

Jonas Musselman's life was cut short on 26 March 1886, at the age of 46 when he succumbed to dropsy, also known as edema. This malady is fluid retention, typically associated with heart failure. His remains rest in the cemetery of Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Coopersburg.

If Jonas had lived longer, would he have emerged as the leader of conference? We cannot answer that, but we know he spawned leaders. Jonas and his wife Lucy had six children: William, Emma, Harvey, Sallie, Allen, and Hattie. William formed and led the Gospel Worker Society for over forty years; Harvey served as Presiding Elder for about forty years; Hattie served as a Gospel Worker for most of her adult life. Sadly, daughter Emma died at age 16, daughter Sallie died at age 18 shortly after her marriage to preacher Joshua Fidler, and son Allen served as a preacher until his untimely death in 1900 at 27 years of age.

Lucy Brunner Musselman

Lucy Brunner was born on 16 February 1842 to Johann William and Maria (Sell) Brunner of Upper Milford Township, Lehigh County, Pa.

In 1859 she married Jonas Musselman, featured above. Jonas worked as a farmer and as a preacher. Lucy was the dutiful farmer's wife and preacher's wife. Their marriage was blessed with six children.

Sadly, Lucy's husband died in 1886, leaving her with several minor children. This did not stop Lucy's interest in ministry. In 1890, Lucy became a licensed evangelist, indicating her sincere desire to be in a ministry. Two years later Lucy was a candidate for ministry as a preacher and accepted as a probationer. She was also listed as working through the reading course. This was the process by which men prepared for the pastorate. Also, in 1892 Lucy received an assignment as helper to preacher J. E. Fidler, widower of her late daughter Sallie. Following that, Lucy was assigned to help preacher J. B. Knerr.

In 1895 the Gospel Worker Society was formed by Lucy's son William as an organization for women in ministry. They did street preaching and sold religious magazines. As the women joined the society, they were given a number. Lucy was Gospel Worker number one and remained with the Gospel Workers for the rest of her life.

When the Gospel Workers were headquartered in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Lucy boldly conducted meetings on the street and in rented store fronts in communities surrounding Williamsport, always with several other Gospel Worker ladies.

When the Gospel Worker Society moved their headquarters to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1907, Lucy moved with them. She died on 20 October 1916. Her remains rest in the Brooklyn Heights Cemetery near Cleveland where many other Gospel Workers were later laid to rest.

William Brunner Musselman

W. B. Musselman was born on 3 October 1860 in Upper Milford Township to Jonas and Lucy Musselman. By the time he was in his teen years, the family lived in Richland Township, Bucks County. W. B. worked in the local foundry there as a molder. On 22 April 1880 he married Mary Oberholtzer of Hatfield, Montgomery County, Pa. They had ten children; their daughter Minnie Lucy died as a young child, but the others lived into adulthood. Most of their children served in the ministry for at least part of their lives.

On 1 April 1883 at only 22 years of age, W. B. Musselman preached his first sermon. Soon after, he quit his job at the foundry to enter the ministry, though he still helped his father and grandfather at times with farm work. He served as pastor to the Blandon, Fleetwood, and Reading circuit; the Bethlehem and Coopersburg circuit; and the Allentown and Plainfield circuit. For six years in the 1890s, he served as Presiding Elder of the Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. During those years the Gospel Worker Society was developed as an organization in which women could be in fulltime ministry. The ladies did street evangelism and sold religious magazines. W. B. Musselman spent the rest of his life as the head of the Gospel Worker Society, for a few years headquartered in Williamsport, Pa., then moving in 1907 to Cleveland, Ohio. For most of those years the Gospel Worker Society produced and printed their own literature to sell.

During his leadership, the efforts of the women in the Gospel Worker Society resulted in the establishment of churches, including Emmanuel Bible Fellowship Church in Sunbury, Pa., Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Shamokin, Pa., Bethany Bible Fellowship Church in Mount Carmel, Pa., Grace Bible Fellowship Church in Harrisburg, Pa., and Faith Bible Fellowship Church in York, Pa.

W B Musselman had a flamboyant personality. A visit with W B got you all pepped up to serve the Lord. When the Gospel Workers came, they would sing and people were "carried away" by the music.

His work as leader of the Gospel Worker Society included serving as editor of the Gospel Banner magazine which contained reports from pastors and Presiding Elders. It is a great resource for researchers in the 21st century.

The Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church considered W. B. Musselman as the Missionary Presiding Elder all those years he led the Gospel Worker Society. As such, he was expected to attend annual conference but never came, sending in an excuse which was accepted by Conference. To be fair, he would have been travelling from Cleveland, Ohio.

W B Musselman suffered a stroke at age 67 which left him with paralysis on his right side. He was able to continue his work with the help of his youngest daughter, Mary Euphemia Musselman who eventually served as the head of the Gospel Worker Society.

W B Musselman died on 21 February 1938, at age 77, and his body rests in the Brooklyn Heights Cemetery near Cleveland in one of the sections designated for the Gospel Workers. His wife Mary passed away in 1946, and her remains are buried next to his.

Harvey Brunner Musselman

Harvey Brunner Musselman was born on 11 February 1868 in Upper Milford Township to Jonas and Lucy Musselman. In his teen years he was learning the printing trade. He was still following this trade in 1888 when he married Annie Baus. Their union produced five children: B Bryan, Clarence, Jansen, Mary and William, the last two mentioned died as infants.

A year into the marriage H B was called to the ministry. He was licensed to preach in 1890 and received his first pastoral assignment in 1891. He insisted that people address him by his initials; he thought it disrespectful if a layman addressed or referred to a preacher by his first name. This became a conference-wide practice for all the preachers. H B pastored several churches in the 1890s: the Royersford and Spring City circuit; the Weissport and Lehighton circuit; Bethlehem; and Mount Carmel. After that he served as Presiding Elder except for 1905 and 1906 when he pastored the Bethlehem church.

His decades-long time as Presiding Elder was memorable to many people. He was strict and self-disciplined and expected the same from others. He would call out people from the pulpit concerning their dress if it was too flashy or if they were wearing jewelry. As Presiding Elder, he also chaired the Stationing Committee which assigned the preachers to their churches. Some people may have noticed some favoritism in the assignments, those close to him getting the "better" churches and staying a longer time. Though

some may have seen H B as a benign dictator, the Conference grew considerably during his years as Presiding Elder.

Lastly, in his 70s, he retired from active ministry, though he would still preach at times. H B Musselman died on 18 May 1956 at age 88. His remains were interred in Grandview Cemetery on Walbert Avenue, Allentown, Pa, next to those of his wife Annie who died in 1932. H B Musselman has the distinction of preaching at his own funeral. One of his last sermons was recorded then played at his funeral.

Charles Henry Brunner

Charles Henry Brunner was born on 2 January 1864 near Zionsville, Pa. to Joel and Rebecca Brunner. His mother Rebecca was a Gehman, a second cousin once removed to founder William Gehman. He was also a nephew to Lucy Brunner Musselman.

Brunner came to faith in Jesus when he was 13 years old. As a teenager and young adult, he learned the carpentry trade. He assisted in the construction of the first church building of the Bethlehem congregation and that of the Reading congregation.

On 27 September 1888 Charles Henry Brunner married his second cousin, Sarah Catherine Musselman. The marriage produced two children: Paul, who died as an infant, and Dorothy, who married preacher Herbert Hartman.

Brunner was involved in the work of the church as a layman, serving on the committee to set up camp meeting, then serving as a delegate to conference the following year. He also began his decades long tenure as Secretary of Conference. In 1893 he is listed among the preachers at annual conference. In 1896 Brunner began publishing the minutes and reports of annual conference as a book, though in those early years those books were booklets. He served as editor of the yearbook for over forty years. He also served as a Presiding Elder several years and developed the Gospel Herald Society, an evangelistic band of men who helped start new churches. The Gospel Herald Society also served as a training ground for young men who wanted to serve as pastors.

He served as pastor at the following churches: Erwinna; Norristown; the Graterford – Royersford circuit; the Reading – Blandon – Athol circuit; Bethlehem; Allentown Bethel; Philadelphia Salem; and the Emmaus – Macungie – Zionsville circuit.

Other services he provided include membership on the Board of Trustees for the home of the aged, Board of Foreign Missions, Board of Publication and Printing, and the Executive Board where he was a charter member.

The members of the Historical Committee of the Bible Fellowship Church appreciate his occasional essays on the history of the denomination that he included in the yearbooks.

Brunner retired from active ministry in 1943, though he continued with pulpit supply preaching at times. He and his wife then lived in Quakertown where their daughter lived, her husband being the pastor of the Quakertown church.

Charles Henry Brunner died on 20 November 1948 at 84 years of age. Sarah followed him a little over a year later. Their remains rest in the cemetery of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church.

William George Gehman

William George Gehman was born on 17 September 1874 near Vera Cruz, Pa. to founding father William Gehman and his wife Anna. W G was the youngest of the nine children in that family. By the time he was born, his parents were 47 and 45 years old. He was blessed to have both parents for his entire childhood and into his adult years.

By his own testimony, W G was converted at age nine. After four years of high school, he taught in the public school in Vera Cruz for several years. In 1896, as his father was retiring from formal ministry, W G received his license to preach and was assigned to assist preacher Lewis B Taylor in Allentown. Ordained in 1899, W G pastored the following churches: the Royersford and Spring City circuit; the Lehighton and Weissport circuit; Mount Carmel; Bethlehem; and the Bethlehem and Springtown Circuit. After serving in those churches, he served as Presiding Elder of the Easton District, and President of the Gospel Herald Society until his death. Also, for the Pennsylvania Conference he served on the Executive Committee. He also served as a member of the General Conference in the 1920s and the 1930s and served on the Executive committee for that larger group. While his father was referred to as "Father Gehman," William George Gehman was referred to as "Daddy Gehman."

In a report about Annual Conference, the newspaper The Allentown Leader of 10 October 1908 called him "wide awake and energetic."

In his personal life he experienced joy and sorrow. In 1909 his first wife, Emma Kinsell, died while giving birth to their fifth child and first son. The baby died also. From the federal census of the following year it is recorded that newly married Howard and Mary Schelly were living in the house with the Gehmans. W G did not have to parcel out his children to other homes. A few months after the census was taken, W G married Elizabeth Kinsell, the younger sister of his first wife. That marriage was blessed with five children, though one of those children (a twin) died at a month old. Many of his descendants went into the ministry or were active laypersons in their local church.

W G Gehman passed away on 26 November 1941 at the age of 67 while planting a tree in his yard. His remains are buried in the cemetery of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church along with those of his wives. His second wife, Elizabeth, passed away in 1980.

Emanuel Nyce Cassel

E N Cassel was born on 10 November 1875 in Hatfield, Pa. to Jonas and Catherine (Hagey) Cassel. After his public-school education E N Cassel attended West Chester State Teachers College for two years, which is the length of the program to qualify someone to teach in a public school. We do not have information on whether he taught in school, but his training no doubt helped him to be a good preacher.

On 15 May 1897 E N Cassel married Ida Price. He reported his occupation as harness maker. Three years later in the 1900 federal census he reported his occupation as saddler. Evidently, he made leather things for use on horses.

Both E N and Ida were raised in the Church of the Brethren. As a young married couple, they lived in Lower Salford Township. One Sunday they attended the service of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. That evening at the Church of the Brethren they were confronted by leaders of the church and told to confess their sin of attending a service at that strange church. The Cassels did not think it was a sin, so they left that church and joined the Graterford Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church.

In 1900 E N Cassel was a delegate to conference and was appointed Statistical Secretary. In that same year he expressed his desire to enter the ministry. He was assigned to the Blandon and Athol circuit in Berks County. Four years later he was ordained. In the ensuing years, E N Cassel served as pastor to the following churches: the Hereford – Zionsville circuit; Zionsville; the Royersford – Spring City circuit; Allentown Bethel; the Coopersburg – Springtown circuit; Allentown Salem; the Graterford – Harleysville circuit; Reading; the Royersford – Spring City circuit again; Walnutport; and the Nazareth – Northampton circuit.

Soon after he began to serve as a pastor, E. N. Cassel was called upon to accept responsibilities at the Conference level. He served on the Board of Examiners for the Reading Course (the educational program to train men for the pastorate) for 47 years, on the Board of Missions, the Executive Board and nine times was elected Vice-Presiding Elder.

E N Cassel retired from active ministry in 1951. Two years later, on 22 November 1953 he passed into the presence of Jesus. His remains were interred in the cemetery of Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Coopersburg. Four years later Ida passed away. Her remains are next to her husband's.

B Bryan Musselman

Baird Bryan Musselman was born on 18 October 1890 in Allentown, Pa. to Harvey B. and Annie (Baus) Musselman. In 1911 he married Cora Rothermal. They had two children: Olivia and Reuel (a.k.a. "Bud").

As a teenager living at home B. Bryan worked as an electrician, so stated in the 1910 federal census. Three years later, in 1913, he entered the ministry and was ordained in 1916. He served as pastor of the Blandon, Fleetwood, and Terre Hill circuit; the Reading church; and for over 20 years at the Allentown Bethel church. It was at the Allentown church that he began broadcasting church services and other Christian programs on the new technology called "radio." In fact, he owned the radio station. He was known in the region as the "Radio Preacher."

From the 1940 census it is discovered that B. Bryan Musselman had three years of high school while his wife had only 8 years of formal schooling. His daughter Olivia had four years of college while his son Bud was still in high school. From B Bryan's draft registration for World War II, he reports that his right hand was crippled.

In 1954 B Bryan was struck by a car and never fully recovered his health. He died on 27 July 1957 at age 66. His remains are buried in Grandview Cemetery of Allentown where his parents rest. Cora passed away in 1979; her remains are buried next to his.

Timothy Doney Gehret

Timothy Doney Gehret was born on 28 April 1895 in Terre Hill to Adam B and Ida (Doney) Gehret. Adam was the pastor of the Terre Hill – Remps circuit at the time.

T D Gehret's childhood had its challenges. When he was 3 years old, his father A B Gehret died at 31 years of age, leaving a widow with four young children, the youngest still an infant. In those days before Social Security, this was a devasting tragedy. The family was broken up, the children parceled out to relatives, while the widow found gainful employment. Another tragedy struck the family in 1904 when the youngest Gehret child, Rolland, died of diphtheria, being only 7 years old. Three years later, Gehret's mother married Hiram Ettinger, enabling the family to live together again. This family setting did not last long. In 1915, only 8 years into the marriage, Ettinger died.

When the United States entered the Great War (a.k.a. World War I), Timothy D Gehret chose non-combat service, complying with the prevailing attitude of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church concerning participating in warfare. He was inducted on 18 September 1917 and served as a farm laborer for Harry Barrick of Rocky Ridge, Maryland, being under orders from Camp Meade, Maryland. He was honorably

discharged on 14 January 1919. As a side note, on his draft registration in 1942 it is noted that he is missing three fingers and the thumb from his right hand. Did he incur this injury doing the farm work? Also noted on the draft registration was that Gehret was 5' 6" tall and weighed 160 pounds.

After his discharge from alternate service, on 27 November 1919 Gehret married Beulah Lutz. A son, Robert, was born to them in 1921. In 1924 a second son, Carl, was stillborn. Beulah gave a history of a fall and died later that year of diabetes. Management for diabetes was not yet available. These were the years that research was conducted on diabetes. T D Gehret, as a Gospel Herald, was pastor of the Philadelphia Wissinoming church at the time. The following year on 20 October 1925, while assigned as pastor in Scranton, Gehret married Esther Deppe. This marriage produced two children: Lloyd and Marilyn.

The other churches he pastored were Sunbury, Easton, the Blandon – Fleetwood circuit, and Fleetwood by itself. He also served as Presiding Elder for a time and later as District Superintendent. Other leadership positions he held were Director of Home Missions, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Berean Bible School, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bible Fellowship Church Home, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, and Secretary of the Annual Conference. He was also a delegate to the General Conference on several occasions. He continued some of these responsibilities in retirement.

Other interesting facts gleaned from the US federal census: in 1930 the Gehrets did not own a radio; in 1940 he reports he had four years of high school while his wife had eight years of school.

Timothy Doney Gehret peacefully passed away on 21 November 1971 at age 76. His remains are in Bethlehem Memorial Park. Esther followed him in 1980.

Paul Timothy Stengele

Paul Timothy Stengele was born on 17 December 1896 in Slatington to Franklin and Sophia (Wehr) Stengele. It appears that the Stengele family was associated with the Allentown Bethel church. As a young teenager, while still living with his parents in Allentown, Pa., he worked as a laborer on the streets.

By 1915 Stengele had joined the Gospel Herald Society, an evangelistic band of men who helped to start churches. The Society also trained men for the pastorate. In 1915 Stengele was serving in Washington, NJ with E J Rutman. In 1918, while serving in Scranton, Pa., Stengele was licensed to preach. As a side note, P T's brothers, Webster and Ralph, also served as Gospel Heralds. They did not continue in fulltime ministry but

were active laymen in their churches. Their sister Ruth joined the Gospel Worker Society and remained with that evangelistic band of women for the rest of her life.

On 1 June 1921 P T Stengele married Ethel Cobb of Scranton. They were blessed with two children: Royce and Eunice. Two years after the marriage he was ordained to the ministry, still pastoring the Scranton church. While he was pastor at Scranton, the church graduated from being a mission to being a particular church. Other churches he pastored were Easton, Bethlehem, and Reading.

He served as a Presiding Elder for 8 years between serving at Bethlehem and serving at Reading. Part of his responsibilities included attending and preaching at the churches under his care during their Quarterly conference meetings (these were the local congregational business meetings). Communion was shared, and foot washing was conducted at these meetings.

Other positions of leadership which Stengele held were member of the Board of Foreign Missions, member of the Board of the Church Home (for the aged), and President of the Executive Board.

In an article in the Daily News, a newspaper in Mount Carmel, Pa., it was announced that "Rev. P. T. Stengele, of Easton, will be the speaker, choosing as his subject 'Some Things God Cannot Do.' Rev. Stengele, besides being a stirring speaker, is noted also for his part in divine healing. Less than a year ago he anointed Mildred Gehman, the daughter of the presiding elder of the local church, who had a hip-joint affliction so that at the age of 22 one limb was four inches shorter than the other. After Rev. Stengele anointed her, she was healed of her affliction." (The Daily News, March 4, 1937, page 4).

Some miscellaneous tidbits learned from research is that in 1930 P T Stengele owned a radio (one of the questions on the 1930 census). In 1937 he baptized nine people from the Bethlehem area in the Monocacy Creek. According to the 1940 census, Stengele had five years of college while his wife Ethel had two years of college. In 1942 when he registered for the draft as required, it is recorded that his height was 5' 1' and he weighed 172 lbs.

Sadly, on 4 September 1954 Stengele's wife Ethel died at the age of 56. On 4 August 1955 he married her maiden sister, Gertrude. Stengele was pastor of the Reading church during those years.

In 1961 he retired from active ministry though he continued to preach as a pulpit supply preacher and at camp meetings and other special meetings.

Paul Timothy Stengele died on 2 October 1972. In the process of moving from South Whitehall Township to Bethlehem, he suffered a heart attack. His remains and those of both wives are buried in Grandview Cemetery, Allentown, Pa.

Jansen Ellsworth Hartman

Janson Hartman was born in Royersford, Pa. on 11 October 1918, the youngest child of Ellsworth and Nora (Weidner) Hartman. The family worshipped at the Royersford Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church (now Bible Fellowship Church) where they were active members.

Jansen entered the ministry as a Gospel Herald in 1938 at 20 years of age, following all three of his brothers, serving in Elizabeth, NJ; Binghamton, NY; Brooklyn, NY; and Glendale, Long Island, NY.

During his ministry in Glendale, Jansen married Ruth Wainwright in 1943. They were blessed with three children.

With attitudes changing within the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church about higher education, Jansen continued his education. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Elizabethtown College, a Master of Arts degree from Lehigh University, and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Westminster Theological Seminary, all while being in full-time ministry and raising a family.

After his time with the Gospel Herald Society, he served as pastor at the Harrisburg church for several years. In 1950 he was elected to be the Director of Home Missions, later to be called Church Extension, a position he held until 1958. Also in 1950, he was elected to be the founding president of the newly formed Berean Bible School the purpose of which was to train people for the pastorate or missionary service. Jansen led the school for twenty years. In 1969 during his tenure the school earned accreditation and the name was changed to Pinebrook Junior College.

After his time serving as President of Berean Bible School/Pinebrook Junior College, Jansen returned to the pastorate, serving at Grace Bible Fellowship Church in Reading for twenty years, from 1970 to 1989.

Jansen served in other leadership positions. He was elected Chairman of Annual Conference thirteen times. He served on the following boards: Board of Directors (and sometimes as Chairman), Board of Home Missions, Board of Education, and Board of Directors of Berean Bible School. He also served on the Committee on Ministerial Candidates, the Ministerial Relations Committee, the Committee on Church Government, and other committees.

Some people are born leaders, and Jansen was one of them. He helped the Conference through a time of transition from leaving the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church to become the Bible Fellowship Church as we know it today.

Jansen Ellsworth Hartman passed from this life on 7 December 2007. His remains rest in the cemetery of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church next to those of his wife who passed away in 2003.

Daniel G Ziegler

Daniel George Ziegler was born on 27 June 1932 to Daniel K and Caroline (Didden) Ziegler of Hatfield, Pa. His parents were active members of Bethany Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church (now Bible Fellowship Church) of Hatfield. Dan was married to Jacquelene MacLachlan. The Lord blessed them with four children.

Ziegler was a well-educated man. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois; a Master of Divinity Degree from Gordon Theological Seminary in Wenham, Massachusetts; and a Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Having men with earned doctorates among the pastors and leadership adds credibility to the Bible Fellowship Church denomination.

The early years of Ziegler's ministry were in Lebanon, Pa where he pastored the Bible Fellowship Church there. He then went to Staten Island, NY to pastor the church there. During those years he became the Director of Church Extension; a part-time position. Ziegler would pastor two more churches (Neptune, NJ and Poughquag, NY) while continuing with of Church Extension.

Finally, in 1977, he no longer held two jobs, as it were, when he became the first full-time Director of Church Extension. As Director of Church Extension, Ziegler trained and mentored the men who were working to get churches started. Those men were grateful for his instruction and encouragement. He changed the conference's view from church planting being a steppingstone to the pastorate to being an important calling. Evangelism was what began our denomination; Ziegler explained that planting churches was a method of evangelism. Door-to-door introducing people to Jesus, Vacation Bible School, Good News Clubs and other programs help bring people to Jesus and develop a church.

Daniel G Ziegler died on 24 January 2022 at 89 years of age. His wife passed away in 2025. Their remains are in the cemetery of Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church.

Summary

A look at our administrative history shows that at first it was a continuation of the way Mennonites did things. Preachers were farmers for a living who preached on Sunday. The Conference was small, almost a family affair, with only a few churches.

Our mergers with other groups began a time of denominational organization and ultimately full-time paid clergy. The Presiding Elder was in charge.

Today the Bible Fellowship Church is led by the executive Board, comprised of both pastors and laymen. Members of Annual Conference, that is, the pastors and lay delegates from over 70 churches, are free to express thoughts, opinions, and to propose changes.

In the future, who will be added to this list of "who as who"? Time will tell.

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