

The Historical Society of the Bible Fellowship Church
January, 2013

The holidays are over and a new year has begun. Begin with some 50 year old memories.

Fellowship News – January, 1963

GRATERFORD purchased a lot on the side of the present church building facing Route 29. On December 2, the offerings of the day were given over to meet the cost, \$ 700. Total offering of the day exceeded this amount by \$ 60.

HARLEYSVILLE has voted to purchase a plot of ground large enough to build a, new parsonage and later a church. All of this looks forward to the not too distant future when both Graterford and Harleysville will each have their own pastor.

LEBANON continues to move forward in the "Forward with Christ' program. Each of the members and friends of the church has been requested to pray one minute per day and has been given a questionnaire to fill out so that those in charge can determine where each member would best fit into the program.

Rev. E. W. Bean was guest speaker at a Thanksgiving Prayer and Praise service at ZIONSVILLE.

A boys club for boys 10-15 years of age has been started in LEHIGHTON. Included in the club will be Child Evangelism Bible presentations along with crafts and recreation. In charge are Mr. Lawrence Hunsicker and Mr. Clair Greensweig.

TERRE HILL is enjoying a, new set of Schulmerrich Chimes, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gehret. The chimes were introduced to the congregation through a Christmas Carol medley played by Robert Gehret, organist and Mrs. Robert Gehret, pianist.

Mr. Gehret was recently elected chairman of the Christian Business Men of Lancaster.



Berean Bible School Banquet - December, 1962
From Left – Daniel K. Ziegler, Byron Cassel, Robert Gehret



Lebanon Male Chorus - 1963

The Lebanon Male Chorus: Left to right, front row – Rev. Daniel Ziegler, Frank Herb Sr., David Herb, Charles Sheaffer, William Bechtel. Second Row – Raymond Herb, Leroy Herb, Charles Weaber Jr., Charles Weaber Sr., Jack Herb.

The Emancipation Proclamation and the Evangelical Mennonites

Richard Taylor

Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which freed slaves in the Confederate States on January 1, 1863. The Proclamation was hated in the South and controversial in the North. In days to come, you will hear much about the background of this significant document as its 150th anniversary is celebrated.



The Evangelical Mennonites made little mention of the Civil War. It seems odd that while our country was engulfed in such a bloody conflict, they should seem oblivious to it. On June 3, 1863, as the stage was being set for a battle in Pennsylvania at Gettysburg, they had a discussion. The minutes of the Semi-annual Conference record:

The present conditions in the land were considered and after some discussion the following was at last decided upon: We should adhere to the law. We shall do our duty in regard to the authorities, praying for them in sincerity, pay our

taxes, and live under their protection a quiet and peaceful life in all Godliness, respectability, and honesty. (I Timothy 2:[2], Romans 13:5-8) (Verhandlungen, page 33)

In October, 1863, ten months after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and three months after the horrific battle at Gettysburg, they made a more explicit and direct statement.



First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation

We believe that slavery (the institution of slave holding) is sin in the eyes of God and a curse on the land when it is tolerated,
Therefore, be it
Resolved: That we use our influence against it, in Christian spirit, with word and deed, after our confession of faith.

While the statement is clear, questions will arise with regard to the timing and apparent slowness of response to the Proclamation. Why did they wait for ten months to say something? And, why did they feel they needed to make a statement?

The answers to these questions take us into the somewhat complex attitudes of what might be called our patriotic pacifism. Those attitudes were shaped somewhat by the identity of the Evangelical Mennonites which had two significant parts. They were Mennonites and German.

In their book, Damn Dutch: Pennsylvania Germans at Gettysburg, David L. Valuska and Christian B. Keller take us into the culture and thinking of Germans or more particularly, German Americans, in the 1860s. They explore the distinction between the Pennsylvania Dutch and German Americans. The Pennsylvania Dutch were from earlier immigrations and many had been born in America by 1860. The German Americans were the more recent immigrants and had not yet totally blended into the culture of America. The complexity and subtlety of this distinction would require a discussion that would fill several pages. Suffice it to say that our church, the Evangelical Mennonites, would be identified as Pennsylvania Dutch though the language of our church was *hoch Deutsch* (high German), not the creole Pennsylvania

Dutch. The high German continued as the language of our congregations long after others had turned to the English.

Few Germans supported the institution of slavery. Yet few could be classified as abolitionists. It simply was not an issue for those who were ethnically German by background. Many Germans were not convinced the Civil War was their fight. When Germans did become a part, it was often for reasons other than conviction about slavery. (German Pennsylvanians would eventually serve. Many were in the 11th Corps of the Union Army which broke at Chancellorsville and took the brunt of the initial assaults at Gettysburg. They garnered an undeserved reputation of being soft and unreliable.)

You can understand why they had little to say. They weren't for slavery but they weren't against it. When they said something about the war, it was only when the news and rumors had begun to point to the approach of an enemy army in their back yard. What would they do? They would remind everyone of their obligations to their country, a good German response.

But they also raised the issue of peaceful living. The Mennonite in them believed in non-resistance. Many believed it was wrong to take up arms even to defend themselves. The Evangelical Mennonites were committed to pacifism in principle. They would not take up arms and during the Civil War they paid to be freed from the draft. But pacifism was not a passionately held conviction with them.

In June, 1863, the hostility of war was coming closer with the armies moving north and stories and rumors of war beginning to circulate. People were beginning to feel the heat. Men would be called upon. Emergency militia units were being assembled to provide some kind of resistance if the Confederate Army was successful. And so, decisions would need to be made about whether to serve.

In this context, the Evangelical Mennonites were expressing patriotic pacifism in their June statement. The statement does not express a kind of protest to war nor does it call for holding back taxes or civil disobedience. It recognizes the biblical mandate to be good citizens. It seems clear that they were encouraging the men of the church to pay the bounty or tax and be free of the obligation to take up arms. They were supporting the war effort while encouraging the stance of pacifism.

The statement of October which condemns slavery was not simply an afterthought. President Lincoln's proclamation to free the slaves in Confederate states was not universally welcomed in the north. Southerners were united in their rejection of the

proclamation while Northerners were divided. And churches were divided. While in 2013 we might wonder that anyone could oppose a proclamation ending slavery, many people in 1863 did oppose it. Some were afraid of what would happen if large numbers of enslaved people were suddenly freed. Some abhorred the potential mixing and intermingling of races.

The statement about slavery has no ambiguity with regard to the institution of slavery. They would be clear about their views of slavery. They would take their stand with those who believed the institution should be ended.

A further note might be added. Slavery and racism are different issues. The Civil War ended slavery but did not end racism. Their statement expresses their opposition to slavery but makes no reference to racism. It gives no clue regarding their attitude about the people they would have called colored and whom we call African-Americans.

In an interesting note, the Gospel Banner reports the joyous and exuberant dedication services at the Reading Church in November, 1888. The article notes, "In the evening our beloved brother Reading Beatty Johns, pastor of the A. M. E. Church of Reading, preached a powerful sermon which was convicting to the sinner and edifying to the saints, he also gave urgent invitations for sinner and believers to come forward for salvation and sanctification until the altar was full and a mighty power prevailed, glory to God." (Gospel Banner, December 1, 1888). Johns also was a significant part of the dedication of the Bethlehem Church later that month. Brother Johns was from the A. M. E. as in **African** Methodist Episcopal Church. I was unable to locate specific information on him but it would appear this black man was a welcomed preacher in the Mennonite Brethren in Christ at this time when racist attitudes were beginning to harden again.

Our church was somewhat hesitant to express itself on matters that were stirring hearts and emotions in their neighbors. They were not interested in political pronouncements but rather their priority was obeying the Lord and preaching the Gospel. They probably could not stay out of the discussion. The congregations would wonder what their leaders thought. When they spoke, they were clear. It just took a while.

A Book Found
Richard Taylor

This story begins with a retired postman riding his bike. Tony Iezzi, a retired postman and elder at the Bible Fellowship Church in Reading, Pennsylvania, was riding his bike

when he saw a pile of books. One of them, somewhat old, had a religious theme so he grabbed it and showed it to his pastor, Randy Grossman who thought it was familiar. He called me to ask about it. The book was Saved From a Miner's Grave by S. B. Knerr (A picture of the book comes later). I nearly came out of my chair. Those who have a copy of our publication, What Mean These Stones, will recognize that we reprinted Knerr's book there but I have no idea where the text came from and knew we did not have an actual copy of the book.

A special thanks to Tony for spotting the book and for donating it to the archives. This book is a treasure for us and would fall into the category of priceless.

The book Tony found was an invitation to visit the story of the Knerr brothers and go beyond what was in the book.

While searching for more information on the Knerrs, I found even another edition of the book for sale and, because it was not priceless, purchased it hoping for more information.

Follow the story of the Knerrs which comes to an abrupt and surprising end.

The Brothers Knerr Richard Taylor

The brothers Knerr, Sylvester and Jonas, were part of our church for the decade from 1890 to 1899, a decade of aggressive and active evangelism to which they were drawn and from which they withdrew. Where they came from is apparent though why they left and where they went is not clear.

The stories of Sylvester and Jonas are found in our publication, What Mean These Stones. Sylvester told his own story which he entitled, "Saved From A Miner's Grave," which details the events of his brother Edwin's death which led to his spiritual awakening. In the earlier edition of his book, he included brief biographies of H. B. Musselman and his brother, Jonas.

Sylvester and Jonas were the sons of Jonas and Caroline (Buck) Knerr. Caroline was the second wife of Jonas, the first being Elizabeth Buck, perhaps her sister. Sylvester was born in 1866. Jonas (son) was born in 1872.

Jonas (the father) and his sons were by trade miners. They lived in Berks, Lehigh and Montgomery Counties at one time or other. In Lehigh County, Edwin and Sylvester were buried in the cave in which cost Edwin his life in June, 1880, and led to Sylvester's convalescence and perhaps his conversion.

About 1885, Sylvester began attending St. Johns Mennonite Brethren in Christ in Hereford, Berks County. He indicates that his family was "not looking to their Maker." He must have experienced some sort of stirring following the death of his brother but did not rise to the stirring until attending the Hereford Church. The preacher was Abel Strawn. Sylvester says of himself, "...The writer was

convinced of his sin, came to the altar, repented and embraced the religion of the Lord Jesus, which has kept him to this present day."

By 1890, Sylvester had relocated to Royersford, Pennsylvania. He persuaded his family to join him and by June, 1890, the Knerr family was living near Royersford.

Here, he must have made the acquaintance of the Kinsell family, particularly, S. Tyson, who edited and revised the second edition of Sylvester's book in 1898 and said of Sylvester, "Brother Knerr is worthy of the esteem, respect and confidence of all to whom he presents himself. Being upright and zealous in his devotions to the cause of Christ, success must of necessity attend his effects, as it evidently does." Tyson was the son of Daniel and Emaline Kinsell whose daughters, Emma and Elizabeth, were married to William G. Gehman.



Sylvester B. Knerr



S. Tyson Kinsell

However, not all was well. Jonas (the son) had begun to sow some wild oats, according to Sylvester, which included the use of tobacco and imbibing generous amounts of alcohol. Jonas had not done well in school and had hired himself out for a while as a farm laborer and later returned to mining. Sylvester believed that during these employments Jonas picked up these nasty behaviors. But now he was in the newly saved Sylvester's environs. He attended a camp meeting in Royersford in June of 1892 when he submitted to the invitation given.

Their pastor, H. B. Musselman, was serving the Spring City / Royersford Circuit. He took notice of the brothers. By this time, Sylvester had become the superintendent of the Sunday School in Spring City. Approximately six months after his conversion, Jonas felt what he believed to be the call of God on his life. He stepped into the Royersford pulpit on December 19, 1892, at the ripe age of 20.

Both Jonas and Sylvester were developing quickly. Sylvester began to write letters to the Gospel Banner from Spring City. His letters, like many to the Banner, were short on details and long on praise but clearly he was trusting the Lord and would share his testimony with the readers. On January 17, 1893, in his first letter to the Banner, he wrote,

Dear Bro. Hallman. - May the Lord bless you in your grand work. I am glad to tell you that Jesus saved me from my sins. And He also keeps me day by day. I am fully trusting in Him this hour. Glory to Him who saved me! Christ is my all in all. He is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctifier and redeemer, and also my healer. A few months ago I took sick suddenly, indeed, I thought I had to leave this world, but my time was not up yet. My brother called for our Elder, Bro. H. B. Musselman, who prayed over me and anointed me with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer was heard. Christ healed me wonderfully. Praise God for such a Physician! Brethren, have you got that Physician? Every family should have Him. You need no money, all that He wants is the praise and honor. I am happy in Jesus. Bless the Lord for His goodness towards us. Our Royersford pilgrims are living in Canaan's happy land where milk and honey richly flow. We are looking for great times in Zion, as it is recorded in the prophesy of Jeremiah 33:3. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." We are expecting the answer. God has wonderfully worked in the past. In our last revival meetings, sinners were converted and believers fully sanctified. Our pastor feels greatly encouraged in his work, and so do the members. Pray for us. Yours under the blood,

Sylvester Knerr

Royersford, Montgomery Co. Pa.

February, 1893, was a very significant month in the life of Jonas. On Tuesday morning, February 7, he shared his sense of call with the Conference. C. H. Brunner, Wilson Steinmetz and A. M. Clauser joined him in sharing their calls as well. They were all accepted. On Thursday two weeks later, February 23, Jonas was joined in holy matrimony to Elizabeth Kinsell, the cousin of S. Tyson Kinsell. They were married in White Horse, Schuylkill County, by H. B. Musselman.

The new Mrs. J. B. Knerr was ministry minded. Three months after their marriage she contributed an article about teaching children to the Gospel Banner.

Jonas served with H. B. Musselman for two years. 1894 brought the first child to him and his wife and an appointment to the Coopersburg / Springtown Circuit with an assistant, none other than Lucy Musselman. During the year, Sylvester, who had been working as the superintendent of the Spring City Sunday School, expressed his sense of call to the ministry to the conference. He was appointed as a helper for J. E. Fidler to serve Spring City and Norristown.

In 1895, Sylvester was assigned to the Norristown / Hatfield Circuit. Sylvester relocated to Norristown taking his mother and sister Ellen with him taking up residence at 534 Marshall Street.

The Gospel Banner printed two of Sylvester's sermons that year. His sermon, "The Preacher's Calling," gives some idea of the expectations of both preacher and congregation for the one who entered a pulpit.

The preacher's calling is one of the most important. It is not a calling of man, but of God. He should be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient. Therefore he must be a man of patience himself, his forehead should be like Ezekiel describes in chapter 3. He should be ashamed of nothing but sin; he should not be afraid to rebuke sin and encourage righteousness. He should not be afraid to tell the duty of each member; should not show partiality. Some say, Preaching is what I would like, and they say preachers have it nice. A preacher is one of the busiest men in the universe, a servant to all, he must take the good with the worst. Sometimes he comes in contact with pretty rough cases, but he has Jesus for his counsel. I have known preachers who have had good positions in the world, were making money rapidly, but they forsook it all for Jesus' sake, took up the Gospel trumpet and commenced to blow. These men should be cared for,

because they cannot live on the glory alone; something else must be added to sustain the body.

Those who are in office should care and pay attention to that which they are called to do, every man to his post, showing perfect obedience to God and man which is right. Some time ago I went to a preacher's home where all they had was a dish of crackers and a glass of water, but they were enjoying their dinner. I met a good old brother who said it was not wise to live so niggardly, because the earth brought forth in abundance. Jesus says, "Ask and it shall be given you."

Faith without works is dead. Sometime ago I came across a certain family who were destitute of daily food. I made inquiry because I saw they were in distress, so I had faith and also tried works. I went to a certain place where they had plenty, and the man went to the market, bought a big piece of meat and seven loaves of bread, and we took it to the house. Those children and mother were hungry, and when they were satisfied we prayed with them. Let us do with pleasure what the Lord has laid upon us and take the Bible as the man of our counsel. A word to the wise is sufficient. May the good Lord bless every member of Zion. May He help us to show perfect obedience to God in all things.

Things appeared to moving along well with the brothers Knerr and their ministry among the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. Then, a cloud appeared on the horizon. At the 1896 Conference, Jonas was found to be unacceptable. The minutes of the meeting recorded, "We found W. C. Betz and J. B. Knerr as unsatisfactory. They acknowledged that they had somewhat erred in the past, and promised to do better in the future, to be obedient, teachable, and loyal to the Presiding Elder and the Discipline. We therefore recommend that they remain on probation for another year." While not being explicit, it would appear that something about the relationship between Jonas and W. B. Musselman, the brother of his mentor, H. B., had gone awry. It is worth observing that Jonas' reading course grades averaged 46 which was lowest of all the scores published that year.

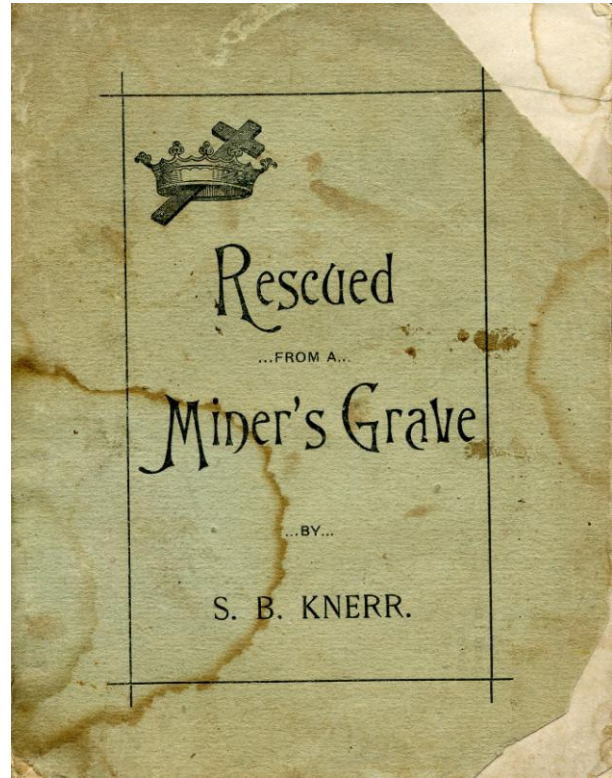
At the 1897 Conference, Both Sylvester and Jonas received appointments, Norristown for Sylvester and the circuit including Northampton, New Tripoli, Walnutport, Kreidersville for Jonas. Jonas was apparently not considered for ordination. For Sylvester, it was better news. He was recommended for ordination. However, by his request, he did not proceed. "Brother S. B. Knerr, who had been passed and recommended by the Committee for Ordination, declined, desiring to labor on Probationer's License another year. His request was granted." No further explanation was given leaving us to wonder if the action with regard to his brother had made him

hesitate. Perhaps he did not want to proceed as long as his brother was being held back. Such an action could have been motivated by loyalty to his brother or by irritation at the Conference for their action.

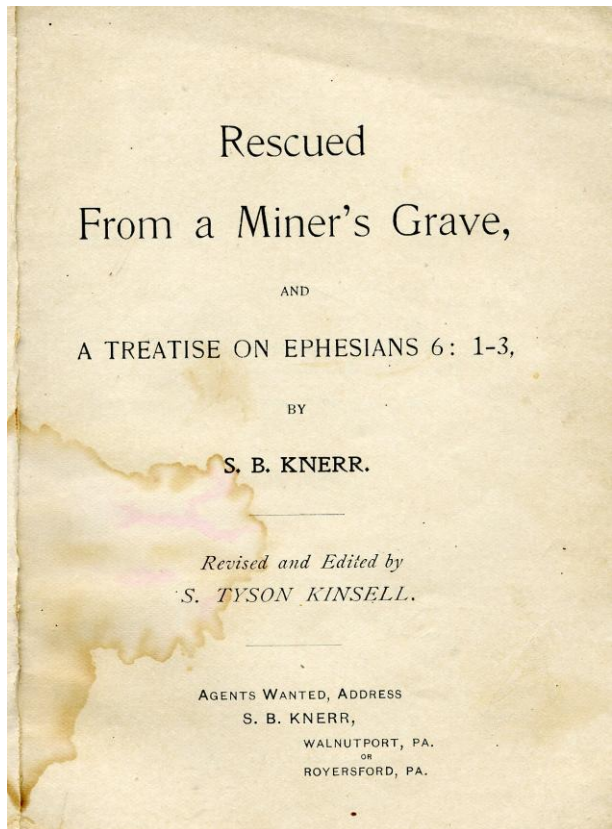
The following year produced a similar hesitation from the Conference. On March 4, 1898, the Committee on Ordination made their recommendation. "We have examined W. K. Ziegler, S. B. Knerr and J. B. Knerr, candidates for ordination. We recommend Brother W. K. Ziegler for ordination. For various reasons we recommend that S. B. Knerr and J. B. Knerr shall travel another year on probationers' license." Even though W. K. Ziegler shared a low grade point on the Reading Course, he was passed. This would indicate that the low scores of Sylvester and Jonas may not have been the primary cause, or even a cause, of the reluctance of the Conference

to pass them on. Sylvester returned to Norristown while Jonas was assigned to Nazareth and Plainfield with a note that he was to be under the supervision of H. B. Musselman.

During this year, the third edition of Sylvester's book, endorsed by S. Tyson Kinsell, was published. Some of the differences from the earlier edition printed in What Mean These Stones are worth noting. First, and perhaps most obvious, the book did not include the biographies of H. B. Musselman and J. B. Knerr. Second, though Sylvester referred to the clergyman who officiated at Edwin's funeral in the first edition, the 1898 version indicates that Rev. A. J. Herman of the Reformed Church led the funeral and even includes a picture of him. Third, in the earlier edition, Sylvester refers by name to Abel Strawn as the man who was preaching when he was saved. But in the 1898 version, he simply



Cover - 1898 Edition



Title Page - 1898 Edition

puts a blank where the name of Strawn had been.

The question is whether these differences are significant or not. Because the book was printed when the relationship between the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Knerr brothers was becoming uncertain, did the changes indicate a that Sylvester was not sure he wanted to include these parts of his earlier book.

1899 did not bring better news or a more positive reaction. When it was time to consider men for examination, the committee reported

No complaint was brought against any of these workers except J.B. Knerr and Levi Moyer, who were not found satisfactory

-Report of the Committee on Examination of J.B. Knerr and Levi Moyer:

WHEREAS, Brother Levi Moyer has kindly requested this Conference to erase his name from the Conference roll, as probationer, giving reasonable excuse; therefore

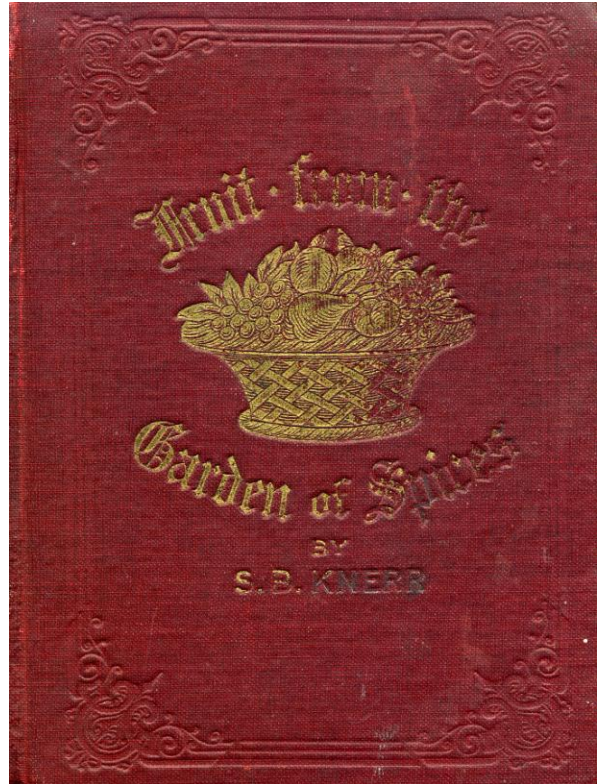
RESOLVED, That we comply with his request.

WHEREAS, Brother J.B. Knerr has expressed his desire to resign from this Conference, intending to join another Conference; therefore

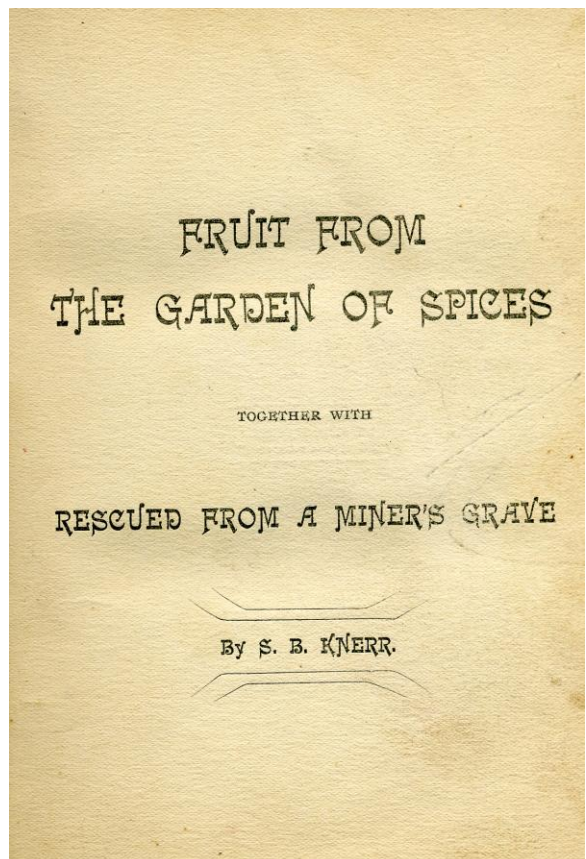
RESOLVED, That request be cheerfully granted.

Later, Sylvester took a similar action.

WHEREAS, S.B. Knerr sent in his



Cover 1900 Edition



Title Page - 1900 Edition

resignation as probationer and member, and desires his credentials; therefore

RESOLVED, That proper credentials be forwarded at once.

Thus ended the affiliation between the brothers Knerr and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The language of the minutes seems to indicate that the parting was somewhat amicable. They were not dismissed or removed but rather allowed simply to leave. The reasons for the division are not expressed.

Two years later in 1900, Jonas and Sylvester were residents of Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Jonas and Lizzie now had four children. Jonas worked as a laborer at an iron mill. Sylvester was living with Jonas and listed his occupation as clergyman.

1900 brought yet another edition of Sylvester's book. It was different than the edition of 1898. It included a lengthy section entitled, "Fruit From The Garden of Spices," a collection of short devotional paragraphs with many illustrations scattered through. His auto-biography is reprinted as a fourth edition. In this book, the picture of Rev. A. J. Herman is the only photograph included and is moved to the front. S. Tyson Kinsell is not mentioned. No reference is made to his former church. His sermon on Ephesians 6 is not reprinted. The changes raise the question of their significance and makes us wonder if Sylvester was putting more distance between him and his earlier affiliation.

Sylvester's story ends in 1916. His obituary in the Reading Eagle on Saturday, January 15, 1916, gives the details.

Dies in Sanatorium

Sylvester B. Knerr, aged 47 years, died from the effects of tuberculosis, this morning, at the Mount Alto Sanatorium, to which place he was removed five months ago, from his residence, 225 Spruce Street. Deceased had been ailing for the past year. He was born in Lehigh county and resided in this city for 15 years. He was a member of the Reading Lodge, No. 155, Loyal Order of Moose.

Mr. Knerr was employed for a number of years as a book salesman for Charles Foster & Co., Philadelphia.

He is survived by his widow, Elizabeth (nee Edwards), three children, Chester, who is confined to St Joseph's Hospital, suffering from an infected eye; Robert and Emma Knerr, at home; two brothers, Jonas, Reading, and Jacob, Allentown, three sisters, Sarah, Allentown; Louisa, wife of Daniel Yerger, and Mrs. Helen Meitzler, both of Royersford. His mother, Caroline Knerr, also of Royersford, survives. Undertaker Seidel took charge of the remains.

Nothing is mentioned of his service as a minister or is reference made to his faith. One is left to wonder.

In 1920, his brother Jonas and Lizzie are living as renters at 236 Mifflin in Reading, Pennsylvania, with their seven children and one grandson. Jonas was then working as a fireman.

The story of the brothers Knerr suddenly shifts to North Carolina. In 1935, a death certificate was issued for J. B. Jones in Dobson Township, Surry County. Jones had been working there as a laborer in a dye factory. He died of endocarditis following pleurisy according to the death record.

But, J. B. Jones was an alias. J. B. Jones was in fact J. B. Knerr. Supplying the information for his death certificate was Helen Geesey of Reading Pennsylvania. Helen was a daughter of J. B. and Lizzie. In 1930 Helen was living with her husband Jacob, their three children and Helen's brothers, the youngest sons of Jonas and Lizzie as well as the grandchild of Jonas.

This final chapter in the life of Jonas raises many unanswered questions. Why was he living under an alias in North Carolina? Does the fact that his children were living with his daughter indicate estrangement from his family? Did the hesitance of the Conference to approve him indicate that they discerned some character flaws in their always careful scrutiny? Had the Conference "laid hands on him" too quickly elevating a new believer to the status of preacher?

Until more details become available, we will have to be satisfied with unanswered questions and the observation that Sylvester and Jonas came and went.

25 Years Ago – 1987

From Fellowship News, January – February, 1987.

Church Extension Mentions

is a brief look at the men and the ministries of the Churches under the care of the Church Extension Department of the Bible Fellowship Church.

The mission at **Whaley Lake, NY** has been recognized by the Board of Christian Education as the fastest growing Sunday School in the denomination during the past year. Pastor Robert S. Commerford received a plaque during a ceremony at Annual Conference, citing the mission for its growth of 100% in attendance during the year.

As part of its response to WIDER HORIZONS, the Cedar Crest Church of Allentown has adopted the **Walnutport** mission as a daughter church. Cedar Crest will provide some financial help for outreach, along with help in leadership, programming, music and

maintenance to the congregation at Walnutport, where David W. Chappell serves as pastor.

A "December Celebration" is planned by the **Irvington, NJ** mission for Saturday evening, December 6 to recognize the fifth anniversary of the Irvington congregation. This will be the third "December Celebration" to which all of the Bible Fellowship Churches in the metropolitan area are invited. Ronald C. Erb is pastor.

The **Camden, DE** Church celebrated its tenth anniversary in September, culminating on Sunday, September 14th in Sunday School, morning worship, a fellowship dinner, a concert and an afternoon meeting.

For the occasion, the congregation did much work on its more than a century old building, which looked as good as new, and launched a building fund for future growth. James G. Koch is the pastor.

Both of the Project Beachhead missions in New Jersey, the newest in the Church Extension Department, took significant forward steps recently.

At **Somers Point**, the first public worship was held at the V.F.W. building on September 28. Sixty-two persons attended the meeting, including 19 from five out-of-town Bible Fellowship Churches. Thirty-four were from the local area. In preparation for the opening, Pastor Roger Reitz visited nearly 1000 homes in Somers Point.

Over at **Mays Landing**, where Harold C. Weaber is the organizing pastor, a Bible Study group was begun on Tuesday evening, October 29 at the Weaber's home in the Oaks of Weymouth Development. There were four persons at the first study and six at the second week.

Two Church Extension appointments: **Mt. Pocono, PA** and **Wappingers Falls, NY** were recognized as churches and received into Conference Membership by the 103rd Annual Conference, October 11 at Pinebrook Bible Conference. Formal recognition of the new churches was made at a special ceremony on Tuesday evening, October 12th. The delegates seated were: Paul T. Rutman, Mt. Pocono and Ross Bassett, Wappingers Falls.

A chartering service is planned for the Wappingers Falls Church on Sunday, December 7th at 4 p.m. at the congregation's regular meeting place (the Mt. Hope Grange on Myers Corner Road). A similar service at Mt. Pocono will be announced later.

The founding pastor at **Wappingers Falls** was Herbert K. Lea, now a Bible Fellowship Church missionary to Central Africa Republic. The present organizing pastor is Byron Widger. The **Mt. Pocono** congregation began as a daughter church of Berean Church in Stroudsburg, PA. A. L. Seifert has served from the start as organizing pastor.

Gateway Church of New Fairfield, CT, where Dean Stortz serves as pastor, has formed its congregation into four Fellowship Groups, whose members make commitments to pray for one another daily and to try to meet together periodically. The plan is for new groups to be formed after three months.

The congregation in **Newark, NJ**, where Bert Baker serves as pastor, is celebrating its eleventh anniversary in November. Worship attendance is taxing the capacity of the building at 30 Randolph Place, which was first used for worship in October, 1977.

In **Newark, DE** the church is moving toward construction of a new building on a well situated lot that has been donated to the church. Pastor William Schlonecker hopes to conduct a ground breaking service in the near future.

Robert W. Smock is the new coordinator for WIDER HORIZONS and Associate Director of the Church Extension Department. He will serve part-time and by agreement of the church at Royersford, PA, which he serves as pastor. He will not receive a salary, but will be reimbursed for expenses.

WIDER HORIZONS is a program of growth goals for the Bible Fellowship Church that was endorsed and adopted by the Annual Conference, to run through the end of the year 2000. Major goals include membership of 14,293 and the start of 55 new congregations – 16 daughter churches and 39 through the Church Extension Department.

Pastor Randall A. Grossman of the **Kutztown, PA** church attended an Evangelism Explosion Seminar, November 14-19. His participation in the seminar was sponsored by the Ephrata Church as a service to the young church. A year ago, Ephrata sponsored attendance at a similar seminar for Pastor William Schlonecker at Newark, DE, where the EE program is now operating.

Pastor D. Thomas Phillips resigned as pastor of the church at **Finesville, NJ** on Sunday, November 2. He came to the congregation in the fall of 1972 and has served there longer than any other pastor. During his term the church has grown and, for the first time in its history, has fully supported itself since September, 1984.

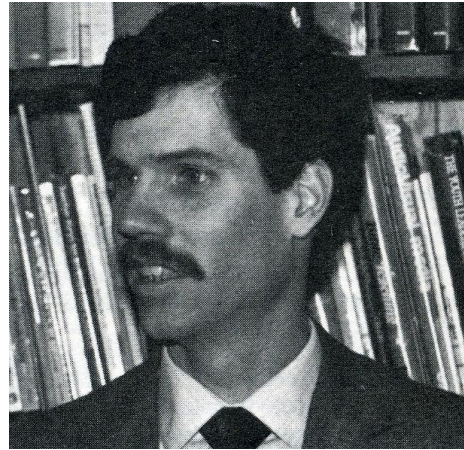
The **Eastern Union County, NJ** mission began Sunday worship in September at the home of Pastor Dennis W. Spinney in Hillside. The group, which has been averaging about 12 and represents 4 potential committed families, has agreed to continue to meet each other Lord's Day and to invited others to join them, but with public announcement at present.

The Mission in **Edison, NJ** moved into a new location for morning worship on Sunday, November 9th, the American Legion in Iselin.

Dennis M Cahill became the first full-time resident pastor at Edison in July. Attendance at meetings has climbed to about 50% over last year.

Valley Church in Poughquag, NY has had a fruitful ministry over the years to the High Meadows Mobile Home Park on Chestnut Ridge, Dover. The ministry began with a children's Bible Club and has included teen activities and adult Bible studies.

There have been a number of credible professions of faith and several families here have been added to the church. High Meadows has over 200 families. The ministry is continuing.



Dennis M. Cahill - 1987

More on Pacifism

In the paper, From Pacifists to Patriots, presented at the October, 2012, Historical Society meeting, the following statement was included, "Publicly, Rev. F.B. Hertzog, who had served as a Conscientious Objector in World War I, did not encourage military service, although he was not particularly vocal about it." Roy Hertzog, the son of F. B. Hertzog, informed us that to his knowledge his father had not been a conscientious objector and had not served as such. We would ask you to note this error.

F. B. Hertzog did register for the draft in September, 1918, but because the war was beginning to wear down probably did not get drafted. Roy is not certain that his father had joined the church at that point and so it is not clear what his convictions were. It is clear that F. B. did not serve as a conscientious objector.

A data bank at Swarthmore College shows the following men registered as conscientious objectors in World War I from the Mennonite Brethren in Christ: Howard W. Bartholomew, Jesse L. Brenneman, Homer B. Curtis, Walter C. Gehman, Timothy D. Gehret, Robert F. Jones, Herbert C. Kauffman, Edgar O. Mann, Harry B. Riffel, Henry W. (Harry) Riffel, Charles R. Sonon, and Cornelius Vogt. Some of these men are from the Pennsylvania Conference. Timothy D. Gehret later became a District Superintendent.

A petition from Mennonite Congregations was circulated about proposed laws in World War 1. The petition read as follows:

A Petition

Believing all war to be a violation of the teachings of Christ whose life and precepts we hold as our supreme law, we feel that we must also avoid having any part in Military Training, therefore we, the undersigned humbly plead your honorable body that it pass no laws which will for militarism upon those who have religious convictions against it. We are confident that the passing of Military Laws which would not excuse non-resistant Christians would mean to send thousands of young men to Military Prisons and no good government desires this.

[The petition was signed by approximately 700 Mennonite Brethren in Christ.]

Comments and questions are welcomed. If you have not renewed your membership for the coming year, now is the time. I have enclosed a renewal form for you.

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