

The Bible Fellowship Historical Society
January, 2016

Some sort of apology may be appropriate. I have not been able to focus on putting together another issue of historical articles because of my focus on moving to a new house and all that is involved with shopping for a home and the subsequent move. Those of you who are veteran movers or have recently moved may be smiling. Most of the work I do for this publication is done in spare moments and are my enjoyment. But recently, spare movements have been given to making the adjustments. All this is offered not as excuse for the delay but as an explanation. This moving occasion set me to thinking about how our pastors moved or were moved.

Pastors Moving / Pulpit Supply
Richard Taylor

Relocation. Moving. Packing. New House. All of these are part of the pastoral calling, at least in more recent years. I will share some personal history. I have just moved into our own home after living in church owned parsonages for almost 48 years. I began my ministry career while a seminary student 48 years ago. During those years we moved four times. It could be said the first two don't count. We moved in 1972 and 1983. So, in 42 years, we have moved twice. Twice too much. I am not a fan of moving. It is my sincere wish that my next move will be the one that takes me into the presence of God. I will not have to pack and I am already prepared. I will not have to apply for a mortgage and plan a moving day.

Having said all of that, I have been thinking about our history of pastoral relocations while appreciating what ministry families endured in order to do what they believed God had called them to do. That set me to searching out our history of how pastors moved around.

When we began, our pastors were primarily farmers who preached near where they lived. At our beginning, we were only two churches and those who served them lived close to their church. So, moving or relocating was not necessary. Because it was impractical to sell a farm and relocate to another every few years, it was just not an option.

When they preached at a new place, that place was often within driving distance, that distance determined in terms of how far one could travel by horse or by horse / buggy. A quick survey shows that our founder, William Gehman, never moved.

Eusebius Hershey joined the new church early after its beginning. Hershey was from Manheim, in Lancaster County, and was almost constantly on the move but maintained his home in Manheim. However, he was viewed as a traveling evangelist and missionary who traveled but did not have a permanent location until sometime later.

In 1870, the need to make decisions about where and how pastors would serve was discussed. The minutes record:

4. Because all of us have been deeply convinced for sometime about the necessity of doing more for the benefit and salvation of souls through our denomination and because many calls to preach at new places under the present set up, we gathered as one in the fear of God, talked over and discussed a travel plan. We felt it necessary to appoint to the field of evangelism two traveling preachers who should travel constantly. However, the question was: who gives himself of his own free will to do this? After every member had explained his spiritual, physical and earthly state of things, the following brethren volunteered: E. Hershey, William N. Shelly, Abel Strawn, and S. M. Musselman.
5. At the suggestion of Brother Hershey, a lot was cast, which after ardent prayer, fell to Abel Strawn and S. M. Musselman to be traveling preachers until the next Conference or even longer, as the conditions may be. (Verhandlungen, page 63)

Two things now became part of pastoral life. First, pastors were called to make a choice about whether they would be available to travel or preach somewhere else. While this choice was not at the time a decision to move, it was a decision to make ministry a full time occupation. Second, the conference would begin to make decisions about who served and where. The old lot system was followed at first to determine who would be travelers.

In 1874, pastoral assignments became part of the Conference matters. At this point, six churches had begun to meet. While they were still geographically confined, decisions about who served them needed to be made. Only the church in Bangor was more distant but David Henning lived nearby and was able to serve it. Now pastors were assigned or appointed to their charge as a result of conference decisions.

The 1880 conference brought a further refinement with the appointment of a Station Committee. This committee was entrusted with the responsibility of making pastoral appointments. In 1882, the committee was to be made up of the delegates, those who were the non-pastoral conference members. The committee was re-named the

Stationing Committee. Each year, this committee would meet to determine what churches or stations were to make up a circuit and which pastors would serve that circuit. In 1893, the committee was identified as the Stationing and Boundary Committee. No explanation is given for the terminology. The word stationing was apparently used because the men were “stationed” or assigned. The word boundary was used because the assignments were apparently to specifically designated geographical areas. While no explanation for the name is given, it seems reasonable to assume the committee discussed these issues. In 1894, the committee became known as the Stationing, Boundary and Appropriating Committee. They took over the work of the Appropriating Committee which determined how much was to be spent, presumably, on pastoral salaries. The name of the committee would remain unchanged until 1968 when it was shortened the Stationing and Appropriations Committee. In 1969, the committee was listed simply again as the Stationing Committee. In 1972, the committee no longer existed.

In the 1880s, the church had grown and geographical spread had become routine. The question of who would serve where was becoming more complicated. The 1883 conference included a question that would become a regular part of conference deliberations. “Who are the preachers that are willing to travel this year according to the directions of the Conference, and our Discipline, and what is their number?” In 1880, the merger of several groups in Canada and the United States resulted in a printed discipline. This question was included in the statistical report each conference was required to make to the General Conference. The question became part of the Pennsylvania Annual Conference decisions about who would and would not be available to move about.

Relocating to a new home would bring a newer level of complexity in the minister’s life. Presumably, moving to a new home would mean that a church would own a parsonage. The statistical report of 1894 contains the first reference to a parsonage, just one. In 1895, parsonage rental had become a statistic. By 1899, two parsonages were reported. It is difficult to determine which church owned the first parsonage because no details are given.

A new vocabulary entered in 1897 with the word unconditional. It was noted in the minutes that a number of ministers “submitted themselves unconditionally to the Conference” apparently indicating that they were willing to move anywhere without any conditions. Three ministers were conditional, G. A. Campbell, William Gehman, and Abel Strawn. Their conditional status was probably based on health and age factors.

By 1906, the system had become refined to a roll call to which a minister was to answer, "Conditional" or "Unconditional." By now, unconditional meant that a minister was willing to relocate according to the direction of the conference, no questions asked. In later years, a congregational poll was taken to indicate whether the congregation wanted their pastor to return for another year. The committee apparently considered three factors in the decision about assignments: 1. The congregational poll; 2. The denominational need; 3. The wishes of the pastor. How much weight was given to each factor was probably determined by the committee at the time.

The report of the Stationing, Boundary and Appropriations committee must have been anticipated by the pastors with eager anticipation or anxious dread. The decision meant a pastor would continue in his current place of service or move to another. I have heard older men speak of what it was to be uncertain about where they would preach the week after conference. It is hard to imagine the anxieties experienced by a pastor's wife who might need to start packing when the decision about where they would live was handed down. Re-assignment meant packing and moving to a new home in a new community.

The General Conference of 1900 recorded the following decision: "Sec. XI Page 82, Insert the following paragraph after paragraph 4, 'No minister shall have charge of the same field longer than three years in succession except by two-thirds vote of the Annual Conference.'" With this decree, time limits became a regular fixture. Through the years, the time a man might serve was increased. When the limit was phased out in 1967, it had been increased to 9 years.

The Annual Conference of 1965 recorded the following:

Whereas, In informal conversations with Pastors and Delegates there have been expressed desires to restudy our system of pulpit supply, therefore, be it,
Resolved, That a committee of 4 Ministers and 3 Laymen be elected to study the matter of Pulpit Supply and report at the next Annual Conference.

The "whereas" seems to indicate that there was a growing unhappiness with the system of assigning pastors to churches. That growing unhappiness resulted in a formal study of how pastors would be sent or called to serve in churches. Significantly, this discussion would happen simultaneously with a discussion of our form of government or church leadership and may have added some complexity to both discussions.

A proposal was offered in 1966 to which the pastors and delegates were to respond by answering the question of why the proposal would not work. The question indicates that the proposal may have been unpopular but viewed as necessary. In the deliberative

way the Annual Conference approaches change, the discussion continued with proposals and objections. It was becoming complex. The minutes of 1968 stated:

Whereas, Rule 9 of our Rules for Pulpit Supply says, among other things, that "no choices shall be granted without the District Superintendent having consulted with the Pastor involved", and,

Whereas, the practical application of this rule has been not to force a church on a Pastor or to force a Pastor on a church, and,

Whereas, Question "d" of the Faith and Order Questionnaire which must be completed annually by all those desiring to retain credentials with the Bible Fellowship Church, asks:

"d. Are you willing to serve a church as stationed by the Annual Conference through Pulpit Supply? Yes or no.", and,

Whereas, the question quoted from the Faith and Order Questionnaire implies that the Pastor who has not been assigned by the operation of Rules 1 through 6 under "Annual Conference Action" will be consulted but he has no choice except to concur in the action of the Stationing Committee, and,

Whereas, the apparent conflict between our practical application of Rule 9 and question "d." of the Faith and Order Questionnaire should not exist, therefore, be it,

Resolved, that, regardless of precedent, it is the consensus of this Conference that, under the existing rules, a man whose name appeared on the Availability List who is without an assignment by the operation of Rules 1 through 6 must accept whatever assignment is given him by the Stationing Committee; and that every church without a Pastor after the operation of Rules 1 through 6 must accept the man assigned to it by the Stationing Committee; and further, that where there is an unassigned Pastor holding credentials with the Bible Fellowship Church and a duly organized church without a Pastor, the Stationing Committee must assign the Pastor to the church and the said church must acknowledge said man as its Pastor.

Frustration with finding a solution must have been growing. The adjourned session of 1968 gave evidence of impatience.

The Committee appointed by the Chairman (see page 21 of the 1968 Year Book) of men "who believe that the present system of Pulpit Supply can be made adequate by revising it" have studied the problem at length and with great deliberation.

Literally hundreds of man hours have been spent by the individual members of the committee and by the committee as a whole in its sessions to develop improvements in the present system. Results to date have been most encouraging because we are on the threshold of vital solutions to the problems that have beset us in the past.

Research has been completed in several phases of the system which must be changed, and we are finalizing material on (1) Filling a pulpit which becomes vacant between Annual Conference, (2) A pastoral agreement with a local church. Concord has been achieved on the types of resignations and legislation dealing with removal by Conference action. Obviously in pursuing our Herculean assignment we have under advisement many other areas which will be scrutinized and refined.

The committee confidently expects to present a clear, concise and complete report; but in order to conclude our assignment, we respectfully request the Adjourned Session to grant an extension of time until the convening of this August body at its 86th Session on October 13, 1969 in Pinebrook.

During the year, the two different approaches to the problem of pulpit supply were able to find a common solution. Gone were the days when pastors called home to tell their wives to start packing. Gone were the days when delegates inwardly groaned because of the pastor assigned to them. Now the choice was to be made between pastors and the churches which had the autonomy to call them.

Today, the calling of a pastor to a Bible Fellowship Church is not a yearly event. In recent years, the length of time a pastor has served has been increasing and the occasions for pastoral change are fewer. It has also been common for our churches to have 2 or more pastors serving, some of which must be called by the congregation and others by the board of Elders.

It might have seemed simple when a committee told a pastor where he would serve and churches what pastors would serve them. Now, the need for a pastor begins with a search committee, a profile and a job description. When that work is done, interviews begin to determine if the candidate fits the profile. If the search committee recommends a candidate, a second round of interviews begin with the elders. If the elders approve, then the candidate will preach to allow the congregation to decide if his preaching is what they desire. As you can see, the process is a far cry from when the Stationing Committee met and sent a man where they thought was best for all involved.

Is the new system better? As in most things, when you compare new and old, some things seem better and some things do not.

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - BINGHAMTON, NY
LeRoy Wilcox

Binghamton is a city in Broome County, NY located at the junction of the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers. The land had been purchased after the Revolutionary War by William Bingham, a rich merchant in Philadelphia and a settlement grew at the river junction called Chenango Point. In 1834 the village was incorporated and the name changed to Binghamton to honor its founder and benefactor. The village grew into a city and by 1940 had reached a population of 80,000 people. The Gospel Herald Society had begun a successful work in Scranton, 60 miles to the south, and there were ties between the two cities.

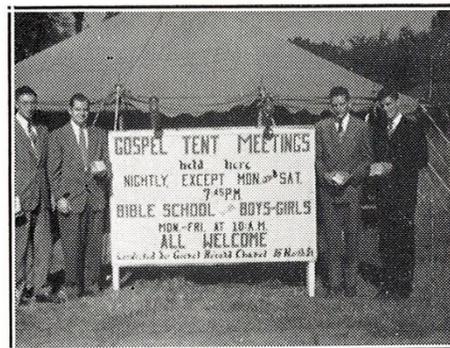
This writer grew up in a section of Binghamton known as the First Ward and my family attended a nearby Bible-believing church which, however, was only one of few of the denomination still preaching the Gospel. When I was in high school a new pastor was assigned who said the Bible was full of fairy tales. Soon after graduation, in 1954, a girl from our church, Sylvia Froncek, went to live with her sister on the East Side of Binghamton because of a temporary problem in the home. She decided to attend the church across the street which was called the Berean Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. She liked it and thought I might like that church better so I attended and heard good Bible-based sermons. My family then began to attend there as well as did another girl from my original church, Ellen. The pastor, Reynold Gardner, was new, having just graduated from Berean Bible School in Allentown. He was assigned to Binghamton to help Harold Yarrington, who left in 1954, leaving Reynold solely in charge. Reynold was the son of David Gardner of our Harrisburg church, who served as a delegate to Annual Conference for many years. Reynold married a classmate from Berean, Myrna Allen. She was the daughter of Edward and Elsie (Brisch) Allen of Phillipsburg, NJ and her twin sister, Margaret, also a Berean graduate, married another classmate, a young man named Frank Herb, Jr., from our Lebanon church. A brother, Russell Allen, was a recent graduate from Muhlenberg College and star football player but had become a pastor, founding our church at Finesville, NJ. Russell had two sons, David and Daniel, both now serving in our Bible Fellowship Conference, David serving as Executive Director of our Conference. Frank Herb, Jr. served in several of our Conference churches, including our church at Bethlehem. Retired, he and Margaret now reside at Fellowship Manor.

Jansen Hartman, Director of Home Missions, and also the president of Berean Bible School, preached at the Binghamton church and I, with Sylvia and Ellen, enrolled at Berean. My two younger sisters also enrolled there later. At Berean I met a young woman from the Finesville, NJ church and began attending there with her. Russell Allen had been sent to our church in Jersey City and was replaced by Reynold Gardner, so I continued under his ministry. Three years later, in 1959, the young woman, Patricia Fulper, and I were married at the Berean Bible School chapel by Reynold Gardner. He later left the ministry but is still an active layman in the Harrisburg area and recently preached at one of our churches. Sylvia married my brother, Nelson. Ellen married a Baptist minister and they served for a time in Laceyville, PA.

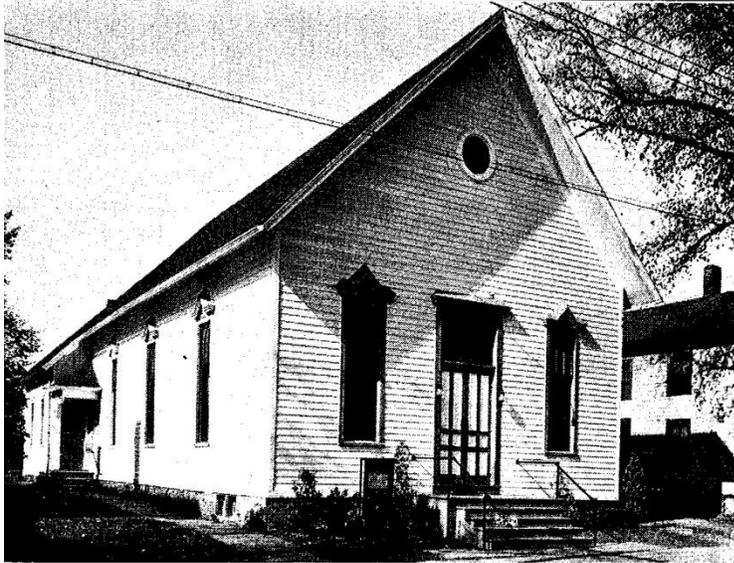
Susan Still also attended Berean Bible School, as did Joan Smith, who attended for part of one year. Susan was the daughter of Bertram Warren Still, who served as Sunday School superintendent and was a leader in the Binghamton work. Born in Sunbury in 1917 he married Beatrice Garrison in Scranton in 1939, with our pastor there, Arthur M. Sprock, officiating. Beatrice was the daughter of John and Elsie (Edwards) Garrison. Her nephew, Robert Garrison, attended Berean Bible school for one year as my classmate. Her uncle, Russell Garrison, married Louise Scheif who served on the kitchen staff at Berean Bible School after Russell's death. Bertram (Bert) and Beatrice moved to Binghamton soon after their marriage and were instrumental in beginning our work there. Susan married a classmate from Berean, Gary Krick. Joan Smith was the daughter of Al Smith, who was supposedly converted under the ministry of William A. Heffner. When Heffner was assigned to another church, Al left and returned to his former ways. I had been dating Joan and he and I became friends. He also hired me in the summer of 1956 to help him with his landscaping business. He told me that he would only return to his Christian ways only if Pastor Heffner returned. Joan, my classmate at Berean, left after four months. She later left the church and joined a cult. Al Smith died in the 1970's and had requested that Pastor Heffner conduct his funeral. Because of the lateness of the request and distance involved, Pastor Heffner was unable to fulfill the request.



Gospel Herald Chapel at Binghamton, NY



Binghamton, N. Y. Left to right: Carl Cassel, W. A. Heffner, Norman Weiss, Austin Shelly



Berean Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, 5 Rutherford St., Binghamton, NY

The work at Binghamton began in 1940 as a Gospel Herald work. The 1940 Yearbook records that a mission was opened there with tent meetings held at the corner of Vestal Avenue and Mary Street, with Joseph I. Somers in charge, assisted by Jansen E. Hartman and Willard E. Cassel. These meetings were well attended. After the tent meetings a mission place and living quarters at 191 Hawley Street were rented. It was noted that Arthur M. Sprock, pastor of our Scranton church, was very helpful.

Joseph I. Somers was the son of Joseph A. Somers, whose father, George, had fought in the Civil War. Joseph A. married Lillie Lindermuth on April 13, 1907, who was the daughter of Alfred and Sarah Lindermuth. Lillie's brother, Elmer, moved to Chester, PA and became an active layman and founding member of our Chester church. Joseph, a graduate of Girard College, began serving at our Brooklyn, NY church in 1936. The Binghamton Press printed an article about him when he was at Binghamton in which he related that it was difficult to convince his members that it was wrong to go to the movie theater.

In 1942 Harold Yarrington, who had been helping John Dunn at Roxborough, took charge of the work and was assisted by Edward D. Rapp. Harold DeWitte Yarrington was born in Wilmington, DE, the son of Clifford and Mae (Potts) Yarrington. He graduated from Shelton College and received a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology from New York University in 1953. Ordained in 1937, he served in Home Missions for 20 years. Relocating in New Haven, CT, he served as a pastor and was active in many counseling and chaplaincy organizations. He died in Middletown, CT on May 21, 2003.

On October 14, 1944 the Press recorded, "The location of the Gospel Herald Chapel has been moved from the corner of Hawley and Rutherford Streets to 16 North

Street. Plans are being made for dedication of the new chapel". The pastor was listed as Edward D. Rapp assisted by John Reitz and William A. Heffner. Harold Yarrington had been sent back to Roxborough to take charge of that work. The 1946 Yearbook records that John Guy Reitz and Winfred Hottel have become helpers to Edward Rapp.

Edward D. Rapp was born in Allentown, PA, January 09, 1918, the eldest son of William, Sr. and Margaret (Demois) Rapp. While at Binghamton he officiated at the wedding of Rochester Russell and Patricia Skinner on December 30, 1946, Rochester had graduated from Lafayette College in Easton and they were leaving the Binghamton area. Not many young people stayed in Binghamton. Pastor Rapp, after leaving the Binghamton work, became active with the Primitive Methodists. He died in FL in 1988. His obituary, in the Allentown Morning Call, states, "The Rev. Edward D. Rapp, 70, of Clearwater, Fla., formerly of Valley Forge and Allentown, died May 21 in Mease Hospital, Clearwater. He was the husband of Ethel J. (Quick) Rapp. A Primitive Methodist minister, Rapp was executive vice president of operations for Christian Communities Inc. with headquarters in Valley Forge, from 1951 until retiring recently. He previously held pastorates in the Valley Forge area. He was moderator of Emmanuel Community Church, Palm Harbor, Fla., and southeast regional vice president of National Association of Senior Living Industries and past president of Retirement Housing Council, also in Florida. In 1950, Rapp was named Boone (Iowa) Outstanding Young Man of the Year."

The Press reported on June 7, 1947, "The Rev. W. A. Heffner has returned to the pastorate of the Gospel Herald Chapel, Mennonite Brethren in Christ, 16 North Street. Mr. Heffner was pastor of the Binghamton church two years. He left the city a year and a half ago to serve the Gospel Herald Chapel in Queens. He succeeds the Rev. Edward Rapp, who has accepted a pastorate at Boone, Iowa. The Rev. John G. Reitz will continue as assistant." Edward Rapp moved to Iowa to continue his education while pastoring a church there. Robert W. Smock, of our Bethlehem church, came to Binghamton during the year to assist. Tent meetings were reported in the 1949 Yearbook.

William Allen Heffner was the son of William F. Heffner, who served in many of our Conference churches. Born in Quakertown, PA on March 22, 1924, he worked with the Gospel Herald Society after completing High School, serving in Brooklyn, NY. He then ministered at the new Binghamton work and attended Baptist Bible Seminary in neighboring Johnson City. Licensed in 1943 and ordained in 1951, he later served at our Bethlehem church. He married Mary Parker of Harrisburg on August 04, 1951 with his father officiating. In 1959 he began service for seven years as Church Extension Director. He died on November 06, 1985 and is buried at the Rolling Green Memorial Park in Camp Hill.

William L. Wilkinson took charge of the Binghamton work in November of 1950. Norman W. Weiss of Philadelphia came in March of 1951 to assist him. William was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Bethel College. He also attended Bethel Biblical Seminary in Chicago. The Press reported on December 08, 1951: "The Berean Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, formerly the Gospel Herald Chapel, is now occupying its new church building at 5 Rutherford Street. The congregation bought the

Rutherford Street structure from the Binghamton Free Methodist Church about two weeks ago. The Free Methodist Church is building a new church at 268-270 Robinson Street. Services will be held at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p.m. tomorrow and Sunday School at 11 a.m. at the Mennonite Church. Midweek prayer and Bible study will be held from 7 to 9 p. m. Wednesday. The Rev. William Wilkinson is pastor. The church was organized 10 years ago and held services at Hawley and Rutherford streets. Since 1944, the congregation has worshiped at 16 North Street. Mr. Wilkinson said the North Street property now is up for sale. The church hopes to be able to grow more in its larger quarters. About 50 persons now attend the worship services. More than 50 children are enrolled in the Sunday School." In 1951 the church was reported to have the largest Bible Club in the county. The Binghamton Press, in 1952, recorded an interesting incident during his ministry:

"The rugged basic training Gerald W. Gollogly of Laurel Lake, Pa., went through as a soldier never had the effect on him that wedding bells did yesterday. The hustle-bustle of last-minute preparations for his marriage to Miss Janet Aton of Johnson City RD 2 floored him less than an hour before the ceremony, scheduled for 3 p. m in Binghamton. Private Gollogly was putting on his uniform at his home when stricken with stomach cramps. A physician was summoned. He administered a sedative and suggested the ceremony be postponed a few hours. Miss Aton was notified. So was the minister, the Rev. William Wilkinson, pastor of the Berean Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church at 5 Rutherford Street, where the ceremony was performed five hours later, at 8 p. m. Mr. Wilkinson, who said Private Gollogly obviously was tired and somewhat nervous, said the delayed ceremony was 'just fine'."

On May 22, 1954, the Press recorded that "The Rev. Walter H. Frank, Youth for Christ evangelist, will conduct a three-day series of meetings at 7:30 p. m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the Berean Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, 5 Rutherford Street He recently returned from 18 months in Germany and the Netherlands and will show colored slides of his work. " Walter later served as pastor of our Bethel Church in Allentown and then accepted the position of General Secretary of Greater European Missions.

As previously reported, Reynold Gardner took charge of the work in 1954 and Norman Gordon, of our York church, and a graduate of Berean Bible School, served with Reynold at Binghamton. Reynold went to the Finesville church in 1955 and Norman was solely in charge. Norman married Mary Miller, a Berean graduate. Norman later left the ministry and presently lives in FL. His brother, Robert, served as a missionary for many years. Another brother, Theodore, married Betty Jane Baer, the daughter of Sterling E. Baer, who served as a delegate to Annual Conference from our York church for many years. A sister of Betty, Carla, married Philip Norris who served as a pastor for a time in our Conference and they currently attend our Bethlehem church. A daughter, Rachael, serves on our staff at Bethlehem.

James Beil came to Binghamton when Norman was assigned to the Miller Heights church. Jim, from our Northampton church, now our Whitehall church, was the son of Oliver and Clara (Deppe) Beil. Oliver had served on the church board at Northampton. James, a graduate of Berean Bible School and Moravian College, married Gail Zimmerman of our Bethlehem church on June 30, 1956 with Timothy D. Gehret presiding. Timothy was a former member of our Bethlehem church who served as a pastor in several Conference churches and also served as District Superintendent. He married Esther Deppe, Jim's aunt, after his first wife died. Jim was the founding administrator of Fellowship Manor and Fellowship Community, Whitehall and served the Bible Fellowship Church Homes for over 24 years. He worked at the Nazareth facility for 14 years. Prior to this he was a pastor for over 20 years. He also served for several years as chairman of Annual Conference and as president of the Conference Board of Directors, He married Sandra (Campbell) Sharer of our Bethlehem church after Gail died in 2000. Jim died on October 23, 2010 at Fellowship Courts and is buried at our Zionsville Cemetery with Gail.

Norman R. Weiss was assigned to be the next pastor and served for two years. The city began to build a new highway through Binghamton and many houses in the area began to be razed, including the building which housed the parsonage. Another apartment was rented but was two miles away. My brother married Sylvia Froncek at our Binghamton church with Norman Weiss officiating. Norman, born in Philadelphia, was the son of Henry and Mamie (Godshall) Weiss. Mamie was the daughter of Daniel and Anna (Garis) Godshall, Her sister, Kathryn (Kate) married John Shireman, who served as a pastor in our Conference for many years and a brother, Irvin, married John Shireman's daughter, Eva. Another sister, Lillie Mae, married Charles Lily of our Nazareth church who served on the Church Board. He was tragically killed in the cement plant explosion in 1942. Norman Weiss served at our Lancaster church after leaving Binghamton but resigned from the ministry in 1969 while serving at Macungie.

David John Watkins became the next pastor. David, a graduate of Gordon College, married Yvonne Amey of our Bethel church, Allentown, on June 15, 1958 with Pastor Walter Frank officiating. While serving at Binghamton it was noted by the Binghamton Press that he was cleaning some items in the basement of the parsonage when the fumes from the gasoline ignited, burning his leg and hospital treatment was needed. On June 09, 1962 he officiated at the marriage of Bertram Still II and Dawn Lott. They moved to FL where Warren died on June 09, 2000. Under Watkins' ministry at Binghamton the church building was raised several feet and a basement was excavated. Other renovations were made. David served several churches in our Conference and was president of Pinebrook Junior College for a time. After retirement he served on the staff at our Quakertown church. He died on October 26, 2015 and his funeral was held in the Quakertown church on November 7. The church was filled as David had been a positive influence to a great many people.

Austin Bernard Sullivan, Jr. became the next pastor at Binghamton. Austin, from Allegheny County, was brought into the Bible Fellowship Church through his association with Pastor Robert Johnson. The 1966 Yearbook records no membership at Binghamton and Arthur Sullivan was assigned to the church at Miller Heights. Binghamton is not listed in the 1967 Yearbook. The people had become quite enthused with the ministry of David Watkins and found it difficult to work with a new pastor. The new highway displaced many people from the church. My parents moved seven miles north of Binghamton and joined a local Baptist church. My brother, Nelson, and his family moved 11 miles west of the city and joined the Missionary Alliance Church. Austin resigned from the ministry on July 14, 1968 while serving at the Miller Heights work.

The church at Binghamton had been small and many young people moved away but the church showed promise for a time. Several pastors continued on to successful careers and some of the young people attended Berean Bible School as did this writer. Other young people attended Houghton College. One young man, Ray Rouse, graduated from Baptist College in PA and now serves as Senior Pastor at Spring Hills Baptist Church in FL He had a high regard for Pastor Watkins and kept in touch through the years. Recently David Watkins preached at his church. A letter sent by him was read at Watkins' funeral. The Binghamton church closed after the ministry of Austin Sullivan but while alive made a definite contribution to God's kingdom.

The Original Interior Wall of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church Andrew Geissinger

An interesting discovery was uncovered in late 2014 under the plaster on one of the walls in the sanctuary of the Zionsville Bible Fellowship Church.

Over the years some of the plaster on the interior of the north wall of the church had partially separated from the wall forming a bulge over part of that area. It was decided to repair that plaster, so during the last week of December 2014, the damaged plaster was removed from the wall in preparation for placing new plaster over that part of the wall.

The removal of the plaster revealed part of the original interior wall of the church. Of particular interest is a band of geometric and floral designs several inches wide stenciled on the wall between the windows and located on a level with the lower portion of the windows. Dark blue paint was used for the geometric patterns, and brown or reddish brown paint was used for the floral design. The floral design appears at regular

intervals within the geometric pattern.

The designs are painted over light gray paint which is the color used on the wall from the top of the design to the floor. Above the designs, the wall is painted a cream color. The accompanying photographs also show extensive chipping of the surface of the original wall. It is believed that this was done at the time the original wall was plastered over and that it was done to provide a more uneven surface texture in order to allow the plaster to stick to the wall better.

The band of geometric and floral designs on the wall may have been located around the entire perimeter of the interior wall but at a minimum probably ran along the entire length of each interior side wall.

The question arises as to when in the church's history the designs and paint scheme were placed on the wall and when they were covered with new plaster. No known references to these designs exist in any church records or in the writings or documented recollections of any eyewitnesses. It is reasonable, however, to believe that the designs and paint scheme probably date to the building of the church in 1859.

It is likely that the original wall with the original paint and wall designs was covered in about 1885.

First of all, some people in the past, no longer living, mention a Bible verse in German painted on the wall behind the pulpit. Some also recalled the flat wall behind the pulpit prior to the building of the existing alcove in that wall. The *Centennial Anniversary* booklet, printed in 1959 for the one hundredth anniversary of the Zionsville congregation states that Wilson Wieand (1871-1974) recalled the church with the Bible verse, Luke 11:28, in German on the wall and without the offset for the pulpit. The



same source states that Sarah C. Brunner (probably 1876-1972 and probably daughter of Joel Brunner—if so, the middle initial is a misprint) recalled that in 1882, when she was 6 years old, the church wall that faces the cemetery was straight. The alcove behind the pulpit was built later. The account of Sarah Brunner’s recollection in the booklet also contains the date 1883 placed in parentheses as the approximate year after 1882 when the alcove was built. It is unclear if the year 1883 was actually part of Brunner’s recollection. Since that date was placed in parentheses, one suspects that the editors of the booklet may have inserted that date based on a different source in order to clarify Sarah Brunner’s statement that the alcove behind the pulpit was constructed later than 1882.



Second, the church records make reference to expenses for “raparing” [sic] done to the building in 1884. The list for expenses in 1884 includes things like lumber, paint, oil, and hardware.

Of greater interest are expenses listed for work done on the building in 1885. The list of 1885 expenses includes lumber, paint, “sash waits” (i.e. weights), shutters, varnish, carpenter work, and painting. There is even a small expense (60 cents) for lime which is a material used in making plaster. Another expense of \$3.68 paid to J. Roeder was for lime, lumber, and nails. Of particular interest is the payment of \$2.30 to Jesse Shaffer for plastering and board, confirming that plastering was done during this time. Finally, J. F. Roeder was paid \$10.60 “for Boarding for Painters.” John F. Roeder was a member of the church and lived in the house next door to the church, so it was certainly convenient to temporarily board men there who were doing work on the church. This latter expense for boarding painters suggests a rather extensive painting of the interior of the church since it implies that some of the painters did not live in the

immediate community and the work occurred over multiple days. In a similar vein, the second largest expense listed in 1885 is for \$44.33 to Joel Brunner for paint.

After considering all of these facts, a few observations are in order. Some of the items in the list of expenses in the financial records for 1884 and 1885 are consistent with materials that would have been used to build the alcove. It appears that the work done on the building in 1884 and 1885 probably included the construction of the alcove.



Building the alcove required the removal of the center portion of the wall behind the pulpit. Since at least a portion of the German Bible verse would likely have been on that central portion of the wall behind the pulpit, this is probably the time frame during which that verse was removed from the wall as well.

The interior wall of the alcove would have needed plaster and paint. Furthermore, if the Bible verse on the wall extended beyond the portion of the wall which was removed, then painting or plastering of that wall would have been required as well. In short, if the alcove really was constructed in 1885 as I believe is most likely the case, this would have been a very logical time to plaster and repaint the entire interior wall of the church. It seems then that the original wall and wall designs were likely covered with new plaster at this time. Unfortunately, in the absence of more definitive evidence, this will have to remain conjecture.

Thanks to LeRoy and Andy for their work. Send me any thoughts, questions, and / or comments.

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