

The Historical Society – Bible Fellowship Church  
March, 2013

I am not sure I can promise that this collection of articles from the history of the Bible Fellowship Church will warm your heart. That would be nice for a winter's day. But the goal of history is not to be heartwarming. History is interesting, informative, thought provoking but only incidentally heartwarming. If you need warming as you read on, get a cup of tea or coffee. That will do the trick. At any rate, may you enjoy what you read.

We have learned a lot about the Gospel Workers and their aggressive evangelism. I came across this account of their ministry in New Jersey. It not only tells what happened but also how others saw the event.

---

From The Gospel Banner, November 26, 1895, page 3.

A Little Persecution  
THE PA. SISTERS GET A DUCKING

Dear Banner Readers: -- May the dear Lord bless you, Amen. The work is still moving on with power and victory in New Jersey. We again baptized eight souls in Glen Gardner and also had baptism again in Annandale, New Jersey. Souls are continually being converted in Glen Gardner. People come from far and near to attend the meetings held by our dear Sis. Felty.

At Annandale there were no regular revival meetings yet, but still souls are being converted. The sister Lizzie M. Christman and R. J. Rote are continually having meetings all around, and on Saturday night Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> they held an open air meeting, accompanied by a few of the pilgrims, in front of a hotel in High Bridge, N. J. which



**Gospel Workers - ca 1896**

resulted in a deluge of water from the hotel porch which cause a great stir. Every one being in sympathy with them, the sister were invited into the M. E. church where they had a meeting last Saturday night with the church so crowded as it was said never to have been crowded since the dedication. Sympathy with the Mennonite work, and indignations against the landlord is clearly observed. Our workers have given the offender over to the Holy Ghost and are going their way rejoicing while the community got him arrested. The following are some of the many voice from the secular press:

From "The Republican."  
TURNED THE HOSE ON THEM

NOW THIS HOTEL KEEPER IS OUT ON BAIL FOR DISTURBING A RELIGIOUS MEETING

Special to the Press

High Bridge, N. J., Nov. 12 – The church people here are in a state of excitement over the action of Arthur Allen, a hotel keeper. On Saturday evening women of the Mennonite faith began a prayer meeting in front of Allen's hotel.

A crowd of seventy five or one hundred people gathered around them, including the loungers from the barroom. Allen was wroth at the idea of having his customers drawn from him and the lusty hymns and hallelujah's grated on his nerves.

He sought to drive them away by turning out the lights in front of the hotel. The Mennonites only prayed louder and longer. Then Allen attached his garden hose to a hydrant, and, going upstairs, deluged the crowd from a window. This broke up the meeting. High Bridge people generally are indignant over the matter. Protestants and Catholics have subscribed to a fund to prosecute Allen, and yesterday, the landlord was arrested, charged with malicious mischief. He gave bail.

From the High Bridge Gazette  
AN UNPLEASANT INCIDENT

In our local columns will be found article under the caption of "Mennonites," which give a brief account of an incident which occurred in High Bridge on Saturday evening last, that has elicited considerable unfavorable criticism from the people of the town.

While there may be those who question the appropriateness and expediency of the four Mennonite women in selecting the public highway as the place in which to hld religious services, no one, however can consistently and truthfully question their honesty of purpose; their earnest and unselfish desire of doing good, and their constitutional right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, unmolested and undisturbed. This is a privilege as sacred as any that ever was accorded to man, and should, under all circumstances, be kept inviolate.

Because this denomination of Christians have adopted certain peculiarities in their manner and mode of worship that may appear strange, and perhaps, objectionable to some, is not consistent or legitimate reason why they should be molested and ill treated.

To interfere in any of their religious devotions, whether as an organized Church or as individual members thereof, so long as they keep within the bounds of the law, is a matter of the highest importance, and one that should be bitterly condemned in every civilized community that makes the least pretensions to morality and religion.

The reception accorded to these devoted women on Saturday evening by some of our people, was far from being courteous and Christian-like, neither was it of that character that our people can possible sanction or approve. In fact, it was a reception that the people everywhere, irrespective of denomination differences must heartily condemn.

Should our Mennonite friends conclude to repeat their visit to High Bridge, we feel more than confident that they will be cordially and respectfully received, and that no discourtesy or improper treatment will be shown them during their stay among us.

From the High Bridge Gazette.

A meeting of the Mennonites will be held on Saturday evening next in the M. E. Church of this place. We earnestly hope that our people will turn out en masse at this meeting and do all they can to encourage these devoted people in the good work in which they are engaged. The reception they received on Saturday night last should arouse our people to such an extent that any one attempting to show them the least discourtesy or disrespect should meet with condign punishment on the spot.

Great is the stir in New Jersey and many miles around. New Jersey for Jesus.  
W. B. Musselman

---

LeRoy Wilcox shares the story of David Henning, one of our earliest preachers, and of Bangor where he served. Unfortunately, we have no pictures of him in our collection.

---

DAVID HENNING AND BANGOR  
1806 – 1881  
LeRoy Wilcox

The borough of Bangor is located in the midst of present Washington Township in Northampton County, PA. Philip Shuck purchased land in 1785 near present Chestnut and Third streets and built the first log house. A blacksmith shop was soon established. Settlers were mainly German, including a number of Mennonites, who built a log

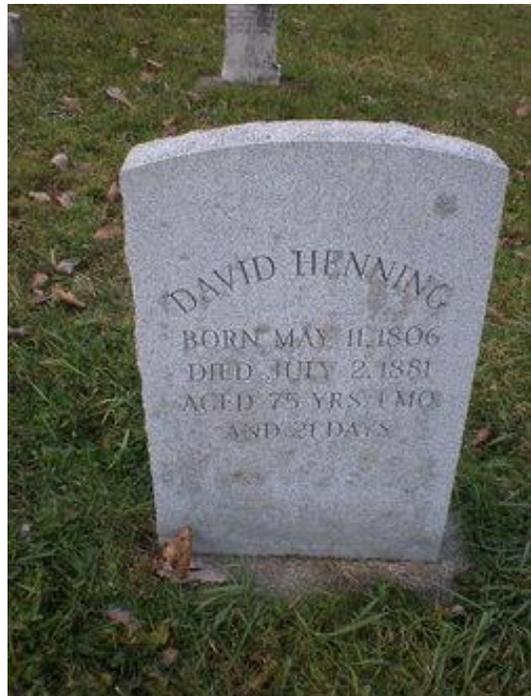
meeting house in 1805 on the land of Jacob Kapoes of Upper Mount Bethel Township. In 1822 they built a brick meetinghouse near what became the intersection of Broadway and South Fourth Street in Bangor. Jacob Moyer (1791-1859) of the Swamp District of the Franconia Conference used to go to Northampton County to administer communion to the members there. In 1935 the old residents in Northampton County spoke of the former Mennonites with high regard, calling them "Old Meneese" (corruption for Mennist, an old German name for Mennonite).

The settlement was called Creektown, for the creek running through the area (the stream is now called Martin's Creek). Adam Utt built a hotel in the early 1800's and the growing settlement was called Uttsville. The settlement continued to grow and the south part was called New Village. In 1866 a Welshman named Robert Jones traced slate strata from the Delaware River to the site of this settlement. He joined in partnership with two other men and began mining the slate. Welshmen, having learned slate mining in Wales, began moving into the area. The settlement mushroomed and New Village and Uttsville together became known as Bangor. A post office was opened on February 9, 1870 and a railroad was completed in 1875. On May 5, 1875, the community became the Borough of Bangor, which means "white choir," named for a great medieval monastery in Wales. In Wales were both a slate quarry and town named Bangor. The first burgess was the Welshman, Robert Jones. Bangor was taken from Washington Township which was formed in 1871 which was taken from Upper Mount Bethel Township.

John Geil (1778-1866), a Mennonite preacher of the Lexington congregation of the Franconia Conference, used to preach in Northampton County. Mennonites were beginning to move out of the area but the members who were left in 1847 united with John H. Oberholtzer's new conference, which ordained David Henning to serve as the preacher.

David Henning was born on May 11, 1806 in Upper Mount Bethel Township to Mathias and Agnes Henning. On September 24, 1858 David was one of seven men who met in the farmhouse of David Musselman to form a new denomination. The new group called themselves Evangelical Mennonites, now called Bible Fellowship Church, which came to be led by William Gehman. David's church apparently agreed to be part of this new Conference as David continued to preach there. Mennonites continued to move out of the area and David was faced with a dwindling population. By 1878 he was conducting services with Rev. Apple at the Lutheran church and on May 15, 1878 Henning and a woman named Elizabeth Warch, as "survivors of the said Mennonite Society", conveyed the church property to the Lutherans. His children were not mentioned but they probably had married and perhaps moved from the area. Four of his children had died young and are buried in the same cemetery as David, along with his wife, Elizabeth. He no longer had a church but continued preaching. He had been spending much time preaching in other places while the Bangor church was dwindling. Did he find that the Welsh moving into the area were not interested in a church of Mennonite background and worship? The younger people were uniting with the Lutherans. Why? In 1879, the year after the church had closed he reported that he had preached 83 times, made 26 family visits traveled 335 miles and had expenditures of \$5.35. What was his status? He was not present at the 1881 Annual Conference but was assigned to "remain in Bangor and Richmond and preach as heretofore". Why was

Bangor still mentioned? It appears that he was the preacher at Bangor but without a church or congregation. In 1881 he had been preaching in Bucks County and while getting on the train at Bethlehem was thrown against the seat of a car. He was injured internally and was confined to his bed as a result of his injuries. His aged body was not able to recover and he passed from this life on July 2, 1881. The funeral was held on July 6 and was conducted by William Gehman, of our denomination, Rev. Apple, of the Lutheran church, and James Salmon, a Presbyterian.



David appeared to be a sincere preacher who was respected by others yet the church dwindled and closed. David Cassel, Mennonite historian, mentioned that David Henning was the last of the Mennonites in the area. Was Bangor poor soil for planting a church of our Conference? David Henning also had charge of efforts to plant a church in the neighboring area of Richmond but that work also eventually ceased. Today we have no churches between Nazareth and Stroudsburg. In 1985 a young couple, Warren and Vivian Moyer, former members of the church at Easton (closed in 1982), began holding meetings in their home in Delabole. The work grew and they moved the meetings to a building in Bangor. They then continued their work in the Independent Presbyterian Church in the neighboring borough of Roseto. The congregation began to dwindle and Jansen Hartman came in 1992 in an attempt to revive it. His efforts were of no avail and the new work closed in August of that year.

Harold Shelly, in his paper on our Conference founders, pointed out that David Henning served as chairman of the semiannual conferences 11 times from 1861 to 1868 yet he failed as a church builder. His remains now rest in the Lutheran cemetery in Bangor, the church that had received the property of Henning's church.

---

#### 1918 Influenza Richard Taylor

The so-called flu season is over or about over. You may or may not have gotten the flu. You may or may not have gotten a flu shot. Lots have been sick and sadly some have even died. But it is nothing like how things were in 1918 when flu swept our nation and the world. It is estimated that as many as 50 million people died as a result of the flu that year. In the United States, as many as 675,000 perished from the illness.

You can search out the details if you are interested and find out much more than you could learn in this short article. For our purposes, you should know that the epidemic spiked during November, 1918, and as you might imagine, had an effect on our church.



In 1918, volume 2 of the Eastern Gospel Banner (EGB) was published. The EGB was an effort to reproduce in the Pennsylvania Conference what the Gospel Banner was doing throughout the denomination. While the EGB was only published for a few years, it provides a rich source of information about what was happening in the churches of the Pennsylvania Conference. And so, its pages would contain information about how the great epidemic was affecting our churches.

The Annual Conference of 1917 had determined that the 1918 Conference would convene on October 10. The October 10, 1917, edition of the EGB announced, "The M. B. in Christ Pennsylvania Annual Conference is postponed until notice. H. B. Musselman, P. E." No explanation was offered but the sickness had begun to spread. The Annual Conference minutes of 1918 explained more fully. "This Conference Session was postponed from the original dates because of the state-wide quarantine of several weeks on account of the Spanish Influenza epidemic. The quarantine even now was not altogether lifted, but privileges were granted to hold the business sessions only. This accounts for the curtailing of some of the business and the elimination of the usual preaching services." They met on November 4 in Reading. November was the month when the fatalities from the flu would actually spike.

Obituaries were a regular feature in the EGB. In the month of October, 1917, 2 obituaries appeared. Likewise in November, 1917, 2 deaths were reported. The October 31, 1918, edition published 5 obituaries in this one issue. During the month of November, 1918, 18 deaths were published.



One of those whose death was reported in the October 31 edition was Sarah L. Shireman, wife of Pastor J. G. Shireman. Her obituary notes, "On account of the Spanish Influenza epidemic, a private funeral was held at the home of her sister in Catsaqua..."

The November 7 edition included news of the deaths of 8 people, the highest weekly number during the awful time. The places where people died were Philadelphia (3), Lebanon (2), Zionsville, Limestone Valley, and Spring City.



Notable are the two deaths in Lebanon, a brother and a sister. Bessie Royer, age 14, and her brother, Quay, age 18, were both taken within 4 days of each other. Their mother, Clara, had died but a few months before. Their father, Ephraim Royer, had lost his wife and now two of his children within months of each other.

This edition of the EGB carried the news of the death of Pastor Horace A. Kauffman. Pastor Kauffman had been ministering to his flock. "... After a brief illness of typhoid pneumonia he fell asleep in Jesus, October 22d, 1918." The obituary adds a poignant note, "He was an indefatigable worker, and spent his last days in calling upon the sick of his flocks, until he himself succumbed to his sickness (he having over fifty members of his congregations suffering with influenza at the time of his sickness), for whom he continued in prayer on his death bed, mentioning entire families by name in his prayers."

Of course, the business of the church must continue. Evidencing the problem, H. B. Musselman included a notice in this November 7<sup>th</sup> edition, "On account of the churches being closed, and our Annual Conference postponed indefinitely, the various stewards of the Districts will please continue to collect the money for their pastors, and make payment to them as usual. Pastors will accept same and give receipts for amounts as heretofore."

The November 14 EGB carried the news of six deaths, two less than the week before. A sad parallel appears in the death of two brothers, Victor and William Weiss of Slatington. They were sons of John and Martha Weiss. Victor died on October 16 at

age 22. William died 12 days later, October 28, at age 33. One can only imagine the heartbreak of losing two sons so quickly.

From Shamokin came the news that Mary Anderson had died, like the others, of pneumonia. Mary was the mother of long term Gospel Herald J. T. Anderson. In York, Helen Hartranft died at age 31. She was married to W. T. Hartranft. Together, they had agreed to join the Gospel Herald Society. In Johnson City, PA, Albert Theodore Knopp died on October 25. Four of Albert's daughters had entered the Gospel Worker Society.

October 29 brought the death of A. P. Deckman, who died in Hahneman Hospital in Scranton. W. G. Gehman wrote of his death, "This was the first break thru death of the ranks in the Gospel Herald Society for more than 13 years. We pray that the God of all comfort will comfort the bereaved friends and relatives, and to make the Gospel Heralds who are sad because of this demise still more zealous in God's service."

The November 21 edition saw lower fatalities recording only 4 deaths, 2 in Reading and 1 each in Bethlehem and Walnutport. But the work moved forward, flu or no flu. From Lehighton, E. E. Kublic reported, "Last evening we opened revival fire on Union Hill and are trusting the Lord for victory, lifting up the fallen and strengthening the things which remain."

Finally, the listing of obituaries let up. November 28 brought no new deaths. W. F. Heffner wrote from the Nazareth Plainfield circuit, "There are a number of members sick at the time of this writing, while a few have been wonderfully healed by the Lord; and we are looking to the Lord for complete victory." From Allentown, C. H. Brunner was able to say, "During these weeks of the Spanish Influenza epidemic the Lord has remarkably kept our brothers and

Photo # NH 41731-A Influenza precaution sign at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, 19 Oct. 1918



sisters. While hundreds died in the city not one of our members was taken and only a very few were even sick.” In Macungie, a revival meeting started. The folks from Emmaus were not deterred by any threat of illness. They “engaged a large auto truck to take them every night. On Sunday night they had two large trucks besides the touring cars, which carried others. So we have a good force; and God for us we are sure to have the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The work went on as the epidemic passed into their memories.

---

Our articles on pacifism brought an email from Royal Kramer. He gives us more of the personal stories of those who made decisions about military service.

---

Dear Pastor Taylor,

I enjoyed reading the October 2012 issue of the Historical Society entitled *From Pacifists to Patriots*. It was a well written article and very interesting to read. I was not aware of all of the MBC details regarding pacifism prior to my birth.

In the January 2013 issue, which I just received today, I noticed on the last page a small article entitled *More on Pacifism*. Reading the names of those who were Conscientious Objectors during World War I, I recognized the names of two of my uncles who I knew were CO's during that war; Herbert C. Kauffman and Edgar O. Mann. Uncle Herbert was married to my mother's oldest sister Elizabeth (Mann) Kauffman and Uncle Edgar was her brother since my mother's maiden name was Mann.

Interesting stories evolved from both of those men and somewhat humorous but not to them at that time. Both Uncle Herbert and Uncle Edgar went into the service at the same time and to my knowledge, they were also together in training.

Uncle Edgar always had a very heavy black beard but being a business man, he always shaved every day. The big problem was did he not only have a heavy beard but it was a fast growing one. If he shaved on a Sunday morning prior to going to church, he had to shave again before going to church for the evening service since it grew that fast. In the Army, **YOU WILL** shave every morning and every day which he did. However, by noon time and into the afternoon, the growth on his face became dark again and he was in need of another shave. His Company Commander noticed this and told him to shave every morning or else. He said he would and he did. By noon or early afternoon the next day, the growth again became prevalent. Again, his Company Commander warned him

about shaving and he said he did shave and the officer called him a liar saying he didn't shave. Well, to make a long story short, this went on for a week or more with the same results. The Commander then laid down the law to him about shaving and again. Uncle Edgar said he did shave and if he didn't believe him, he should come into his barracks the next morning when he got up and he would shave before his eyes and the officer took him up on it. Sure enough, his growth came out again by noon and when the officer saw this, he called him aside and apologized to him for being so harsh with him and finally admitted that he never realized a man's beard could grow as fast as his did.

Uncle Herbert was the father of three boys and when World War II came around, all three of them were of draft age and knowing their father was a CO during World War I, asked him what they should do; go as a CO or go regular service and let the Lord lead in their lives. His response was that he was not going to tell them what to do as the decision was strictly their own. The end result was that all three of them did not go the CO route.

Charles, the oldest son, was drafted first into the Navy and since he was an electrician in civilian life, became an Electrician's Mate aboard ship and ended up in the South Pacific. He said his ship was in Japanese waters for a long period of time but his ship was never attacked in any way by the Japanese.

The middle son, Paul, was drafted into the Army and ended up in Europe in General George Patton's Third Army but he was always about 1-2 miles behind the front lines. Instead of carrying a rifle, he carried a tool box as the group he was assigned to were the mechanics who tried to fix any of the tanks that were damaged in battle and get them in operation again.

Clarence, the youngest son, who later became the organist at Bethel BFC in Allentown for many years, wasn't anxious to get drafted so he enlisted in the Navy. He ended up at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station in New Jersey and was sent to school to become a meteorologist. Lakehurst was the main base for all of the Navy's dirigibles or "Blimps" as they were called. Their job was to go out over the Atlantic Ocean and go up and own the coast looking for German submarines who were spying on the U.S. and only a few miles off the coast especially in the New Jersey area. Once the dirigibles spotted them, they would radio back to the base and the Navy patrol planes would take off and either torpedo them or drop bombs on them and sink them. Occasionally, Clarence had the privilege to go flying with these pilots since he was the one who would give them the clearance to go when the weather was fair.

After Germany surrendered, Clarence was then shipped to Pearl Harbor in preparation

for the invasion of Japan. One Saturday night, he decided to go to the USO Club on base for an evening of relaxation. Unbeknown to him, His brother Charles's ship had docked at Pearl and he too decided to attend the USO Club for an evening of relaxation. Need I say more? They ran into each other inside the USO and it was one of the biggest mini-reunions that a family could have. They hugged each other and cried on each other's shoulder as they were so glad to see each other. They hadn't seen each other for several years and this was a wonderful time to be together so many miles away from home. Thank the Lord the invasion of Japan never materialized and it wasn't too long after that when the war with Japan ended.

Saying all this, it just proved that going into the service the normal way rather than the CO way, many men ended up in non-combat situations and as I had said in my article back in 2002 and as Ralph Mann, another cousin of mine eluded to in his article, there are many jobs in the military that need to be done that do not require carrying a weapon of any kind. It was told us when I was in that for every man in the Infantry at the front lines fighting and risking his life, there are seven men behind him supporting him. It could be a truck driver, a cook, a radio operator, a medic, a clerk behind a desk, or whoever. These guys in the background do not earn a Bronze Star, a Silver Star, a Purple Heart or a Medal of Honor but their services are vitally needed at the time when it is necessary but they still are serving their country honorably and courageously.

I didn't know how interested you might be in knowing these details but I just thought I would pass them along to you.

---

I am certainly interested and share this because I think others are as well.

---

Accidental Churches  
Richard Taylor

A little controversy never hurt anyone, I guess. So, I propose to stir some up or at least to stimulate some conversation. I don't usually aim for such a thing when I write for the Historical Society so I am preparing you and inviting your comments and thoughts.

My controversial thesis is this: The spiritual ancestors of the Bible Fellowship Church never intended to start churches and certainly not a denomination. But, of course, I must explain and defend my statement because you will ask what they were doing if they were not starting churches or a denomination. Church planting as an objective did not enter our bloodstream until the 1960's or later.

Begin by recalling the marching orders given by Jesus Himself for the Gospel message. In my opinion, the objectives of Jesus were two fold. He said he would build His church (Matthew 16). While people don't often see what Jesus says as an earthly reality, it is clear that He understood the church to be a defined reality (Matthew 18). When He said, "Tell it to the church," the church was not abstract or ethereal but real and actual. This is one objective. The second objective is the preaching of the Gospel (Matthew 28). The Gospel is to be preached to all nations, and insofar as it is possible, to every individual person. These objectives are not an either / or but a both / and.

Building the church and preaching the Gospel are clearly related activities. You can't build the church without preaching the Gospel. But, it seems to me, you can preach the Gospel without building the church. That's what we did. That's why our churches were accidental.

To make my point, we need to go back to our very beginning. The division began because of prayer meetings. To the best of our ability to know what went on, the prayer meetings were about revival or about experiencing the Christian life to its fullest. As such they apparently tended to be somewhat exuberant with displays of emotion. But they were also about the Gospel. Our forefathers also desired to spread the Gospel and preach it wherever they could. This created tension on two levels. Emotionalism was suspect and did not set well with the humble disciplined quietness cultivated in Mennonite churches. Preaching the Gospel also meant being involved with people who did not know or understand how things were supposed to be. It was like inviting pagans to church. Such preaching was a threat to the stability of the faith communities established by Mennonite churches.

When the break finally came, they formed themselves into a society. It is probably quite significant that these motivated and highly enthusiastic evangelists formed a society, not a church. When they were free, they declared in November, 1859, "Each child of the Lord, having proved himself such by his walk and conversation, shall have entire freedom to express himself according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost." (Verhandlungen, page 24) A vision of future churches was not in their thinking. While it is an argument from silence, the silence is somewhat loud.

For the next 100 years, the Gospel was preached with great energy and determination. But at almost every corner, you can see that building the church was just not the vision.

Several indicators will help us to see how much commitment there was for preaching the Gospel and how little thought was given to building the church.

They began to keep track of their activities by recording their statistics. The peripatetic Eusebius Hershey was the first to give a record of his activities in 1865. He included 3 measures in his report: 1. Miles traveled (1806); 2. Families visited (426); 3. Public speaking (65). You can see that the intention was to measure how much evangelism was taking place. When his report was ended, the minutes recorded, "Brother Hershey received again the unanimous approval of the Conference to continue his travels and to preach the Gospel, and (was assured) that he would be supported with prayer and means." (Verhandlungen, page 44).

The ecclesiastical attitude of the 1870s was noted in the statements presented in the court proceedings regarding the controversy of the church building in Quakertown. "Some of the contributions were made upon the express representations of Mr. Musselman that the church should be free and independent from any denominational or ecclesiastical body. Mr. Musselman also stated to some of the contributors that the legal steps had been taken for the incorporation of the church which was for the purpose of securing the church property from ecclesiastical control." Jonas Musselman was a key man in the 1870s and 1880s. He was the human agent for starting at least 4 churches, 3 of which remain today. You can see his attitude was "anti-ecclesiastical."

The son of Jonas, William B. (WB) Musselman apparently carried similar attitudes. He led an aggressive campaign of outreach during the decade of the 1890s which led to the formation of the Gospel Workers and later the Gospel Heralds.

The Gospel Workers were zealous evangelists who moved to communities where they did both street preaching and held hall meetings. If a number of people came to faith in Christ, they would help to form a church. WB's vision for evangelism as opposed to church planting became clear when he made the decision to put the energy and efforts of the Gospel Workers into the work of printing because printing would allow them to share the Gospel on a much larger scale. This initiative led to the formation of the Union Gospel Press which continues to display its colors on the title page of its publications by announcing that it is an undenominational or non-denominational ministry.

The ministry of the Gospel Heralds is a further indication of a vision for evangelism which did not include a vision for church planting. The Gospel Herald Society was primarily training ground for new pastors. If a man served faithfully and successfully in the Gospel Heralds, he would be ordained and assigned to a church. In some ways, the Gospel Heralds were the "minor leagues" where men served until they received a

call to the “bigs.” The Gospel Heralds were not a church planting organization but rather a step in the development of men for ordination and ministry in a church.

The decisions of our denomination with regard to Foreign Missions reveal the same focus. Eusebius Hershey was our first foreign missionary. He left for Africa with no other agenda than to preach the Gospel. When others took up the call to foreign missions, we chose not to send missionaries to begin churches. Perhaps it was viewed as too much of an administrative strain. We had come in close contact with what is today known as the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA). The decision was made to send our missionaries out under CMA with the result that CMA churches were formed by our missionaries. But, that was not a problem because our focus was on evangelizing, not on church planting. Let the CMA plant churches. We would do the evangelism. So, having missionaries who did not reproduce our churches was not a problem because the vision was for evangelism, not church planting.

We have only in the last 60 years seen a shifting of the vision to include a focus on church planting. That shift occurred when the Gospel Herald Society became the Home Missions Department which later evolved into the Church Extension Department. Perhaps the first clear direction developed under the leadership of Daniel Ziegler who served as the director of Church extension for 30 years. This shift brought a new vision. Men who serve in the Church Extension Department today are there to plant churches and not looking for an opportunity to move up.

While the attitudes are still transitioning, it is clear that a new day has begun. We have a Bible Fellowship Church in Merida, Mexico with others, if God so directs, on the way. Evangelism has not been forgotten in this new day but now it is being directly linked to church planting. We are not only evangelizing throughout our nation and the world, but we are building the church, the two objectives that Jesus laid before us.

---

Responses, inquiries, and any other interaction are welcomed.

Richard Taylor

RETaylor723@gmail.com

Web: [www.BFCHistory.org](http://www.BFCHistory.org)