

The Historical Society of the Bible Fellowship Church

September, 2008

Our Annual Historical Society Meeting is just around the corner. I have included a flyer and registration for you to fill out and return. I hope you will join us at Fellowship Community on Saturday, October 25. I also hope you will make a point to bring a friend. I continue to meet people who are surprised to discover that we have a historical society and to hear what we are doing. If you know a person who might be interested, bring them along.

Literaries Rave About Hershey's Living Poem

No, I am not making this up. I came across these commentaries on Hershey's work. I have always tended to dismiss Hershey's poems as the ramblings of an itinerant preacher. Clearly, there is more to them than meets the eye, or in this case the ear. [The entire Living Poem is reprinted in our publication, What Mean These Stones, which you can purchase using the enclosed order form.]



A "LIVING" POEM

[Taken from *The Literary World*, March 3, 1888, Volume 19, Number 5, page 70-71
Published in Boston, Massachusetts]

[The Living Poem. By Eusebius Hershey. Rebersburg, Center Co., Pa. First, Second, Third, and Fourth Editions. Philadelphia.]

This little book will richly repay perusal. The author is a traveling evangelist who is personally engaged in circulating his poems. The most recent edition, we are informed, numbered ten thousand copies, and it is probably already nearly exhausted. Through the successful efforts of the author the book is, no doubt, even now appreciated in regions where Shakespeare and Milton are unknown.

We do not regard Eusebius Hershey as unduly ambitious. He has, indeed, adopted the fashion of introducing his name into the body of his poems, but in this respect he has only followed the example of the minnesingers. It is, in fact, a first-rate device to prevent plagiarism. On this general subject our poet defines his position in the following lines:

Eusebius Hershey is my name,
I seek not here for earthly fame;
Rebersburg, is my address.
In Christ I seek my happiness.

Center county now comes in;
I know I hate the ways of sin.
Pennsylvania comes below;
From earth to heaven I hope to go.

The first of the above stanzas may possibly include an unconscious reminiscence of certain lines, of which we remember to have seen the following version on the fly-leaf of a copy of Webster's Spelling Book:

Tommy Tompkins is my name,
America is my station,
Slabtown is my dwelling place,
And Christ is my salvation.

It should, however, be remembered that the authorship of these lines has never been determined, and that they have appeared in numberless recensions. Literature, we know, is full of such coincidences. We do not know why the book is entitled *The Living Poem*. It is, in fact, composed of a considerable number of poems which appear at first sight to be but slightly connected. They are, however, mainly biographical, and it is possible that it is the career of the author which constitutes a living poem. Though our poet disclaims all desire for "earthly fame," he is, of course, aware that fame is the penalty of genius. He has therefore discreetly prepared the way for his future biographer by recording as follows the facts of his parentage and birth:

My parents' names, without fancy,
Hershey, Abraham and Nancy.
God to them nine children gave,
Two of them found each a grave.

My birthday came, as all may see,
In eighteen hundred and twenty-three;
August, on the fourteenth day;
Since, millions died and passed away.

The place where we for years did live,
I'll to the reader plainly give:
Lancaster county and Pa.,
Three miles of Manheim, north, I say.

In another poem he supplies the following additional information concerning the family:

Eight sisters, I had not another;
I the ninth, their only brother.
Seven of them were each a wife,
I and the youngest single life.

In a "letter to a Cousin's Family" our poet enumerates his more remote relatives:

There is a family, Levi Reist.
Death entered into their house now twist;¹
I'll give in first the man and wife,
Then the age of each one's life.

Levi Reist, now fifty-nine,
His wife, a first cousin of mine,
Her age now numbers fifty-two,
Remaining years may be but few.

The beginning of his evangelistic mission is thus described :

Father and sister I gave good-by;
My mother in her grave did lie
The State Ohio was the ground
Where I appointed work have found.

In twenty-nine counties traveled through,
I always found some work to do.
Many points I must omit,
I might bring in and make them fit.

Somewhere in the West Eusebius was exposed to great personal danger. In some mysterious manner he escaped, and thus records his emotions:

Next morning, thank God,
I came out. My soul felt happy,
I could shout,
I then proceeded on my journey
In good humor, with my pony.

¹ This word should perhaps be spelled twiced. No doubt the author would have written twice, but that would not rhyme.

His discourses made a profound impression on the Indians, as appears from the following stanza:

O Henry, I remember well
When you and I God's truth did tell.
The Indians who did hear us speak,
Tears from their eyes did freely leak.

In a poem called " Distance of Miles " the poet thus refers to his extensive journeys:

In Pennsylvania, also in Iowa,
Many hundred miles did walk,
I say, In Kansas and on British soil,
Walked many miles, for Christ did toil.

Thousands of miles on different lakes,
On rivers, too, in different States,
On railroads, God knows best, how far
On horseback, wagon, some grease was tar.

The most ambitious poem in the volume is a "Centennial Hymn," which begins as follows:

United States of America;
Centennial, hundred years, they say.
The God who other nations knew,
Saw what United States would do.

Few centennial poems have attained to such an altitude, and at this dizzy height we leave the poet. His whole book is, however, full of passages similar to those we have quoted, and it is, certainly, "a matchless *bonne bouchée* for the small-ware critic.

**THE POET-LAUREATE OF THE LIVING LYRE.
[From Here and There in Two Hemispheres, by James Duff Law, 1903]**

As Bayard Taylor sweetly wrote
(O, would that I could sound a note
With but an echo of his charm!) :
"Eusebius never cared to farm;
'Twas not his call, in truth," he said;
For Hershey was not Poet-made,
But Poet-born — of rarest breed,

As all may see who care to read.

"He played on a harp of a thousand strings" did not refer to Eusebius Hershey, who made his fame secure, like Paganini, by evoking all the emotions with one. I had not been long in Lancaster County when I heard frequent references made to "The Living Poem" and other productions of this gifted singer, but could not among all my friends and acquaintances find any one who possessed a copy of his book. At last I advertised my wants, and after many harassing experiences I became the owner of "the first, second, third, fourth and fifth editions" as specified on the covers of the volumes now lying beside me.

I am more or less familiar with the musings of "the sweet singer of Michigan," of Edwin Payson Hammond, and of Bloodgood Cutter, not to mention "Jeremiah Judson's choicest gems"; but after weighing their merits and demerits I have come to the decision that all the minstrels named must yield the baize to Hershey. In the hope that others may derive some pleasure and profit from the verses of the euphonious Eusebius this short and entirely inadequate article is penned.

Hershey's ear was not perhaps extra precise at best, and living, as he did, in the land of the Pennsylvania-Germans it is true that he fell somewhat into their ways of pronunciation. But there was method even in his deflections. For instance, in announcing his mission the sly old bard tickled his neighbors by adopting their peculiar articulation:

"I give my thoughts in words quite brief;
God gave them to me, I belief;
To leave in print to edify
For high and low before they die."

"Impression on my mind God made
That I should write before too lade."

"Many sought and found indeed
Sin is bitter, grace more sweed."

There are some Scotch and Scotch-Irish in the valley of the Conestoga which may account for the following Doric:

"I hope to God his soul is safe
When I came back I saw his graif."

Thus at one stroke Mr. Hershey found a rhyme for an unrhymable word, and also managed to flatter his canny-going friends. The great tobacco industries of the county were neatly remembered too:

"Many do as Demas did, —
Laboring for the Lord they quid."

It is believed by his admirers that Eusebius also prepared a titbit for his purely Celtic readers, but the "spud" came to grief at the printer's hands and the Quaker City alone must share the praise and the blame:

"Philadelphia— brotherly love!
God who also rules above
Has fixed his eyes on that great spud
Where Red Men long ago have trod."

Quaint little bits of autobiography are scattered through his volume, from which we find that he was born in the middle of summer and that may partially explain how he came to be such "a warm baby":

"August is to me quite dear,
The month when I did first appear;
A little infant helpless came,
My father gave to me a name."

Another wonderful event happened in this red-letter month:

"In August, on a summer's day,
When fifty-three I then could say,
God in his mercy did give me
Wisdom to write more poetry."

Like the Eusebius of Bayard Taylor's poem, Hershey tells us that he had "worked on farm"—
"and mill." Furthermore, evidently less in anger than in sorrow :

"I helped my father to build a barn,
It was a favor, and no harm."

He also tells us—

"Some years I staid as single man"

but finally was captured "by Mary Ann."

It is true, he admits,—

"She counted years two more than I,"

Then offsets this by asking:

"But who can tell which first must die? "

In his "Song of The Four Seasons" he reverts again to his favorite month with characteristic speech. He was, I am told, a popular reciter of his own poems and one can fancy the solemn feelings excited by the next stanza:

"In that month my second birth
With me took place, it was no mirth:
I love each summer's month indeed,
August above the rest is sweed."

That he was a keen observer is everywhere apparent, as witness:

"In the summer birds do sing
And their Maker praises bring:
While the lambs do skip and play,
And some farmers make their hay."
For giving much in little he has rarely been excelled. Says he:

"One night I was locked in a room,
Thank God, I was not there alone.
Next morning, happy, I walked out
So soulful happy I could shout.
I then proceeded on my journey
In good humor on my pony."

It is interesting to know a great author's methods of composition, how he comports himself in his study and so forth; consequently we should all relish the little details that our faithful lyrist has given us, and after reading the specifications can conjure up a pretty good picture of Eusebius wooing the muse.¹

"While I now on my knees do write."

¹William Cowper, before him, specifically declared:

"But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb."

"While now I write with ink and pen
I think of women — and of men."

"The little stand where leans my head
Is wet with tears that I have shed."

And finally, to be more specific:

"The year is eighteen seventy-seven
The month of May, before eleven,
Eleven o'clock now in the night,
In Philadelphia on my knees I write."

What a pity he did not tell us his street and number, but probably our wandering modern minstrel had his own reasons for withholding the information! He confesses he had "a mother-in-law with two sons" and he might well have hesitated "to brave her tongue and face their guns." Listen!

"I am father of one child,
In my youth I was quite wild;
Yesterday, my eyes did see:
Grandfather, now they do call me."

That he had a ready pen goes without saying.

"Twenty-five verses I did write
In the forenoon, while daylight:
Two meetings since I did attend
Of such a course I'll not repend."

" It is now about bed time
If God will give me some more rhyme
I'll put them down on paper white
Although it is late in the night."

"Where am I at!" once queried a Congressman, but long before that the lyrical Lancastrian had asked:

" What is it now I next should write?"

" The fiftieth verse, — eleven o'clock
In the forenoon, I shall not stop;

I'll dip my pen in ink and write
If God says so, until 'tis night."

What true poet anyhow would pause for such material things as lunch or dinner? He buckles on his armor and sternly announces :

"The time for writing now has come,
And by God's help I'll have it done."

Once it is true, but once only he confessed he was exhausted, but before condemning him consider his excuse:

"I hardly know what more to write,
In my heart there is no spite."

For frankness, Hershey is to be commended:

"One day I spoke with tears in eyes
To my earthly father, here's no lies!"

And again:

"My calling is a watchman, I
From out my watch-tower sit and spy."

Few poets have equalled the picturesqueness of that couplet. The "I" placed as it is looms up like a lighthouse in the midst of a stormy sea. It is emblematic too of the tenaciousness of the man. See how he hugs his favorite thoughts :

" And when at last I seek my bed
My night cap on, not in my head.
Before the next day may begin
I hope the roof may not fall in.
But if it does I wish it known
With pen and ink as I have shown,
And to the very last proclaim:
Eusebius Hershey is my name!"

Although of a serious cast he could indulge in a pun:

"From Matthew, Mark and Luke and John
Mark what I say — I'm not yet done ": —

—and has even shown hilarity at times:

“But I must go, I'll feel the woe
If I refuse the trump to blow.”

Ben Jonson has told us of Shakespeare 's facile pen ; our poet is his own recorder:

“I know not where my pen shall stop ;
The ink is willing still to drop.”

And none of the Elizabethan dramatists could say:

“I preached to colored and to white
In daylight and by candle light.”

In another poem he says:

“Dear colored race we wish you well.”

Note the happy alliteration. It also appears in—

" The righteous all shall prosper well
While sinners shall be hurled to hell."

And in—

“Some useful work I hope to do
By preaching and by proxy too.”

With all his sweetness he was a fearless critic. In discussing pride he begins at the beginning and shows that Eve's daughters live up to their mother's reputation:

" While the child is not yet here
The wicked mother does appear,
And with her wicked hands prepares
Gegaws for the child, she snares."

“Of experiences I some things can say
I travell'd matrimony's way;
Over twenty-seven years I'm in this school;
I write with wisdom, I'm no fool.”

In recounting where pride flourishes he writes:

" On the dancing floor, that's low,
There you see this sin doth grow."

Then again:

" Some will buy on trust for show,
Thus the devil makes them go
Swiftly down the path to hell,
There forevermore to dwell."

Some believe he had a slap at editors when he was inspired to say:

"Tobacco and the whisky-stink
Oft are mixed with smell of ink."

When the Centennial Exposition Sunday closing movement was on the tapis Eusebius Hershey's voice was heard with no uncertain sound:

Don't open on the Sabbath day
That show of natural things, I say;
Let God and all the Nations know
That we are more than brutes below."

"Republican" and "Democrat" had to him little meaning and called forth an apothegm that equals the warbling of the Sweet Swan of Avon in his rosiest mood:

" What is the name, the party name ? —
The name is after all the same!
The question is: —
Which does the right?
Let him be branded Black or Bright!
Good men at present are but few,
So let's not fight about the hue."

He never balked for want of a rhyme. Who could have better met the exigencies of the case than he has done in his handling of persons and places both awkward to manipulate and difficult to chink?

"My parents' names, without fancy,

Hershey, Abraham and Nancy."

" The place where we for years did live.
I'll to the reader plainly give Lancaster County, and Pa.
Three miles of Manheim, north, I say."

"There is a family Levi Reist,
Death entered in their house now twyst."

"It was in Philadelph-i-a
He came to grief again, ha, ha!"

"From Genesis to Malachi
Good texts I found— I'll tell you why."

His fidelity to truth operates throughout all his works. To him the poetic license never permitted any wandering from the facts. Speaking of his travels, he tells us that he journeyed—

"Thousands of miles on different lakes,
On rivers, too, in different States,
On railroads — God knows best how far,....
On horseback, wagon — some grease was tar."

Neither did he gloss over anything uncouth for the sake of a smoother effect. Note his description of a Camp Meeting in Ontario:

"The minister in charge was there,
Brother Jacks — he closed by prayer;
We sang, I prayed, and then did read.
The interpreter Cabbage had his seat
Near to me, he spoke for me;
I'll give correct what you can see
How we did work for God so nice;
This interpreting it goes twice.
I read my text, then Cabbage read
The truths into Ojibbway's head,
We had a meeting very good
With C. providing wholesome food.

The corn beef is not mentioned, but may be assumed. In another place he shows his knowledge of history:

"Many, many years ago
The Indian tribes had war, that's so."

He rarely ventures on a feminine rhyme, but to let his reader know it is not because he cannot handle such endings, two fair examples are quoted

"This day I keep with God in quiet
Last night with pills I took no diet."

"The heathen Indian felt quite lonely
Though they had killed his brother only."

"They" might have slaughtered the whole family, and Homer Hershey felt called upon to offer a mild rebuke.

Poets are too often of a pessimistic turn, and seldom thankful for the greatest blessings they enjoy. Eusebius never forgot "what might have been," and frequently we meet with such grateful outbursts, as—

"Thanks be to God, to-day I'm well,
I might be long ago in hell."

He had the true attitude of a great mind in regard to critics:

"Some trifling one perhaps will laugh
And say this matter all is chaff,
But common people wheat will find
And would-be cynics — never mind."

He could, if he only would, but decided not to waste ink on them. He knew that even the best was censured, and admits—

"Strange, if all would praise my book,
Such who read and in it look.
Millions the Bible do despise,
And think by doing so they're wise."

"THE LIVING POEM speaks quite free;
Impartial readers clear can see
That for their welfare I did write

To work for God is my delight."

And with a Baconian flight he confidently announces:

"Yes, when my hand is cold and dead
My book will speak to sinners yed."

Gentle readers, has the prophecy not been already amply fulfilled? The bard is buried long ago, and we are here. But sometimes he had his "doots":

"Perhaps I soon should cease to write,
In reading some may not delight."

"Perhaps my pen ought now to stop
But still the ink will freely drop."

"I hope I do not paper waste
Although at times I work in haste."

His reasons for composition are sometimes given with startling frankness:

"I think I should write lines to-day,
Some one may come along this way."

"I'm ready for poetic work,
I have the gift — I must not shirk."

"My subjects I perhaps should change,
But where could I from error range?"

Yes, where?

He had no mock modesty about his abilities and the probable reception of his poems:

"My verses may sometimes seem queer
When they to millions do appear.
Read on, read often, time will tell
That I have labored much and well."

"And after I am dead and gone
My lines to millions will speak on.
To sinners they will say, Now stop
Next step you into Hell may drop."

But, in his own words:

“I gave of this in former writ,
This subject then I here shall quit.”

And to conclude from the poet-preacher himself:

“Conclusion! Oh, thought, how deep;
Hearts feel solemn, eyes will weep.”

“Two verses more and I am done,
This couplet finished, leaves but one.”

To give justice to our author I have selected for the ending a specimen of his best style as shown in the termination of a letter written by him to his “earthly children”:

“Farewell, Jacob, and Nancy too,
Be always to each other true.

 Eusebius Hershey
 (and my wife),
[and with a fresh start]
Dear children live a pious life;--

“Eusebius Hershey is my name,-
I seek not here for earthly fame;
Rebersburg is my address-
In Christ I look for happiness!-

“Centre County now comes in, --
I know I hate the ways of sin,
Pennsylvania comes below;-
From earth to heaven I hope to go!”

A Publishing History

In our last article, we took up the story of William Brunner Musselman, asking the question why he is not more prominent in our history. He was a preacher and leader with great talent. He was the second presiding elder after stepping into the shoes of William Gehman himself. The answer seems to be that he removed himself from our denomination by a geographical relocation and that he began a publishing work that would not be linked to or limited to our denomination.

W. B. founded the Gospel Workers Society which began as an organization of women who would preach the gospel and start churches from the street level. They were aggressive evangelists whose work formed the foundation of a number of our churches from 1910 – 1920. Part of their methodology was to distribute gospel literature that would challenge the reader to accept Christ as savior. Such literature was passed out on the streets of the cities where the Gospel Workers preached. W. B., perhaps as an economical move, began to print this literature while the Gospel Workers were headquartered in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. He realized that more people could be reached through the distribution of literature than through street preaching. The Gospel Workers began a transition that led them from preaching the gospel on the street to preaching the gospel through literature. As a result, they transitioned from preaching to printing. The Gospel Workers became the workers who “manned” the presses to pour out gospel tracts and literature. When they moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1907, they were seeking a place to be even more effective in the literature distribution.

Following the move to Cleveland, W. B.’s connection to the Annual Conference became shadowy relationship. Between 1907 and his death in 1938, WB attended 3 of the annual conferences. Each year he did not attend, he sent a letter asking to be excused, sent his regrets, and spoke glowingly of the great work that was going on which kept him so busy he could not attend. Each year, the Conference praised the work and His servant and re-elected him to the office of Missionary Presiding Elder. While he may have made occasional visits with the Gospel Workers, his ties to the conference were over. He was publishing non-denominational material and did not want either to be identified with or limited to the work of the Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ.

For the next phase of our look at W. B. Musselman and his legacy, we must distinguish between the work of publishing and the work of printing. By publishing, I will mean the content of what was printed. By printing, I will mean the business of putting ink on paper. Publishing and printing are inter-related but two separate issues. W. B. had a hand in both.

In this article, we will pursue the history of publishing. We will take up the history of printing in the next issue.

Publication of a denominational magazine began before the mergers that led to the formation of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. According to J. A. Huffman, in his book, History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church, the Canadian conference, known as the United Mennonites, first published a periodical called the Gospel Messenger in 1877. It was not supported widely and it ended nearly as quickly as it began.

In July, 1878, another attempt was begun as the periodical known as The Gospel Banner appeared. The decision to publish the Banner was made at a conference of the United Mennonites held June 5-7, 1878. A guiding voice in the formation of the Banner was that of Daniel Brenneman, the leader of the United Mennonites in Indiana. He was appointed the first editor.

The first issue laid out its purpose and intention.

That as a church we need a church organ, is too plain to admit of an argument. Although our organization is yet in its infancy – only of a few years standing – yet only too long has it been without a special medium through which to advocate its object, defend its position, and diffuse its sentiments...

Our object shall be to see well to it that the Gospel Banner shall be a purely religious journal, and that anything of a vain or trifling nature shall not be admitted to its columns...

Whilst it shall be an object to guard against the sin of selfishness and vain sectarianism, the Gospel Banner shall yet be a plain and free outspoken exponent of the faith and doctrines of the Bible as understood by the United Mennonites, without any design of marring the feeling, or of gratifying the selfish principles and vain desires of our fellow men... (Gospel Banner, Vol. 1, Num. 1, July 1878.)

Brenneman concluded his introduction, "Our motto, by the grace of God, shall be, the Glory of God and the salvation of man."

Soon, men from Pennsylvania became involved in the publishing concerns. In 1879, John Traub and John B. Gehman were elected to be part of the overseers of the printing work. They would have more to do with printing than publishing but they were included among the men who were involved in publishing. In 1882, Traub was appointed the manager of the printing establishment. [The next article will introduce Traub.] John B. Gehman and Abel Strawn were appointed to the managing committee.

In 1882, Church and Home, a periodical of what Huffman calls the Wenger branch of the Brethren in Christ was added to the Gospel Banner. The magazine was expanded. 2600 copies were being printed and distributed.

As early as 1884, financial problems began to emerge in a way that would affect the publishing of the Banner. Most financial problems can be reduced to the fact that income does not meet expenses. The denomination was eager to publish its news and views and simply would not consider being without a voice. They weren't selling enough copies to make enough income. The conferences sought ways to economize. Ultimately, a loan was given by Pennsylvanian John B. Gehman which kept the publishing afloat but created an obligation that did sit comfortably with men who did not like to be in debt. In 1900, Gehman was owed \$1535.00 which was paid in full to him that year. In 1904, Gehman again had provided a financial cushion. He was paid off again as he received \$643.79.

During these formative years, several served as editors including, Daniel Brenneman, T. H. Brenneman, J. B. Detwiler, and H. S. Hallman.

In 1908, with finances still pressing, W. B. Musselman, with his new printing facilities in Cleveland, came forward with an offer. The General Conference of that year recorded the following:

CONDITIONS UPON WHICH W. B. MUSSELMAN HAS CONSENTED TO ASSUME ALL THE FINANCES OF PUBLISHING THE GOSPEL BANNER FROM JAN. 2nd, 1909 FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS.

First: The Gospel Banner shall be published as a sixteen page weekly, same size pages and type as heretofore, also rising as good quality of paper as heretofore, excepting the notices and the announcements of the church which may be in smaller type.

Second: The Editor shall be elected from the Pennsylvania Conference, agreeable to Pennsylvania delegates, as well as the General Conference, said Editor to render his services free of charge.

Third: The Gospel Banner shall be published at one dollar and a quarter per year, or one dollar in advance per year.

Fourth: The publisher, W. B. Musselman shall be privileged to use the last page to advertize his books, Bibles, mottoes, wall-calendars, etc. He shall also be permitted to insert special notices concerning the above on the Editorial page as heretofore, Also special advertisements of literature, etc., on the second last page providing the space allows.

In case after one year's trial, the Executive Committee should in any way be dissatisfied with the editing and publishing of the Gospel Banner, the above Executive Committee may secure another editor and Publisher.

Sixth: in case there be a change in the Editing and Publishing for the above or any other reasons the subscription list shall be handed over on the same conditions as received. RESOLVED, That this offer be accepted.

When reading minutes from our past, one is forced to read between the lines. Criticism was almost never verbalized. When criticism was to be expressed, the various conferences would enter the committee of the whole, a parliamentary procedure that allowed you to talk together about things that were of concern without having to express what you talked about. It was a way to voice criticisms and get at the real issues "off the record." The culture of our denomination placed a high value on loyalty which left no room for the expression of criticism. So, we are left to read between the lines.

From the various minutes, one would never gain the idea that people might be unhappy with editorial policy. The longevity of the editors (H. S. Hallman for 20 years) seems to imply that all was well. In a letter to E. N. Cassel, in the 1930's, W. G. Gehman expresses dissatisfaction for the articles that are appearing, voicing a concern regarding the emphasis on holiness issues. His critical comments then indicate the growing theological storm that would lead the Pennsylvania Conference to finally part ways with the rest of the Church. These criticisms were voiced in a private letter.

Reading between the lines of the minutes of the 1908 General Conference, we might conclude that they believed turning the matter over to W. B. Musselman would solve the financial problem because he would assume financial responsibilities (and the profit). We would also note that

advertisements would now be acceptable and part of the way the financial obligations of publishing a denominational magazine would be met. The insistence that a Pennsylvanian be appointed editor may imply some sort of criticism for the previous editor or editors. C. H. Brunner was appointed to the position which he held for the next 4 years and for which he received no compensation from the Conference.

The Gospel Banner thus continued. The Pennsylvania Conference desired to expand its publications. In 1915, according to Huffman, the Pennsylvania brethren launched The Christian Life Series which was intended to provide quality Sunday School Literature. I do not believe I have seen a copy of this publication.

In 1917, the Eastern Gospel Banner was first published for the Pennsylvania Conference. At the helm was C. H. Brunner, by now an experienced editor. Its first issue in January, 1917, offers no explanation for itself and gives no purpose for its publication. It would appear that the publication was intended simply to be a localized version of the Gospel Banner. The Publishers' Corner states, "The Eastern Gospel Banner will retain the name Gospel Banner in honor of the first and original Gospel Banner... We sincerely hope and trust that there may be many Gospel Banners representing Mennonitism throughout this and other countries, if the Lord tarries, all working together with Him who loved us and died for us, until He says, 'Well done'... Elder C. H. Brunner, the editor, the presiding elders, the staff of associate editors, and others, undoubtedly, will feel at perfect liberty to freely voice their convictions in these columns." (Eastern Gospel Banner, Vol. 1, num. 1, page 8.)

The Eastern Gospel Banner lasted for a few years and then ceased its publication. The Pennsylvania Conference could not sustain its own magazine while the parent, The Gospel Banner, was available.

Our story moves now to the time following the decision of the Pennsylvania Conference to break its ties with the larger Church which had now become the Missionary Church. For some years, the Pennsylvania Conference continued to publish its own paper which was added to the Banner as an insert. (I have not seen any copies of this insert and would welcome any copies or information that anyone might have.) A growing desire for its own publication led to efforts to begin again.

Our approach to new works was to carefully and deliberately consider the possibilities and make proposals. To that end, a committee was formed which reported to the 1960 Annual Conference. Their report is included in its entirety:

REPORT OF THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

The Adjourned Session of the 76th Annual Conference adopted the following resolution: "That the Chairman of the Annual Conference appoint a committee of five to study the possibilities and problems involved in our denomination producing its own publications. This committee shall report at the Annual Conference, October, 1960." We humbly and sincerely offer for your study and prayerful consideration the following facts,

conclusions and recommendations. We pray that God may give wisdom to decide the course that we shall follow in this matter.

The Committee met on several occasions and was unanimous in submitting this report.

The Objectives For A Denominational Publication

Believing that it is not enough just to state that we want our own Church Paper or to proceed along a certain path just because we have not done anything else in years gone by, we endeavored to consider the objective and basic need of having a denominational paper. The following objectives were delineated by the members of the Committee:

1. That news of our denomination's activities could be presented to all of our constituency.

2. That specific articles promoting our denominational program could be put before the members and friends of our church.

3. That our people might be informed and instructed of our doctrinal position.

4. That our members and those who worship with us might be strengthened spiritually.

5. That we might have an organ for disseminating information that is produced solely by and for the Bible Fellowship Church.

Reasons Why The Present Set-Up Does Not Achieve The Above Objectives

The Committee endeavored critically to survey the present set-up of publications sponsored or supported by the Bible Fellowship Church: the B.F.C. Edition of the Gospel Herald, the Spotlight and the Sunday School News. The following problems that are presented deal with the official publication of the denomination, namely, the B.F.C. Edition of the Gospel Herald.

1. There is a considerable delay in getting news of our Church activities into print and to our people by means of the Gospel Herald. The minimum time for getting anything printed is five weeks, but generally it is much longer.

2. There are many subscribers who claim that they read only the insert and that the price is too costly for just the four pages that the Church publishes.

3. There has been a continual and serious drop in number of subscribers, portraying the lack of interest that exists in our churches.

4. Many of our pastors are not responding in submitting material for publication. There is a feeling that lack of interest in the Gospel Herald has caused some to give little support in this area. The Committee realizes that this could also be true of a strictly denominational paper, but with a publication that receives the approval of our pastors, this situation would be corrected.

5. The Committee has found that we do not truly edit the B.F.C. insert in the Gospel Herald. Material submitted by our Editor has been edited, and some even refused for publication by Union Gospel Press.

The Committee also feels that three separate publications are not the answer to our denominational need, but a single organ will promote all phases of our program. Three separate publications are more costly, demand more time, reach only certain segments of our people, do not provide the unity that should exist in the Church.

Ways To Solve The Problem

Believing that the Committee should investigate the possibility of the Church producing its own paper, three areas of investigation were considered. First: purchasing equipment and producing the paper ourselves. Secondly: contracting with a printing firm to produce the paper for us. Thirdly: operating on a basis of mutual production, work to be set up by our own men and only the printing to be done by a printing firm. The Committee decided that only two plans were feasible. We submit both plans.

Plan A

Plan A would involve a contract with the Dorney Printing Co. of East Texas, Pa. This company is set up to produce the entire paper for us with the least effort upon the part of our men. They have devised a simplified method to aid the editor in preparing his material, and such aids are provided without cost. Upon submission of copy the paper would be printed by them within five working days; thus, news of our church could be very quickly brought before our people. The cost of the printing is as follows: \$64 for an 8 page paper and \$182 for a 20 page paper. This would be in lots of 1000 copies. Each photograph would cost an additional \$1.00. We submit the following estimated cost of producing monthly our own 8 page paper of 1000 copies; size of paper and type will be the same as this report.

<i>Printing</i>	<i>\$ 768.00</i>
<i>Mailing</i>	<i>25.00</i>
<i>Circulation Manager's expenses</i>	<i>75.00</i>
<i>Additional cost of pictures</i>	<i>60.00</i>
<i>Working Capital for Editor</i>	<i>100.00</i>
<i>Honorariums:</i>	
<i>Editor</i>	<i>100.00</i>
<i>Circulation Manager</i>	<i><u>25.00</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$1,153.00</i>

The Committee believes that an annual subscription price of \$1.25 per subscription could make the publication self-supporting. As this paper would have its own Youth Department, Foreign and Church Extension Departments, Sunday School Department, we would suggest that contributions be made by these and other branches of our Church in order to make the subscription price of \$1.25 per subscription possible.

The Committee would further point out that the above estimation is based on a monthly publication and that there would be some additional expense to begin such a publication. For example a mailing permit would cost us an initial fee of \$25.00, subscription blanks would have to be printed and an addressograph machine purchased.

Plan B

Plan B would involve purchasing our own equipment and producing a Church paper completely apart from outside aid, except for the photographic process needed to make the offset plates. The Committee met with the representatives of the Addressograph-Multigraph Co. and observed a demonstration of the machines available

for our use. Two models were shown and operated, Model #750 and Model #80. Model #750 would be the only, practical model for our use if this plan would be adopted. The cost would be as follows: \$1,595.00 for a new machine. A reconditioned machine would cost \$1,050.00.

To operate such a plan and produce a paper, more than the cost of the machine must be taken into account. The cost of plates, paper, ink must all be noted. Further, available manpower must be considered. On the positive side, other denominational reports and brochures could be printed.

Committee Recommendations

The Committee submits the following recommendations:

1. That the Bible Fellowship Church publish its own Church paper.
2. That we adopt PLAN A as specified in this report.
3. That the Annual Conference elect a Committee on Church Publication to direct and manage the Church paper. This Committee shall be elected annually and be composed of three pastors and two laymen; the Editor and Circulation Manager shall be members by virtue of their office.

Carl C. Cassel, Chairman,
R. C. Reichenbach, Secretary,
David E. Thomann,
Committee.

John Dunn,
James R. Cressman,

Resolved, That the Bible Fellowship Church publish its own church paper and, further,

Resolved, That we adopt Plan A as specified in the Publication Committee report and, further,

Resolved, That the Annual Conference elect a Committee on Church Publication to direct and manage the Church paper. This committee shall be elected annually and be composed of three Pastors and two Laymen; the Editor and Circulation Manager shall be Members by virtue of their office.

Resolved, That the Publication Committee be authorized to establish a subscription rate for our Church paper not to exceed \$1.50, further,

Resolved, That each church be encouraged to secure at least one subscription for every four members of every local church.

Resolved, That the Publication Committee draw up and present to the Adjourned Session of Conference a statement of the prerogatives and duties of the Editor of our paper.

The following were elected:

Editor of Church Paper: David E. Thomann.

Circulation Manager of Church Paper: R. C. Reichenbach.

Committee on Publication: David E. Thomann, R. C. Reichenbach, Robert W. Smock, James R. Cressman, Robert W. Gehret.

On February 15, 1961, the first edition of Fellowship News rolled off the presses. District Superintendent F. B. Hertzog had this to say:

Fellowship News will serve to acquaint our members and friends with the teachings of the Church and keep the membership informed of its activities. We trust, too, that it will produce mutual interest and a greater unity among pastors and members. It is our prayer that God will use it as a means of salvation to many lost souls and a source of enlightenment, inspiration, food and strength to many Christians.

C. E. Kirkwood, the other District Superintendent, added his voice:

One of the most oft repeated phrases used in Church circles today is that of "Freedom of Religion." This is a freedom that goes much farther than worshipping in the Church of our choice. It includes within its sphere the purchasing and owning of church property, the Biblical education of our children, each Church setting up its own standards and requirements for their ministry and not the least, of publishing and editing its own official organ or Church paper. Over the years we have always had some type of Church paper of which we participated or published ourselves.

The newly elected editor was David E. Thomann. He wrote, "With the help of the Lord we will do our best to bring you what is needful for our Church. There will be devotional articles by our pastors, information about Foreign and Home Missions, Berean Bible School, and general news of our local churches, Sunday Schools and youth fellowships."

Fellowship News has been under the direction of the Board of Publication and Printing which in recent years was changed to the Board of Communications. The Board of Communications continues to oversee Fellowship News but has established a denominational website and has been instrumental in developing a new denominational logo.

A history of Fellowship News would not be complete without a list of those who have served as editor. The following are those who have been responsible for what we have read:

David E. Thomann – 1961-67

Robert W. Smock – 1968-72

Willard E. Cassel – 1973-77

Richard D. Harris – 1978-81

Randall A. Grossman – 1982-1985

Steven R. Van Eck – 1986-87

Thomas P. MacMillan – 1988

Daniel P. Allen – 1989-90

James E. Neher – 1991-95

Carol Z. Snyder – 1996- present.

(Carol has distinction of serving longer than any other of those who have served us. – Thanks, Carol.)

In our next issue, we will take up the business of printing, putting ink on paper and see W. B. Musselman's role in that portion of the work of publication.

John Traub – Manager of the Publishing Office

John Traub caught my attention as I began to research our history of printing and publishing. He first appears in the minutes of the special conference held in November, 1879, at the Zionsville Church. He, with John B. Gehman, was appointed to the managing committee for the printing shop (Verhandlungen, page 126).

What makes this reference interesting is that Traub seems to come out of nowhere to assume this position. He had no relationship with our Annual Conference and seems not to have been a member of the Zionsville Church. All of a sudden he was there, paired with John Gehman, as a representative of the Pennsylvania Conference.

John was born in December, 1836, the son of John and Hannah Traub or Tropp. The senior John was an oil miller. The younger John listed his occupation as a farmer though one suspects that he may have had some training as a printer. In 1865, John married Amanda Stoneback, daughter of Robert and Lydia, of Hatfield, born in March, 1842. John and Amanda were parents of three children, Alice (1868), Elmer (1871), and Harvey (1880).

After John's introduction to us in the minutes of the special conference of 1879, he appears next in the summer of 1880 traveling to the west with Jonas and Lucy Musselman and Abel and Hannah Strawn to visit the new fangled camp meeting at Fetter's Grove. After attending the camp meeting, he met with others regarding printing business in Goshen, Indiana, on August 11. On August 12, he and the rest of the Pennsylvania party left for Canada to visit the churches there. John was without the company of his wife presumably since she was at home with a one year old child. For the 1880 census, he listed his occupation as that of farmer.

March, 1881, found John at the Pennsylvania Conference where he was listed as a probationer assigned to serve with Abraham Kauffman on a circuit that included Upper Milford, Berger Church and Fleetwood. He was elected to the managing committee again with John Gehman.

On January 4, 1882, he writes of his experience in Hellertown at meetings being held there.

I feel impressed, out of love to God, to impart to your readers what the Lord has done for us, on the last day of the past as well as on the first day of the present year.

On Saturday afternoon, Dec. 31st, several of the brethren and sisters met at the house of Gro. Ruch, near Hellertown. One brother and two sisters here testified to the love of God in their hearts, and desired to be baptized. We then repaired to the stream where these three souls were baptized by Bro. A. Strawn, while hymns of praise were being sung. The blessing of God rested upon us. Praise his name.

At this meeting a sister fell into a trance, and the last that I heard (forty-nine hours after the meeting) she was still in the same condition. She never stirred in the least only that the movements of the body in breathing were perceptible.

Bro. Strawn then returned to Coopersburg, but I remained for the night to hold a watch-meeting with the brethren. We improved the last hours of the old year by

preaching, singing, praying, confessions and the relating of experiences, and in praising God for all his benefits, after which we “went our way rejoicing.” I praise God for his love.

Sunday, the first day of the year, we held two public services at private residences in Bucks county, seven miles from Hellertown, and the Lord was with us. In the evening we again returned to Northampton county to hold a special prayer-meeting at the residence of Bro. Aaron Bader. Almost the entire class was here assembled together, among them a beloved old mother more than seventy years old. The brethren had a season of refreshing here, that I hope will not be forgotten in eternity. Already in the first day of the year we were permitted to enjoy a pentecostal time. To God be all the glory. Your brother in Christ, John Traub

At the Annual Conference held in February, 1882, John was again listed as a probationer, assigned with Jonas Musselman to the Upper Milford, Fleetwood and Emmaus circuit. In addition, he was elected the delegate to the General Conference to be held at Bethel, Elkhart County, Indiana. He was to accompany the Presiding Elder on the journey.

In June, he wrote the Banner to tell of his meetings with Jonas Musselman. They were excited that a number of Lutherans had been converted and were to be baptized. In July, he tells of those who had attended camp meeting:

Bro. John Troub, of Zionsville, Pa., informs us that the brethren who attended the Breslau camp-meeting from their place, could scarcely find language to express their entire sanctification and enjoyment whilst thus permitted to engage with the dear pilgrims of Canada, and elsewhere assembled at this “Feast of Tabernacles,” in the worship of God. A like feeling no doubt pervades the mind, of all who had the pleasure and benefit of attending this spiritual repast.

October came with the call to General Conference. He and William Gehman left Zionsville, suitcases in hand, for the trip. At the General Conference, John was elected the German Secretary and later General Secretary and Treasurer, significant positions indicating that his abilities were held in high regard. But, in addition, he was selected to be the manager of the printing establishment. At that point, the denomination was endeavoring to print the magazine with its own personnel and equipment. John was to be the printer. This may be an indication that John had some sort of printing experience.

The appointment would mean relocating his family to Goshen. His last mention in the Pennsylvania Conference came at the Annual Conference of 1883 which noted that he was to be paid for his expenses for the trip to Goshen.

The Gospel Banner, November 15, 1882, announced, “Bro. John Traub will enter upon his duties as publisher about December 1st.” For the next two years, John Traub’s name appears in the Gospel Banner as the managing publisher. In April, 1885, John moved on. He was replaced by Calvin Hett, a Philadelphian who had been working for the print shop who was now

hired to be the printer. The shop was to be relocated. For whatever reason, John's printing career was over. The Gospel Banner (April 15, 1885, page 8) graciously reports:

A Few Parting Words

"As our dear Bro. John Traub, who has for two years so faithfully conducted the affairs of our printing establishment in Goshen, Ind., has resigned the office of manager since its removal to Berlin, we deem it only fair and proper that we should give public expression of the high esteem and brotherly affection with which we regard him. The brother has had to struggle against great difficulties, but under the circumstances did well. As our readers are aware the removal to Berlin took place because a great saving could apparently be effected thereby, in such items as rent, heating, power, insurance, postage, &c., &c. Another reason is that Bro. C. Hett has the printing by contract. Brethren, in the favorable circumstances in which our establishment is placed now, we need only work with such zeal as Bro. Traub worked, and under God's blessing the work will be sure to succeed.

The Committee

Brother Traub was looking for either a better climate or new opportunities. He writes of his somewhat surprising decision to head south:

On My Journey

In the issue of the Banner of April 15, 1885, it was stated that my connection with it as publisher, was ended. My prayer is that the God of Heaven will be with the editor and committee, and crown their efforts with success in spreading the true Gospel of Jesus Christ over our land. May His excellent name be adored, his children edified, and precious souls saved. According to my promise to the dear brethren J. Y. Shantz, J. W. Buzzard and others, I will write these lines, and if the columns of the Banner have room for it. I will, by and by, let you hear more from this part of the world, Christ's kingdom and the Lord's dealing with me. I was much impressed to go to this country, for what purpose God knows better than I do, so I bade farewell to family, home and friends, and left Goshen at 4:30 P.M. April 20th. I went via Cincinnati, Ohio; and Chatanooga, Tenn.; to Atlanta, Georgia. On the 22nd I arrived at the memorable place, Andersonville, Ga., where were heard the dying groans of many perishing and starving Union Soldiers during our late civil war. I viewed the place and I could well imagine the perishing lying along a little stream of water, stretching out their hands for the last time to a God of mercy. I was pointed to a place, one-fourth mile to the N. W., where a large U. S. flag was floating over the spot where many a father, husband and son is slumbering under the same graves or trenches, waiting till the last trumpet of Jehovah will sound to call them forth. My heart was moved at the sight of the silent tombs, remembering that man, made after God's own image, can depart so far from God's original desire to bring such calamity and destruction on themselves; my heart was melted at the pitiful scene that was brought before me.

Leaving this place, I arrived at Jacksonville, Florida at 9 P.M. pm April 22nd. When I awoke next morning it looked like being in another world. This place, (Altoona),

is 190 miles south from Jacksonville. I enjoy this climate to the uttermost. The sun shines warm in the daytime but at nights there is mostly a cool breeze, enough to need a blanket. I am well, bless God, and have gained 7 pounds since I came here. Have lived mostly on fruits such as oranges, limes, grapes, blackberries, strawberries, mulberries, tomatoes, &c. In many localities this is yet a new country, it will take some time to improve it. I think I enjoy the climate better than any that I ever experienced. The Lord's goodness is manifest every where, praise His holy name. I was two Sundays in Florida, the first one I preached twice to an attentive audience on the importance of being ready to meet our God. Oh how sensitively do I realize that time is passing away, and when I look back over my past life, I am willing, like dear brother E. Hershey to write over the best deeds I ever did, "Imperfection." The second Sunday, I was nearly one hundred miles from where I was the first Sunday, and was again to church twice. I meet people from nearly every state in the Union, Canada and Mexico. I again had the pleasure of testifying to the saving grace in the religion of Jesus Christ, and the sanctifying power which enables us to outride all the storms of time, and to stand firm whether we are among friend or foes, Christians or Infidels. I ask an interest in the prayers of those who stand in close relationship with our elder brother Jesus Christ, in whom is Glory, power, now and forever more, Amen. John Traub

Altoona, Orange Co., Fla.

In later census records, John and Amanda were living in Umatilla, just south of Altoona. He listed his occupation as farmer on a fruit farm. He died in 1919.

Reading all of this has tied you up for a while. But, you have just enough time to fill out the registration form and return it.

Dick Taylor
723 South Providence Road
Wallingford PA 19086

Telephone and Fax – 610-876-8725
Email - RETaylor@Cavtel.net
Web – BFCHistory.org