ratified to more accurately reflect the beliefs of the Fellowship. Adopting a rule-by-elder structure of church government led to the elimination of the President Elder and District Superintendent offices. Because the Conference chose to graciously grandfather in preachers who held to the "old doctrines," the Conference did not split apart but worked together to the glory of God. In time, most pastors understood and held to the doctrines of grace pertaining to salvation that are now required of pastors seeking ordination in the BFC as part of our Articles of Faith.

Changing Culture

By the late 1990s, the BFC expanded its outlook to reach communities outside its traditional Pennsylvania German heritage. The BFC, spearheaded by Church Extension Ministries, developed Biblical Principles for Living to highlight cross-cultural godly living traits such as humility, love, and justice while explaining its position on a number of biblical and contemporary issues. In 2008, its first Spanish-speaking congregation in Reading, PA was received into Conference as well as its first international church in Merida, Mexico. The focus on reaching its neighbors remains today. Several of its churches hold services in a variety of languages including Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic.

Working Together

Over the course of its history, the BFC engaged in a variety of ministries:

The Gospel Herald Society were street evangelists who held tent meetings and planted churches. It was renamed the Home Mission Society and is now known as Church Extension Ministries. Church Extension plants new churches in places that are largely without a Bible-believing church and a gospel presence.

- The Board of Missions has supported foreign missions around the globe in partnership with a wide variety of sending boards.
- Berean Bible School, which eventually became
 Pinebrook Junior College, opened in 1950 to
 prepare pastors, missionaries, and Christian
 workers. It closed in 1992 as four-year colleges and
 seminaries became the preferred preparation for
 ministry.
- A home for the aged and orphans opened in 1906 in Center Valley, PA before moving to Nazareth in 1960. Fellowship Community in Whitehall, PA, which opened in 1988, operates today as a separate organization.
- Mizpah Grove in Allentown, PA was one of our summer camp meeting locations as church families enjoyed spending time together and hearing speakers. In 1968 the fellowship sold Mizpah Grove and purchased Pinebrook Bible Conference in Stroudsburg, PA. In 2018, Pinebrook was ceded to Spruce Lake Retreat but the BFC still utilizes the property for a number of annual activities.
- In 1955, a property in Zionsville, PA was purchased to operate a children's camp; Victory Valley Camp remains today as a thriving BFC ministry.

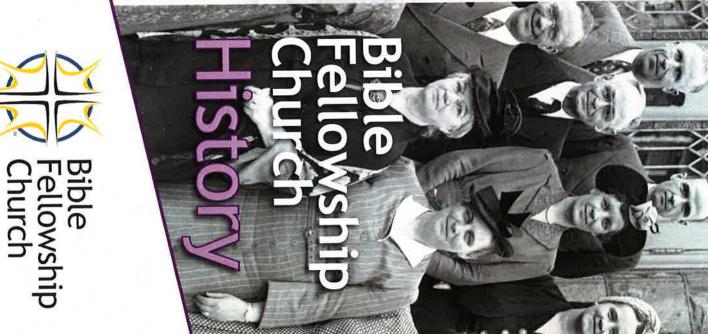
From a loose association of Mennonite revivalists influenced by the holiness movement to a Wesleyan denomination to a Reformed fellowship holding to the doctrines of grace, the Bible Fellowship Church stands firm today as new churches continue to be built and new congregations are planted.

For further reading see BFCHistory.org



1011 Brookside Rd, Ste. 145 PO Box 3555, Allentown PA 18106







United to Make Disciples of Jesus Christ"



promises to build His church of God in keeping His demonstrates the faithfulness (BFC) has a rich history which Fellowship Church

The Bible

order along with a constitution for the mission which contained a statement of faith and church In 1866 they published their Glaubenslehre (Doctrine), young men joined them, the organization developed. leadership for this dynamic group, and as other William Gehman and Jonas Musselman provided Society. Bishop William N. Shelly and preachers and so they established the Evangelical Mennonite revival and prayer meetings? No, they would not, upon the freedom of expression they enjoyed in their this question: would they acquiesce to restrictions council meeting two weeks away, they considered farmhouse in Lehigh County, PA. With the next high to give up their style of evangelism, huddled at a revivalists, under pressure from their local bishops On Friday, September 24, 1858, seven Mennonite

Pennsylvania Conference; William Gehman became and many joined together with the Evangelical Southeastern PA influenced other Mennonites Mennonites. What is now the BFC was called the Mennonite Society to form the Evangelical United The same revival winds blowing through

> in Ohio, and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ was merged with the Brethren in Christ, a small group PA. In 1883, the Evangelical Mennonite Society were five active congregations, all in Eastern Elder in 1880. At that time there its first Presiding

> > with the other

Great Depression dampened evangelistic fervor. By Growth was rapid. Neither World War I nor the 1920 the



had what it size over doubled in Conference

children and adults. Weekly meetings were held in homes, but continued growth soon made larger Sunday School movement also attracted many Society, who preached door to door and distributed of the Gospel Worker Society and the Gospel Herald gospel literature in numerous communities. The through evangelistic tent meetings and the efforts meeting places necessary. in 1900. Over the next 20 years, it doubled again

A New Name

followed the end of World War II. Disagreements Changes in the Mennonite Brethren in Christ

> educational plans, financial autonomy, church doctrine of holiness, foreign mission programs to separate from the others. Official reasons cited and in 1952, the Pennsylvania Conference voted practice were magnified by personality differences for the separation included differences over the Christ Conferences about doctrine and Mennonite Brethren in



Church the Confer-Association with The merger to a projected and objection Missionary In 1959,

regarding salvation. New Articles of Faith were a new name — the Bible Fellowship Church traditional Mennonite doctrines, especially those led our forebears to no longer hold to several (BFC). The influence of the Bible School movement