

Bishop Ezra Funk was known as a great teacher. Looking toward heaven, he once said, “I hope there will be someone for me to teach.”

While pastoring churches in Pennsylvania, Funk chalked up 28 years as an elementary public schoolteacher. A school superintendent described him as “one of the most energetic teachers I have ever known.” And creative. He was always on the lookout for visual aids to use in the classroom.

Ezra Funk was born July 3, 1886, in Cheesetown, Pa., just north of Chambersburg. Always small for his age, he was subject to much bullying. He grew up in the York Brethren, a branch of the plain-dressing River Brethren. At age 20, when he told his parents that he was joining the United Brethren to become a minister, it didn’t go over well. But he knew that’s where God wanted him. In 1906, he joined the Salem UB church near Chambersburg and was licensed to preach.

Funk went on to pastor various churches in Pennsylvania — in Chambersburg, Shippensburg, Orrstown, Strinestown, Waynesboro, Heidlersburg. In 1941, Funk was elected bishop, and served until 1957 — four terms, 16 years total.

Funk was a voracious reader, and a dedicated walker. Every morning he took a brisk “devotional” walk, during which he would read the Bible and pray. He was always reading something, and was even known to take a book to read during denominational board meetings.

He read the Bible over and over. One time during a UB missions convention in Ontario, while everyone else spent the afternoon visiting Niagara Falls, Funk stayed behind to re-read the Book of Acts, on which he was preaching that night. A note in his Bible said he had already read Acts 111 times.

He was also devoted to UB missions. Two daughters served in Sierra Leone. He traveled three times to Jamaica to teach the pastors, he organized Honduras Conference in 1956, and he also visited our work in Hong Kong and Sierra Leone.

After the 1957 General Conference, Ezra and Bessie, along with daughter Erma, moved to Greencastle, Pa. Within a couple months, he was diagnosed with cancer. Bishop Ezra Funk passed away on June 10, 1958, at age 71.



**Ezra
Funk**