

Revivals and Renewals

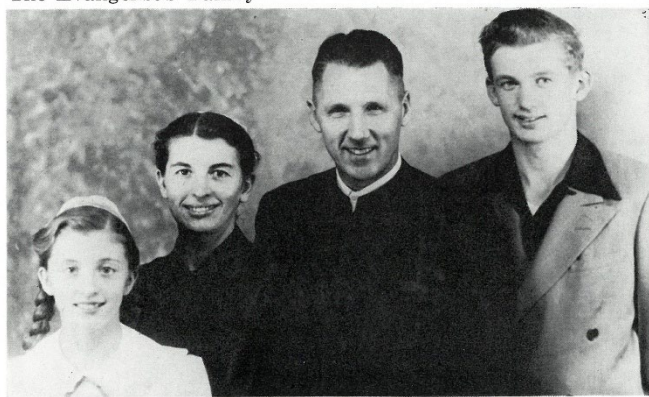
Big names in Mennonite revivalists include George Brunk and Howard Hammer. The *Brunk Brothers Revival Campaign* was the product of George and his brother Lawrence, who began their work using the proceeds from the sale of Lawrence's large flock of chickens! The inaugural crusade in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in the summer of 1951 lasted seven weeks and concluded with a crowd of some 15,000. "The Whole Gospel for the Whole World" was their slogan. Gameo estimates that their organization conducted one hundred tent crusades in places including Goshen, Indiana; Orrville, Ohio and Harrisonburg, Virginia. Thousands were converted or renewed in their commitments as a result of these nightly meetings, which could go on for 3-4 weeks.



Photos from *Revival Fires*, by Katie Florence Shank, 1952. Pages 58 and 16-17.

Howard Hammer, from Apple Creek, Ohio organized the *Christian Laymen's Tent Evangelism* ministry in 1952, reportedly after Hammer attended a Brunk crusade. His initial board of trustees included members from CMC congregations East Union and Pleasant View. Hammer conducted campaigns beginning in Wayne County, Ohio in May-June 1952. In the next months campaigns were conducted in Kalona, Iowa; Hannibal, Missouri as well as Morton and Aruthur in Illinois.

The Evangelist's Family



Howard and Dorothy Hammer are the parents of two children, Jeanne 11, and Don 17 (deceased)

Of the Kalona Hammer campaign, John Y. Swartzendruber wrote: "Backsliders were reinstated, cold and indifferent members came confessing their sins and found joy in making restitution. As a result, this has cost them time, money, and gasoline but it has brought ample returns. This cost, however, is more than offset by the throwing away of, and doing without, tobacco, jewelry, and wearing apparel not designed for Christians. (*Hammer Tent Revival Echoes* 1952, p. 15)

Andrew Jantzi seems to have been the home-grown revivalist from our conference. As was the custom in his era, he purchased a tent which could be set up in various communities to create a larger and more neutral space than a church sanctuary for preaching the revival message. The RNOC archives includes mention of the conference renting Jantzi's tent for the annual conference 1952-57, 1960, 1962, 1965. In that 15-year span, the amount conference paid only increased \$100 from the \$500 paid in 1953.

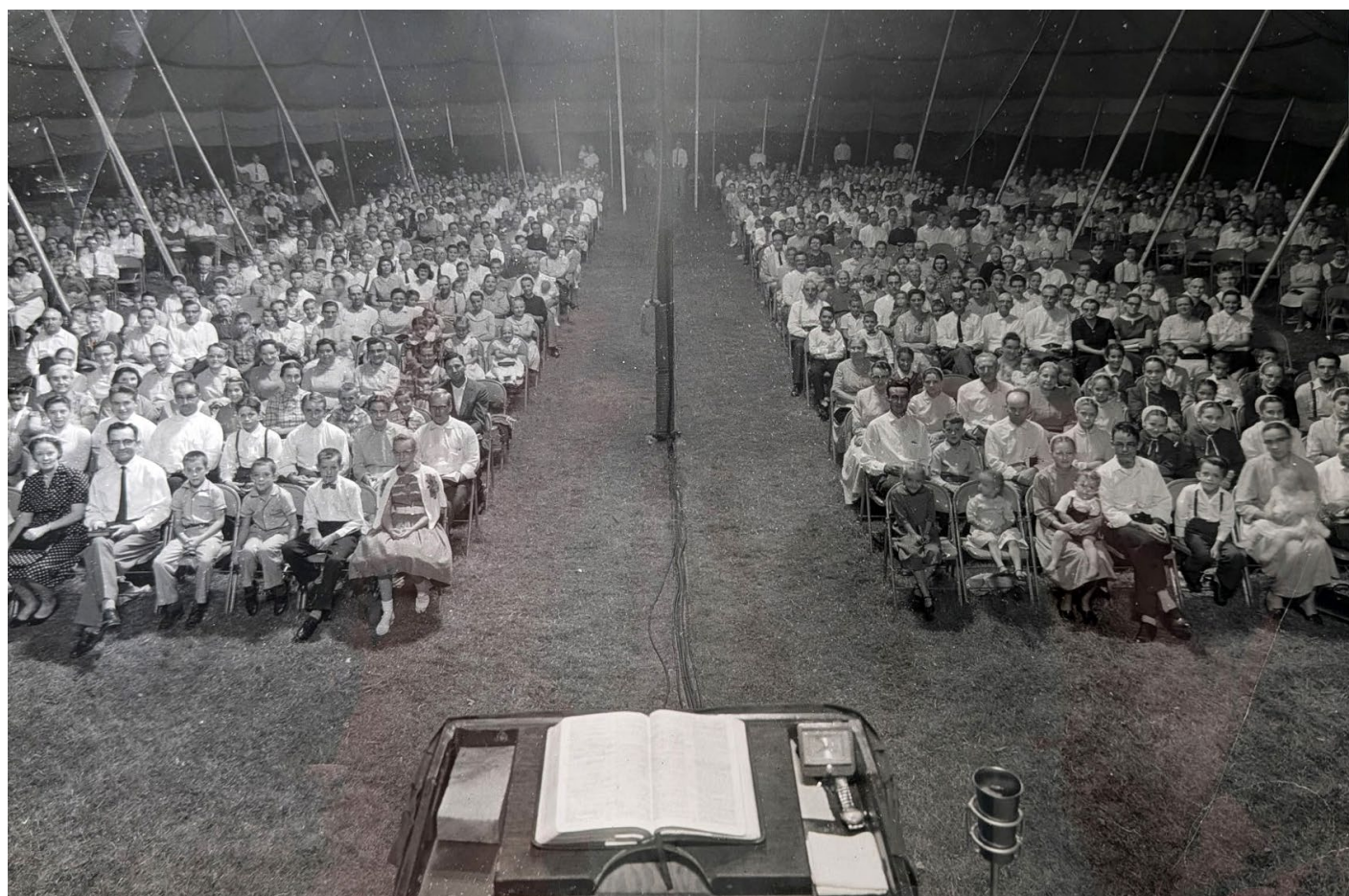


Photo pictures multiple families from Plain City, Ohio. Believed to be an Andrew Jantzi tent campaign from the (then) open field just east of United Bethel Mennonite Church, circa 1954.

There is an extensive literature about the tent crusade phenomenon and the way Mennonites echoed the tactics of “America’s pastor,” Billy Graham. There is little doubt that thousands of Mennonite lives—including from our conference—were dramatically changed as a result of these efforts.

Here are two revivalist recordings from the RNOC archives:

George R Brunk II: “The Religion of the Easy Road” from September 17, 1951(?), plus invitation

Andrew Jantzi: “How to Have Victory Over Sins” from unknown crusade