



Lancaster Crusade, 1951.

# LANCASTER REVIVAL OF 1951

by Dean Taylor

Speaking directly to the crowd in a tent meeting that was conducted a little over a year after the Lancaster revivals began, George R. Brunk II directly addressed the crowd:

*It is thrilling to witness the sea of faces like this. It is challenging. It makes one tremble when it comes to the responsibility of preaching the Word of God. So many people. You come here for something I trust, and I am going to assume you are here for a sincere motive. You're here because you love God. You want the truth from God's Word. I want each of you here who acknowledge Jesus Christ to pray for the progress of this service. This is God's work and not the work of man.*

*Our policy and our declared position is that God shall have the glory for every victory won. These campaigns have let no human thing touch it, because God shall be praised for every blessing that comes to it. And let's look to God tonight and expect from him the blessing that we need. I like to have that ready and, well, and clear response from you as I ask you a few ques-*

*tions. I want you to come back at me with a clear and ready response. With a yes or no, either one, I'd like for everybody to respond—yes or no.*

*Do you believe that the devil is against this revival?*

*Audience: "Yes."*

*All right. Do you believe that God is for it, not only this revival, but for the cause of revival—Yes or no?*

*Audience: "Yes."*

*Thank you. Are you looking in simple faith to God tonight for the blessing that we need—Yes or no?*

*Audience: "Yes."*

*Now the vital question comes last, and I want you to give me the answer, yes or no. Will you be obedient to the Spirit of God as he speaks to you tonight—now come on!*

*Audience: "Yes."*

*Thank you.*

*I wish that we might be in prayer not only for this meeting but for others, for other evangelists around the country and around the*

world who are preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that God is making a visitation to the nation and to the world today, that there is something unique about it. It is remarkable. Something is happening. The Spirit of God is moving across the countryside. <sup>1</sup>

The Spirit of God did indeed move across the countryside. In the spring of 1951, a group of believers from the small, semi-rural community of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, started a series of prayer meetings that culminated into a series of revival meetings with attendance of over 15,000 people! From Lancaster the revival spread to several states and even into Canada. The revival was distinctive for speaking out strongly against sin and spiritual complacency. Its influence affected the community and enacted lasting change in people's lives that is still being testified to today.

## Extraordinary Prayer

Almost without exception, every great work of God has had its starting place in the fervent, effectual prayer of God's people. Jonathan Edwards, the man God used in the Great Awakening called these special prayer groups "extraordinary prayer". Jonathan Edwards even published a book encouraging this type of prayer in his day. The long title of his little book was:

*A humble attempt to promote the agreement and union of God's people throughout the world in extraordinary prayer for a revival of religion and the advancement of God's kingdom on earth, according to Scriptural promises and prophecies of the last time.*

What Edwards meant by "extraordinary prayer" was special prayer meetings that happen outside and beyond our normal everyday prayers. He spoke of a specific gathering of people crying out to God for His outpouring and change in their lives.

As I was digging around at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, I found testimony of this type of "exceptional prayer" powerfully demonstrated in the Lancaster revival of 1951. In an old 1951 article from the *Gospel Herald* entitled *The Lancaster Revival*, a clear and challenging witness to the power of prayer surfaced.

## The Prayer Meeting

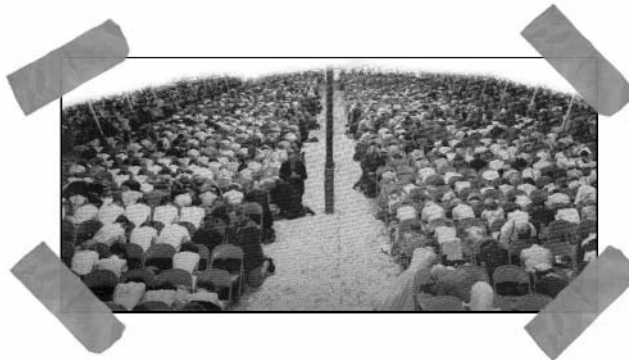
Much like the spiritual condition during the Welch revival in the early 1900s, Lancaster County was an area that feared God and had a respect for His Word, but underneath this saintly veneer the lives of many people suffered from extremes of both religious formalism and licentious carnality. However, a few praying believers moved by God, developed a burden for things to change. Maurice

E. Lehman, who was one of the pastors of the East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, tells the story of how one of these "extraordinary prayer" groups started and grew into the Lancaster revival. Writing a testimony of the revivals just days after they had happened, Lehman reported to the *Gospel Herald* this inspiring account.

*One great factor in the success of this program was that the saints of God prayed. On Good Friday of this year [1951] we had a special day of fasting and prayer at the Vine Street Mennonite Church. There, it was announced that we would have special prayer meetings once a month besides our regular prayer meetings. The next special prayer meeting was held on a Sunday afternoon at the East Chestnut Street church. The meeting was well attended and many prayers were offered and tears flowed freely. We prayed for revival and for lost souls. This type of meeting was followed by many more.*

### Daily Prayer for Revival

*Someone in the prayer meeting suggested that there should be an early morning prayer*



**Entire revival tent praying  
on their knees**

meeting. So a meeting was called from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. The early morning meetings began in a large Sunday-school room. The Lord poured out His Spirit upon us. As the numbers increased, we moved to the main room of the church. In one of the morning meetings Bro. Brunk said, 'So far in our prayer meetings we have been observing the second part of James 5:16 that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. I think tomorrow morning we ought to consider the part of James 5:16 where it says "confess your faults one to another"'. Bro. Stoner Krady said, 'Why wait till tomorrow? Let's start right now'. At that point, liberty was given to the group for confession. People confessed many sins and praised God.

### Confession of Sins

Many prayer meetings that followed had a period for confession. Many sins of the spirit were confessed and tears were shed as the Holy Spirit searched our hearts. The special early prayer meetings were in session each morning from May 21 to July 22 [1951]. **We believe that it was prayer that brought the revival and it will take prayer to continue it.** Bro. Brunk said the early morning prayer meeting on July 22 was the largest prayer meeting he ever saw.

### Others Prayed Also

One cannot attribute the revival alone to the prayer meeting held in the church. We are sure that many aged people and others who could not attend throughout the conference were also praying for such an event. During the meetings, Bro. Brunk received many letters from different parts of the world and people said they were praying for the meetings. Since we see what prayer will do for a church in such a short time, we are made more responsible to keep praying. <sup>2</sup>

George Brunk's daughter Barbara Brunk Gascho, who was a little girl at the time remembered the prayer meetings 50 years later saying,

As a very young child, I was keenly aware of the pledge to prayer that many persons made weeks before each crusade was scheduled to begin. The first service would take place and our family and the staff would wait in anticipation to see if people would come. People WOULD come! <sup>3</sup>

## Two Willing Vessels

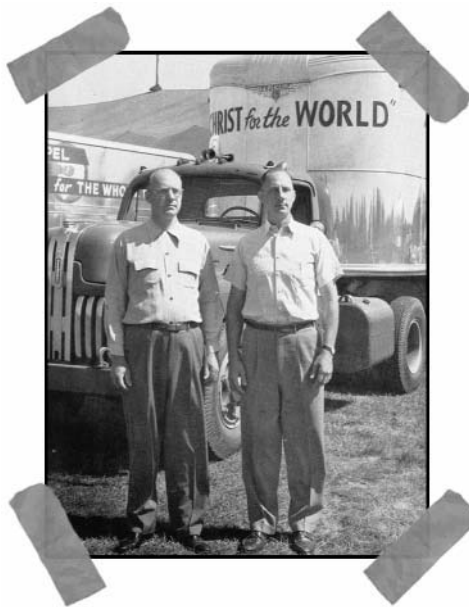
A few years before the Lancaster Revivals, George R. Brunk II and his brother Lawrence were coming back from a revival meeting that they had concluded in Richmond, Virginia. Their sister Katie reports that the trip home was one they would remember for a long time. She wrote in her book *Revival Fires* that their "hearts throbbed with a newly awakened zeal and a greater concern for the lost as they began to recognize the challenge which the world offered." Katie reports that after

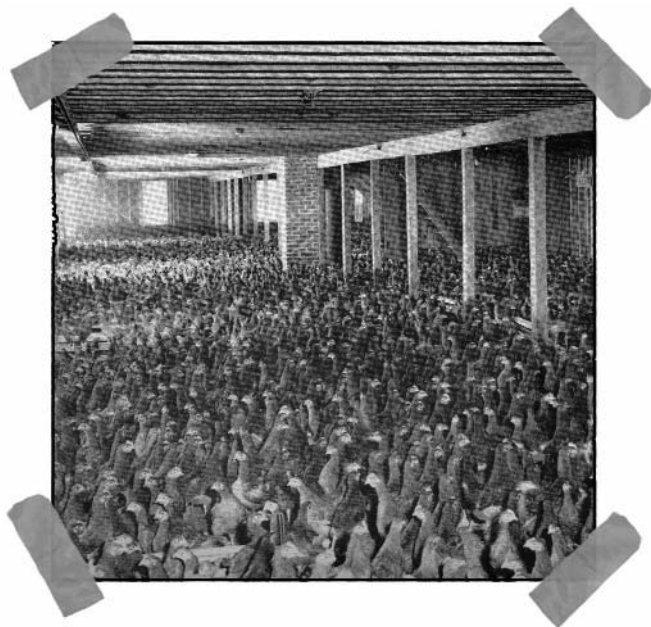
this Lawrence just could not let the vision go. Lawrence had actually been dreaming and praying about this for a long time. Eventually Lawrence dared to consider the idea of stepping out in faith and purchasing the tent, trailer, and equipment trusting that God would provide an evangelist. <sup>4</sup>

One afternoon Lawrence Brunk "stood in the midst of his poultry flock of five thousand broilers and asked the Lord to give him as many souls as there were chickens. He promised God that if he

could make \$5,000 clear, he would place the entire sum into the needed evangelistic equipment. By 1951, Lawrence was surprised bountifully by not only the \$5,000 profit, but the astounding sum of \$35,000! Lawrence placed this sum into expensive tents and traveling equipment, and soon the first revival campaign began in Lancaster." <sup>5</sup>

In an early sermon from 1951, Lawrence looked out over the people sitting in the tent meeting and noticed the similarity between the "flocks." After he told the con-





**Lawrence Brunk...asked the Lord to give him as many souls as there were chickens. He promised God that if he could make \$5,000 clear, he would place the entire sum into the needed evangelistic equipment.**

gregation (and apologized for the comparison!) he blessed the Lord for the fulfillment of the vision.

## George R. Brunk II

George and Lawrence's father George Brunk I was the bishop of their conference and was a godly and a powerful influence in his day. The boys were raised on fiery preaching with clear denunciation of sin. George R. Brunk II had been called to preach from a young age.

Without any strings pulled by his father, George R. Brunk II was ordained by lot when he was only 22 years old. These ordinations by lot were done by placing the names of the selected men in a hymnal, which was then shuffled with other hymnals without names. The hymnbooks would then be chosen by the men at random. Each man selected a book, and whoever had the chosen lot in his hymnal would become the next minister. George remembers that before the ordination he had a dream in which it was revealed to him which book he should choose. At the ordination, George selected that book and was ordained the same day.

## The Decision

While Lawrence was busy shopping for tent equipment, George was teaching Bible at Eastern Mennonite College. George remembers getting an urgent telephone call from Lawrence in the middle of class one afternoon informing him that he was about to buy the revival tent and needed to know a definite answer—yes or no. He asked George the question: If he bought the tent, would George come and do the preaching? George said yes, and their lives—as well as the lives of countless others—were changed forever. Once on the road, reminiscent of the Ira D. Sankey and D. L. Moody revivals, Lawrence led the singing while George did most of the preaching.

## East Chestnut Street

Once George and Lawrence got to Lancaster, the prayer meeting was already strongly underway. The overwhelming response of the prayer meeting resulted in an opening night attendance at East Chestnut Street of over 2,000! By Sunday night, crowds of over 7,000 were reported.<sup>6</sup> It was said that many were turned away because of the congestion in the city.

In the face of such an overwhelming turnout, George Brunk did not succumb to the temptation of merely tickling ears. Local resident Irene Deiter remembers that first crusade. She said that George started right off challenging the sleeping Lancaster community with, "The people in Lancaster County keep their fence rows trimmed and trained better than they keep their children trimmed and trained." She remarked, "When I heard him say that, I knew he was going to preach the Word—and he did."<sup>7</sup>

Maurice E. Lehman told *Gospel Herald*:

*The Evangelist preached against sin for many nights at the beginning of the revival. This preaching brought conviction of hidden sin of the flesh and spirit. Many church members confessed sin and 'got right' with God. Brother George*



Brunk made the statement that this is a cleanup program as well as an evangelistic campaign... We who have witnessed this great revival can say we will long remember it as one of the greatest events in our day.

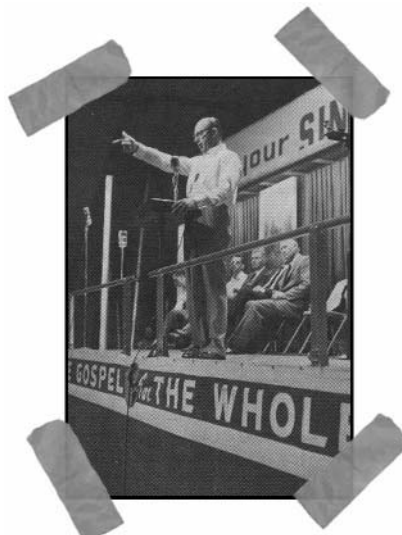
## More Eyewitnesses

Another eyewitness who gave a detailed description of the meetings said:

Most of us who are accustomed to sitting in our regular Mennonite services have a new experience when we witness those who walk forward in response to the invitation. For three nights, as I attended the meetings in my home community, I sat awed. One, two, three persons soon walked forward. The number mounted—increased so, that I was unable to watch the whole proceeding. I saw friends, relatives, and others walk to the front.

There were calls for additional personal workers. The evening hour became late, 10:00 p.m., and the meetings were still going strong, although some parents with children had wended their way out of the tent.

As personal workers dealt with those seeking help, opportunity was given for those who wished to give their testimony for their Lord. There was no difficulty whatever in obtaining witnesses. As those in the prayer room found peace with God they were urged to testify before the large audience.



**Overflow Crowd**

### Plain Witness

I sat in my seat entranced, tears flowing down my cheeks at times, as I entered into the joys and concerns of those who spoke. There was the seventy-year-old Christian who proclaimed his love for Christ. The very young, the youthful, the middle-aged, and the silver-haired gave their testimonies. To be sure, no golden-tongued oratory appeared. These were largely people who knew not what it means to stand before others to witness. They stumbled in their speech; they walked timidly; many did not say all they wanted to say, for one forgets on such occasions.

Testimonies continued while those in the prayer room filed out to the platform. I was amazed to see an Amish man walk to the microphone. He stumbled a little in his speech, said something about finding his way, and then reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a pack of cigarettes. He handed them to George, who was standing nearby guiding the folks to the microphone. The cigarettes were plopped on the pulpit, and the joyful man completed his testimony. Another cigarette 'sucker', as George put it, found his release. Soon another speaker was telling his story.

### Confession of Sin

It was evident that many Christians had now really found their Saviour meaningful. An approximate ten-minute period produced the following: A relative of mine, in his halting English, told of the many children he has and how he wants them to know Jesus Christ as Saviour. Next, two young girls sang their praises. Then came a young man who had been a Sunday school superintendent in a large church for several years. He said that he had malice in his heart,

that he wanted to confess it. He had been influenced to make this confession, he explained, because his pastor had made a similar confession several days before, and that certainly he too should confess if his pastor could do it.

It was after eleven when the meetings were dismissed, although generally the huge tent was nearly empty, except for those who lingered, some with loved ones who had found themselves anew, others with acquaintances, all marveling at this thing which had come to pass.

### Marriages Put Back Together

One evening I saw a young man whom I have known for twenty years suddenly walk out from his position to go to the front where those seeking help were standing. In a moment, he returned—with a small, sleeping child on his shoulder. I soon understood what he had done. He had obtained the child from the arms of his sister and her unfaithful husband so that they could go into the prayer room unhindered. Soon the couple stood before the microphone asking for prayers, and the young man, known to be unfaithful to his wife, pledged a new start.

On another evening, previous to the evening which I attended, the evangelist George had given the invitation, and the usual numbers walked to the front. Suddenly, a man and a woman, both of whom had walked down different aisles, raced across the front and threw themselves upon each other's shoulders. Neither had known the other was present, and, you see, they were man and wife separated for months.<sup>8</sup>

LOSE your SINS and FIND your SAVIDOUR!

## Overflow— to the Old Airport

Due to the overwhelming congestion, the city revival could no longer fit on East Chestnut Street; so they moved adjacent to the old Lancaster Airport and stretched out yet another tent. To pull this off, volunteers got busy and erected a primary electric line with a transformer for the electricity, and 500 feet of the newly designed plastic piping for the water. Wood was borrowed from the local lumberyard to build the stage and the wood benches.

## Effect on the Community

The revivals had a significant effect on the community. Michael D. Beckler, who was personally affected by one of the revivals that spread from these days said of his community:

Our community was never the same after that. Some of the Christians who re-committed their lives to Christ after this dropped whatever their life's vocation was prior to that and went into ministry... I will never forget the spiritual fervor that gripped the community. People were praising God all day long wherever they were working. I can remember a cousin of mine saying that the grocery store



**The two tents to the right were purchased before the first campaign began and were used at Lancaster. During the campaign at Souderton, in August 1951, the large tent to the left was purchased and also set up. This tent can seat 5,000 people.**



## Overflow Crowd

*where he worked was like attending church all day long, because all that these new converts and recommitted Christians talked about all day long was the Lord and how He had changed their life.”<sup>9</sup>*

Paul A. Neuenschwander, one of the volunteer electricians for the tent, mentioned his surprise of how many different groups of Christians were coming seeking revival.

*The six-week crusade opened on Sunday evening with the large tent nearly filled. Most area Mennonite churches were represented, regardless of the conference affiliation; and non-conference churches attended as well. It was the first time a Mennonite sponsored meeting attracted so many evangelical groups such as Christian Missionary Alliance, Nazarene, Brethren, and many others. The general public was affected. It was easy to start a spiritual conversation with most any-*

*one on the street or in a place of business during these weeks.<sup>10</sup>*

As God poured out His Spirit again in Lancaster, the Lancaster Airport site saw an unprecedented turnout for such a small area. The Sunday evening service of July 15, 1951 had more than 15,000 in attendance! This was just seven weeks after the meetings began. During the campaign, over 1,500 people had publicly confessed their sins, made decisions to follow Christ, or reconsecrated their lives.

## Real Change

Ford Berg, writing of the change in peoples' lives said,

*An outward indication of the effectiveness of the meetings was demonstrated by Mennonite farmers who plowed up their fields of tobacco. Others threw cigarettes, pipes, whiskey,*

THE WHOLE GOSPEL  FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

playing cards, jewelry, and other items which they felt had been a hindrance to their lives into an offering rack marked "Offering for Baal." "

*Gospel Herald* records that the wood crate pictured in front of the Lancaster airport revival tent [picture on front cover] was used "as a receptacle into which people threw pulp and other sinful articles."

## On the Road— Spread to West of Philadelphia

Shortly after the unprecedented outpouring in Lancaster, the Brunk brothers headed to a community west of Philadelphia, and on July 29<sup>th</sup> started a series of meetings in the Franconian area. The church there could have just tried to catch the wave of excitement and ride on the coattails of the Lancaster revival. However, the praying men and women there knew what real revival would cost. They knew it needed a church that would prevail in prayer. Writing to *Gospel Herald* right after the revival tents had left, Paul M. Ledrach tells the story.

The revival in Franconia Conference did not begin July 29, the first night of the campaign, nor did it end September 3, 1951. Rather, it was during those days that the revival fires were poured out in this community. The revival began long ago as brethren individually prayed for a revival in the Church. The five weeks of meetings were but the beginning of the working of the power of God in answer to these prayers. And now that the three huge tents have gone from the 17-acre field one mile west of Souderton on route 113, the revival is not over. It continues, and the Lord alone knows



what the outcome will be. At least Franconian Conference will never be the same.

In many revival meetings it is necessary first of all to build attendance, interest, and convictions. Not so in this campaign! From the very first thousands attended, souls were saved, sins were confessed, and people gained Christian victory and assurance.

The crowds attending the services were large. They ranged from 2,500 on Monday and Friday evenings, to 10,000 to 12,000 on Sunday

evenings and the closing nights of the campaign. Large crowds, however, are not the heart of the revival. The large crowds were only symptoms that something was happening... The Gospel was being preached in entirety and power... The Holy Spirit was convicting men of sin... Many were ac-

cepting Christ as Savior... Many were repenting and confessing sin... many were surrendering life in a new way to Christ. People were beginning to understand and experience the glory of the Lord in their hearts and lives!... God was visiting His people.

An eyewitness from the revivals reported that there was genuine repentance of sins and changed lives. Writing about a particularly hardened group of





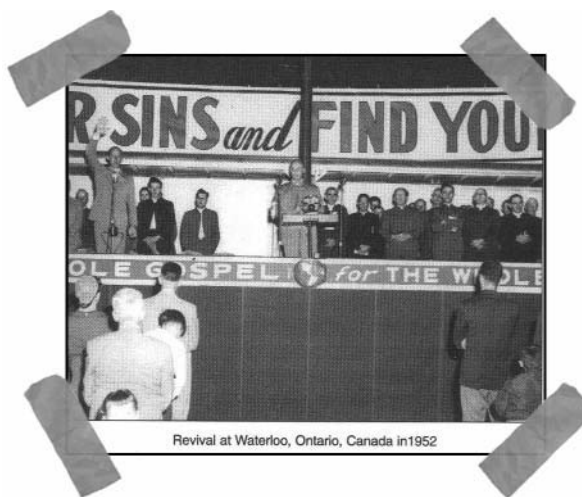
young men that were converted, it was recorded,

*“In the Franconia Conference there had been for years a gang of young Mennonite boys who delighted in reckless driving and daring stunts, much to the chagrin of other Christians and fellow church members. They were remarkably converted at the meetings and now engage in prayer meetings and Christian work instead of the former ‘rough stuff.’”*

## Lasting Testimony

Willard Bergey, who was one of the “Franconian cowboys” that were converted at the meetings, said of his own conversion over 50 years later:

*“I went on doing the worldly things that I was doing, going to shows, carnivals, and driving my car in a way that was unfit—to shame. This was what gave us the name ‘Franconian Cowboys’. I also was doing many things to please myself. Now, all at once I saw myself as an ungodly person. And thank God, He did a wonderful change in my heart”... “In August of 1951 the Brunk Brothers came to Franconia. After the meetings were going a couple of weeks, we decided to give it a try to see what these meetings were about. The Spirit of God kept drawing us back again and again. Finally one night, as George was giving the invitation, my heart was filled with conviction and condemnation of my sin. My head was down and the tears were flowing, but I didn’t have the courage to go forward. A brother put his arm around me and said, ‘Would you like me to go up front with you?’ So I went, and there on the*



Revival at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada in 1952

*shavings in the prayer tent, I cried out to God in repentance. God showed me the sinfulness of my heart. As I repented, God did a miraculous work in my heart. I was dead in sin, and now I was alive. I was blind, but now I see. My night had turned to day. God changed my heart in a moment.*<sup>12</sup>

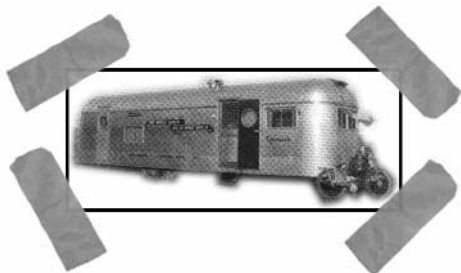
From Franconia the revivals quickly overflowed into Ohio, Indiana, and Canada. The outpouring was moving beyond denominational boundaries, and the Brunk brothers purchased four semi trucks to haul the equipment in an attempt to meet the demands. A church magazine reported in July 1952:

*During the winter of 1951-52 the Brunk brothers held two series of meetings in Florida, one in a Mennonite center, and the other in a non-Mennonite location. Calls to conduct revivals have come from many states, and meetings are now booked for a couple of years in advance. Many requests have been turned down.*<sup>13</sup>

## TIME Magazine

By August of 1952 the revival caught the attention of TIME Magazine which reported:

*“This week, after 14 months of evangelizing through the U.S. and Canada, the Brunks are preaching the word in Goshen, Ind., to crowds of nearly 3,000 a night. At their previous stop, Waterloo, Ont., attendance was even larger: 105,000 during four weeks of steady preaching (including 1,500 who made formal ‘decisions for Christ’). Local Canadian pastors were so pleased with the results that some canceled*



their own services to let their congregations hear the Brunks preach.”

At their first meeting in Lancaster, Pa., Lawrence led the singing and George gave his maiden sermon, a vigorous appeal to elect for Christ and escape damnation, a topic which Mennonites have always stressed. The first night more than 2,000 jammed their way into the tent. Dozens were converted. Before the week was out, the Brunks had to order a new tent. Said Preacher George, ‘We preach a fundamental brand of religion, but we aren’t fundamentalists. We aren’t modernists, either. You don’t have to be one or the other.’<sup>14</sup>

## Blessing to the Local Church

In a personal interview toward the end of his life, George R. Brunk II was asked if he sought the support of the local body of Christ. Brunk reported that in every crusade except one he had the full consent and support of the local body. Instead of being in competition with the local churches as some para-church ministries are today, the Brunk brothers worked with local pastors to assure that new converts found essential needed discipleship.

Remembering the effect on the local church, one magazine reported:

“Obviously, the effect of the revivals in the local churches is profound. In the large Franconia Mennonite Church, near Philadelphia, for example, in a regular Sunday morning service, over 130 responded to an invitation to confession of sin and reconsecration. Significantly, this was the first invitation ever given in that church. In another church nearby there were 85 confessions and testimonies on a Sunday morning during an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Untold other miracles, including many acts of

restitution, known only by God, prevailed and still continue.<sup>15</sup>

This past August, 2008, I held a personal interview with Luke Horst, an 83-year-old retired Mennonite bishop and church elder of this time. He said that he remembers all the elders and bishops sitting up on the platform during the meetings. He remembers that at the Lancaster Airport meetings, in order to avoid the tendency of preaching a Gospel-lite message, early services were conducted that taught on biblical doctrines and dared to draw lines, even on controversial issues.

## Not Meant to Entertain or Amuse

Unlike many modern church gatherings where keeping the attention of the people is carefully choreographed and orchestrated by rock bands, videos, and even “spirit-dancing”, the Lancaster revivals consisted of simple, heartfelt gospel singing and anointed preaching on subjects such as sin, hell, and getting right with God.

John E. Sharp in his book *Gathering at the Hearth* reports what the meetings were like:

What are the services like? There are daily prayer meetings, some preceding the evening meetings which begin at 7:30. Lawrence opens the meetings by having the audience sing many

hymns and gospel songs. The a cappella, congregational-type singing seems never to fail in lifting the spirits of those present.

After a short devotional period and further singing, George begins his sermons. He speaks on such subjects as *God’s Barriers to Hell*, *From the Glory of Jericho to the Disgrace of Ai*, and *The Sins of the Flesh and the Spirit*. The sermons generally average an hour in length. After the sermon the invitation is given. By this time the audience has heard much direct preaching,



some which is new, and much which is familiar. The speaker draws his illustrations from life, from children, and practical experiences, all of which have tremendous effect in leading people to make decisions for Christ.

## Supported by God

In the sermon “How the Revivals Began”, preached in August of 1951, George Brunk said that when he and Lawrence began, they determined that their provisions would be totally met on faith. George recalled that when they were dreaming about a real revival crusade, one of the things that had grieved them about the meetings they had been to was all of the time spent begging for money. “We thought it a terrible pity that a campaign in which the Gospel is preached had to be spoiled by begging people for money.” The Brunk brothers took an offering, and sometimes even that was considered scandalous. However, through the years they went into each new area on faith, with no promise of how things would work out.

## Since Then

The blessing that came to Lancaster County during the revival is still felt today. As I have talked to people who were alive during the Lancaster revivals, even if they themselves are not too keen on the idea of revival, I found that they still admit that what happened here in 1951 was a real move of God.

Since the 1950s Lancaster County, along with many other areas around the country, was “sifted like wheat”, especially during the latter part of the 1960s. Divisions separated the county into various camps, ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Driving down a road in Lancaster County today, you could see one parking lot filled with people with plain dress, all coming into church on their horse and buggies. Then on the other side, you could see another church with a conspicuous lack of modest dress, all on their way in to hear their female preacher expound on the need to have toleration with the new homosexual members. What is surprising—and sad—is that both of these churches share the same denomination name on the front of their church buildings. It doesn't have to be this way.

Ironically, both of these extremes have tended to drop the cause of revival. Sadly, today many ultra conservative churches have actually grown fearful of revival meetings and foreign missions. Likewise, liberal

churches can hardly dream of a church-life that experiences daily prayer meetings, speaking directly about sin, or encouraging separation from the world. Both extremes make the Church of Jesus Christ saltless in today's world.

## Just Men

Inevitably, the Brunk brothers made their share of mistakes, but they were just men. Moreover, because they were just men there is an important lesson to be learned from them, as well as all other historic revivals. Whether it be the revivals under John Wesley, the Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards, or the Welsh revivals of 1904, there is an important lesson to be learned.

Throughout history, there is no doubt that God has used willing vessels to accomplish His will. However, when we look at them in hindsight, many inconsistencies emerge. Even in the Bible, looking at the revivals under Asa and Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles, chapters 15 through 21, we could look from the outside at these mighty works of God and see their mistakes, their unfinished business, their failures in later life, and conclude that God really never did anything in their day. However, I believe that doing so is an insult to God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is notable that after all the mighty works that God did through King Asa during his time, God still took note that the work was incomplete. However, what is even more surprising is that even after all of Asa's blatant mistakes, God still recognized the good that was done. “But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days” (2 Chron 15:17).

### Revival Meeting Leads Boy To Confess \$10,000 Barn Fire

The origin of a \$10,000 barn fire of the structure's contents were three years ago was learned Friday. The fire burned at an estimated loss of day when a conscience-stricken, \$600, but stock and a tractor were fifteen-year-old boy admitted to saved.

State Police that he set the blaze ADMITS SECOND FIRE because “the Devil told” him to and “it was exciting.”

Cpl. Strahan said the boy also admitted setting fire to a brooder house at the same farm about six months after the barn fire. He boy, then only twelve years old, used a hot coal from the brooder touched a match to hay stored in a stove to set the blaze, he told a barn located at East Earl R1, police.

according to his confession. The Cause of the fires had not been confession, he said, came after the determined until the boy's confession — first to his parents and later to police. The theory of a tent revival meeting in Lancaster Thursday night. spontaneous combustion or “hot hay” was entertained by authorities in the barn fire.

The barn, owned by Weaver Martin, was tenanted by Weaver Martin, was Police said they will confer with Hurst, Ephrata R3, and on a farm razed the night of June 17, 1948 juvenile authorities concerning and has since been rebuilt. Part the boy.

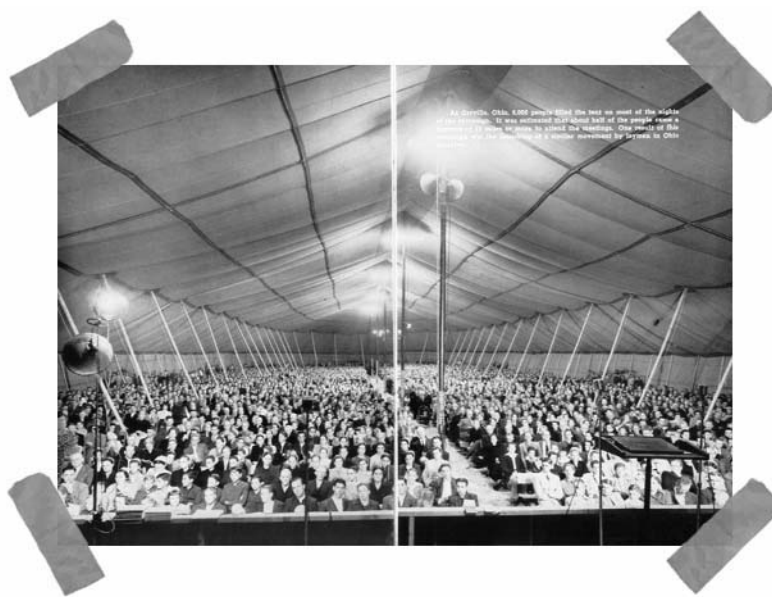
# Lessons from The Lancaster Revival— and All Revivals

I have found that when looking back at the mighty works that God has done throughout history, problems can arise from two extremes: both focusing on the failures of revival and ignoring them. For example, to use their failures as an excuse not to go further and pursue those “high places”, by reasoning that God will send revival without us worrying about such things as “high places” is a big mistake. On the other hand, to cancel out what God has done in history because we now notice their imperfections, is both a disservice to the previous work of God, as well as a great hindrance in God revealing to us our own blinding inconsistencies today.

No doubt about it—when God’s people repent of their sins, get right with God, and pray—God sends revival. And when He does, the lives of men change and God alone is glorified. Men will fail, movements will fail, and denominations will fail. Even whole nations will fail, but the promise of God stands—“If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron 7:13-14).

## Do it Again, Lord!

As I studied the Lancaster revival, my heart rejoiced. This revival clearly demonstrated the enormous power of a praying people and willing servants. No one personality stood out as deserving all the credit—not even George R. Brunk II. It became clear to me that when God has a praying people who are serious about their sins things begin to happen. I believe that Bro. Maurice E. Lehman, the praying pastor at the beginning of the Lancaster revival, encapsulated the secret of the Lancaster revivals, as well as any other revivals when he said — “*We believe that it was prayer that brought the revival and it will take prayer to continue it.*” My prayer is, “Lord, *please* do it again! *Please* do it again here in Lancaster County, and across the world!” □



<sup>1</sup> George R. Brunk II revival sermon, “God’s Supreme Position of Power.” Harrisonburg, Virginia, September, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> “Gospel Herald”, Sept. 4, 1951, p. 853.

<sup>3</sup> *All Praise Be to the Lord: Memories of George R. Brunk II*, 21 Century Press, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> *Revival Fires*, by Katie Florence Shank, 1952.

<sup>5</sup> “Mennonite Life”, July, 1952, pp. 119, 122-124.

<sup>6</sup> “Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage”, January, 1996, quoting “Mennonite Weekly Review”, June 28, 1951, “Thousands Attend Evangelistic Services”.

<sup>7</sup> *All Praise Be to the Lord: Memories of George R. Brunk II*, 21 Century Press, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> “Mennonite Life”, July, 1952, pp. 119, 122-124.

<sup>9</sup> *Praise Be to the Lord, Memories of George R. Brunk II*, 21 Century Press, 2003, pg. 92.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 138.

<sup>11</sup> *Gathering at the Hearth: Stories Mennonites Tell: A Collection of Twenty-Eight Stories from Mennonite History*, by John E. Sharp, Herald Press, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> *Praise Be to the Lord, Memories of George R. Brunk II*, 21 Century Press, 2003, pp. 103-104.

<sup>13</sup> “Mennonite Life”, July, 1952, pp. 119, 122-124.

<sup>14</sup> “TIME Magazine”, Monday, Aug. 25, 1952.

<sup>15</sup> “Mennonite Life”, July, 1952, pp. 119, 122-124.