



# Shenandoah Mennonite Historian

Volume 30, No. 4  
Autumn, 2022

Published by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians  
Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

*A quarterly periodical dedicated to the history and culture of Mennonites in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, USA*

## The Holy Spirit Gives Gifts

The Shenandoah Historians invite you to a lecture with John Roth, a former Goshen College history professor who is now working with the Anabaptism at 500 project. Roth will speak about the Anabaptist and Mennonite faith at 500 years. Come to Park View Mennonite Church on Saturday, November 19, at 6:00 p.m. Admission is free.

You are also invited to the Trissels bicentennial weekend, October 21-23, 2022, at the Trissels Mennonite Church in Broadway, Va. More details can be found at <https://trisselsmc.org/bicentennial>

In this issue, find a sermon preached at the Virginia Mennonite Conference in July 2022, a tribute to the passing of Glendon L. Blosser, two photos of note I've come across recently in my research, including a 1938 YPCA group, and a singing at the Cove church in 2004.

You will want to read Bishop L. J. Heatwole's 1906 sermon on music. We note the passing of Virginia Grove Weaver (1922-2022), one of Heatwole's granddaughters. I am grateful to have interviewed Virginia for the Weavers history book, and she gave me fourteen book photos.

**Trissels Mennonite Church (above), September 2021.**  
Photo by Wayne Showalter



**Gospel Tent Meetings took place on the Berea Christian School grounds, Garbers Church Rd. Harrisonburg, Va., July 27 - August 7, 2022, sponsored by the Southeastern Mennonite Conference.** Photo by the Editor

James Rush, one of the founding members of the Shenandoah Historians, is getting married to Beth Steria, at Lowville Mennonite Church, Oct. 22, 2022. Note his new address, for the next year, as listed on the back of this issue, and mail your annual subscription fee to Jim's address in New York. Thanks!

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- *THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES GIFTS*, BY ELWOOD YODER
- *A TRIBUTE TO GLENDON BLOSSER*, BY OWEN E. BURKHOLDER
- *YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, 1938*
- *A SERMON ON MUSIC, 1906*, BY LEWIS J. HEATWOLE

## The Holy Spirit Gives Gifts

A sermon given by Elwood E. Yoder at Virginia Mennonite Conference, under the oaks at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., July 15, 2022

The Holy Spirit empowers congregations for ministry, service, and witness. When the believers at Pentecost received the Spirit, they moved out from their Jerusalem home base. Spirit-empowered mission is my theme.

The Spirit has gifted Trissels Mennonite Church for the past two hundred years with multiple gifts. All of our congregations have received Holy Spirit gifts. The four gifts I'll mention are hospitality, generosity, itinerancy, and ministry.

Here's an illustrative story. Two weeks ago, I drove about thirty miles north of here into Hardy County, West Virginia. Hidden back in the woods next to the Lost River State Park, I found the block building of the former Buckhorn Church, built by Trissels folks and others in the Northern District.

Northern District ministers began their itinerancy to the Buckhorn community in 1930, and held meetings in the local schoolhouse. During the '30s and '40s, young adults followed and taught Summer Bible School and Sunday school. In the '40s the Summer Bible School program thrived. Maude Geil, Robert Alger, and Linden Wenger were among those dozens of young adults who went to Buckhorn in ministry and taught. Men from Buckhorn would come to Rockingham County and work on Mennonite farms during harvest season. They were shown hospitality.

When the folks at Buckhorn asked Northern District ministers if they could have their

own meetinghouse, the ministers raised the money in the home base churches. Home base churches were generous with money and labor to build a cinder block structure in 1948.

All four gifts (hospitality, generosity, itinerancy, and ministry) came together in that Northern District outpost, a remote region in mountainous Hardy County. In the early 1970s, Buckhorn merged with Cove, Cullers Run, and Mt. Hermon to form Mathias Mennonite Church.

Hospitality (1): "The wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting," (Acts 2:2) probably while they were eating a meal. Did you know that the *Mennonite Community Cookbook* emerged out of the Trissels congregation? In 1950, Mary Emma Showalter Eby (1913-2003) completed her best-selling cookbook, published by Herald Press in 65 editions. Over 500,000 of the books have sold, making it the best-selling book of any EMC or EMU faculty member. Mary requested recipes, and she received several thousand, with some mailing their entire cookbook to her home in Broadway. She chose over 1100 recipes, including from a half dozen Trissels women and another half dozen from women in Hartville, Ohio, my community of origin. Mary Emma's cookbook was a gift of hospitality to her church, her conference, her denomination, our dinner tables, and far beyond.

When the Mennonite General Conference met in Harrisonburg, August 1919, preliminary meetings took place at Zion and Trissels, with Bishop Lewis and Mattie Shank's kitchen table being the hub of activities. *Gospel Herald* Editor Daniel Kauffman came to Broadway for those meetings. After almost every Mennonite

family in the area helped host the 1000 visitors who came, and after the Virginians gave a surplus offering of \$1000 for missions above expenses, Daniel Kauffman wrote that “When it comes to hospitality the Virginia brethren never do things by halves.”

Seventy years ago, July 23-25, 1952, for the tenth time, Trissels hosted the annual Virginia Conference meetings. Moderator Truman H. Brunk Sr. welcomed newly ordained ministers Norman Derstine, Dan Smucker, and Myron Augsburg. At the end of the Conference the delegates passed a resolution of thanks to the Northern District for the kind hospitality shown the delegates.

Three years ago, September 9, 2019, the Trissels Hospitality Committee, with Zola Showalter and LuAnn Bender, showed wonderful hospitality, in a pre-covid world, serving a light meal to twenty-nine delegates and guests of the Northern District Council. Trissels did it again, offering up gracious southern hospitality.

The Spirit’s gift of hospitality flows out of a Christian commitment to serve the spiritual, physical, and economic needs of others. “Practice hospitality (Romans 12:13), and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Generosity (2): Laura and Steve Campbell just returned after ten years of missionary work with Virginia Mennonite Missions in Montenegro. Trissels gave generously to their work and two leaders from this congregation served on their Ministry Support Team. They worked in a city where only a few have seen the light of Christ. I’ve read articles about their work, attended a fund-raiser or two, taught Laura in world history, but only recently learned that

Laura Moyers Campbell is an eighth-generation descendant of Daniel and Margaret Showalter (Margaret died 1816 and Daniel died 1822), some of the founders of Trissels. The historical records I’ve seen show that Trissels has been a generous congregation, supporting both the Conference and Virginia Mennonite Missions. A co-chair of the VMM capital campaign attends this congregation.

Some of you knew Mary Brunk Moyers (1913-2008), an outstanding quilter. She was also a generous woman. For sixty years attending here, she made around a hundred quilts that she donated to the Virginia Relief Sale. In 1987, Mary’s four quilts brought \$5000. In 1988, Mary’s “Jacobs’s Fan” brought an all-time high of \$5000. Mary and the Trissels Sewing Circle, since 1920, have been generous with their skills and service work.

The Spirit’s gift of generosity at Trissels extends to neighbors near and far. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need (Acts 2:44-45), and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Itinerancy (3): “The Holy Spirit said, ‘set apart Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them’...and the believers sent them off.” (Acts 13:2-3) Similar to the first century itinerancy of the apostles, a quickening, an awakening, a Spirit-inspired mission’s impulse moved among Virginia Mennonites after the Civil War. Leaders saddled up and rode into the western highlands. Spurred by a desire to preach the gospel, Mennonite ministers rode to remote mountain regions and preached in schoolhouses, union churches, and people’s homes. In some locations, like Buck-

horn, the Northern District built meeting-houses for new churches.

Inspired partly by the wider Protestant mission's movement, Northern District ministers traveled like itinerant apostles in the Book of Acts, going from one place to the next, preaching the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because they believed in the good news of Jesus. And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Samuel Shank Sr. led the way in the Northern District and went into West Virginia even before the Civil War. He was followed by bishops John Geil, Abraham Shank, and Lewis Shank. Itinerant ministers rode thousands of miles on horseback and carriage, and then automobile. Their ranks include Samuel Shank Jr., George B. Showalter, Mark C. Showalter Sr., Perry E. Shank, Timothy Showalter, Joseph W. Geil, J. Hopkins Turner, and Samuel A. Shank.

John S. Coffman was a renowned Mennonite evangelist of the late nineteenth century. John Coffman grew up in the Virginia Conference. At age twenty-six, October 1876, he traveled with Northern District minister Samuel Shank Jr. on a three-day horse-back riding jaunt to schoolhouses and churches north of Trissels. Coffman and Shank stayed in homes of local people and they preached wherever folks would listen to their messages. They went to Lost River, Baker, and Wardensville. Coffman's journal is how we know details. It is hardly an overstatement to say that a Virginia man sparked the late nineteenth century missions awakening in the Mennonite Church which came right down into this church.

About twenty years ago, Martha Shank

Whissen (1914-2019) brought her father's oil lantern along to church at Zion. Perry E. Shank, her father, served Trissels and the Northern District for over fifty years as a minister. At age eighty-three Perry attended the 1952 Conference here at Trissels. A farmer from Broadway with little education, Perry was ordained by lot. Perry rode horseback, carriage, and car into the mountains. Perry used an oil lantern on his buggy when driving at night. In the early twentieth century, Perry ministered in several dozen schoolhouses and churches of the Northern District. He believed in mission. He'd leave on Friday from his Broadway farm and come home late Sunday evening, with his lantern. J. Ward Shank tells of his father leaving after a Sunday evening service, having three flat tires on the way home, and arriving at 4 a.m.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Trissels and Northern District ministers launched an itinerant mission's movement that inspired a host of young adults from this church, the Northern District, and the Virginia Conference. Twenty-two churches emerged in the highlands, like Buckhorn, and it was considered home mission, done without the support of a mission board.

Ministry (4): The era of itinerancy from leaders prompted a quickening, an awakening, a movement of the Spirit among Virginia Mennonites, that lasts to this day. Four stories to illustrate. Mattie Shank traveled with her bishop husband for decades, assisting his work of visitation, counseling women, helping with communion, attending at funerals, and providing coverings and bonnets. Though not ordained a deaconess, she operated like one. One of the largest early twentieth century funerals at Trissels and Zion was of Mattie Shank, in

1934, when hundreds came to pay their respects.

Elizabeth A. Showalter (1907-1998) was one of the pioneers of the Summer Bible School program in the Northern District and the Mennonite Church. She followed her father, George B. Showalter, who had ridden hundreds of preaching itinerant circuits into West Virginia. Elizabeth taught Sunday School and developed Summer Bible School curriculum. Elizabeth said that in 1938 over half the 1050 Northern District Mennonites were folks in the highlands. Elizabeth knew of eleven Sunday schools in the district, needing 70-80 workers to staff the classes, with 25-70 students in each location. Elizabeth reported that to go from the home base in Broadway to each of the preaching appointments separately and return, one would travel 1500 miles. There's a fun photo in the Trissels history book of Elizabeth taking twenty children in her car to Summer Bible School at Hebron, in Fulks Run. Summer Bible Schools began in the Northern District in 1932, and Elizabeth helped pioneer and energize the work. During the 1930s and 1940s there was nothing like this anywhere in the Mennonite Church. Harry A. Brunk uses a page and a half of fine print to list all the Northern District youth who served. Elizabeth took her experience in the highlands to Scottsdale and wrote Summer Bible School curriculum for the Mennonite Church. She edited *Words of Cheer* and was known as "Aunt Beth" to her readers. In 1961, she began "Books Abroad," in the red barn, Harrisonburg, to furnish donated used books for institutions and



Joel Ross (center) played Timothy Funk and led a "singing school" in the Singers Glen musical drama, September 18, 2022. This year was the twelfth edition of the Singers Glen Music and Heritage weekend, beginning in 1978. The musical drama portrays events in Singers Glen from the 1830s and 1840s. The superbly done event took place in Singers Glen, Va.

Photo by Editor

persons overseas.

Helen Trumbo Shank (1925-2020) was among those dozens of youth in the 1940s from Trissels, Zion, and Lindale who volunteered their summers and traveled into the highlands to conduct summer Bible school. Helen remembered that during one summer in the early 1940s, when she was 17-18, she taught five Summer Bible School sessions of two weeks each. Business people in the district provided her a trailer or a tent while she lived away from home. The Mennonite community encouraged their young people in this local mission's endeavor, and responsive young adults reveled in the mission impulse of their home base church communities. Helen remembered visiting mountain homes in the afternoons and evenings. At mealtime on one occasion, Helen recalled, with three teachers,

“One got a spoon, one a fork, and one a knife.”

Amanda Showalter (1891-1980) often accompanied her husband Mark C. Showalter Sr. (1895-1978) to highland churches where they served as energetic and dynamic Mennonite mission developers. Married in 1919, Amanda and MC gave their best years to small congregations. Mark used his poultry industry business skills to help families earn an income and provide for their needs. MC first convinced a family to build a brooder house, then he supplied a wood-burning brooder stove, chicks, and feed. Fourteen weeks later he marketed the birds and paid the family.

For over twenty years Amanda and MC helped raise up Salem Mennonite Church, Hardy County, W. Va. Then in the early 1950s, Amanda and MC helped start the Stephens City Mennonite Church. Amanda and Mark were seldom seen on Sunday mornings at Trissels or Zion. Instead, they drove to mission stations to support small mountain churches. Oh, Amanda and MC offered itinerant ministers and Summer Bible School workers “gospel gas,” where all you had to do was stop at their farm, fill up your vehicle, and write down how many gallons you pumped.

My call is that God would spark a quickening, an awakening of Holy Spirit gifts for mission in our era. Pastor David Augsburg wrote in the Trissels bulletin in 1963, “Mission is to the church as fire is to burning.” Outreach was the reason for building the 1965 Educational wing. Four community families joined here in 1960s. I’m calling for a home based mission awakening, to neighbors and friends nearby, like when Nelson Swope began a Sunday morning ministry at Living Water Senior Care in Timberville, 1990, and this congrega-

tion rallied to help. I raise this missional vision praying and believing that with Holy Spirit gifts like hospitality, generosity, itinerancy, and ministry, we can reenergize our churches to focus on mission once again. A focus on mission is in the VMC strategic plan, the Conference mission statement, and now is the time to refocus and energize that Holy Spirit vision.

Our Master called us to “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

## A Tribute to Glendon L. Blosser (1930-2022)

By Owen E. Burkholder

*Editor’s Note: Owen Burkholder delivered this tribute to Glendon Blosser, July 10, 2022, at Glendon’s Memorial Service, held in a full church house at Weavers Mennonite Church. The Editor attended the service. Owen Burkholder has served as Moderator of Virginia Conference, Executive Director of Virginia Conference, and Moderator of the Mennonite Church.*

*Glendon chaired the Virginia Conference Historical Committee in 2011 that initiated the new Virginia Conference history book that the Editor and Steve Nolt are now writing.*

Can one be forgiven for chuckling when reading an obituary?

The fourth paragraph says, “As a young man, Glendon responded to a call to ministry, an avocation that led him to pastor Zion Hill Mennonite Church in Singers Glen...” It goes on to list Glendon’s service in Central District, Virginia Mennonite Conference, and the Men-

nonite Church...

In 1999 (23 years ago) Glendon wrote in “I Trust My Church,” that he had “preached 2919 sermons in 157 different churches in seven different countries...” Doing the math, that is 66 sermons a year for the 44 years of ministry to that date. That is way more than full-time ministers preach these days.

Do you see why I chuckled? Glendon’s church work was his calling and the only thing avocational about it is that he got paid for very little of it.

The Mennonite Church owes a great deal to Dorothy and the family, to Boyd Burkholder and others, who kept the farms going while Glendon was off serving the church.

Let us review his work of church leadership beyond the congregation.

Glendon served with his Father, Mahlon, and then followed him in bishop/overseer work in Central District of Virginia Mennonite Conference. He was bishop from 1969-1992, and overseer from 1992 – 2003. That is a total of 34 years. Noting the change of terminology from “bishop” to “overseer” indicates that Glendon served his generation through some remarkable



Glendon L. Blosser (1930-2022) and Dorothy Nice Blosser (1932-2004), about 2000.

Photo from Glendon Blosser collection

## Amish Population In Virginia

Since our 2021 “Directory of Mennonites and Amish in Virginia” (*Historian*, Summer 2021), the Amish population in Virginia has increased by well over 200, with four additional settlements since a year ago. The Amish continue to move into the state of Virginia. The Young Center collects the research and published the information in *The Budget*, August 10, 2022. No information is available about the Meadows of Dan settlement.

County	Settlement	Settlement Date	Districts	Estimated population
Carroll/Patrick	Laurel Fork	2021	1	20
Charlotte	Charlotte Court House	1997	3	465
Cumberland	Farmville/Buckingham	2016	4	230
Giles	Pearisburg	1993	1	150
Giles	Springdale	2020	1	15
Halifax	Nathalie	2005	4	405
Highland	Monterey	2019	1	60
Lee	Rose Hill	2020	1	90
Patrick	Meadows of Dan			
Pittsylvania	Chatham	2013	1	60
Pittsylvania	Gretna	2019	1	55
Richmond	Northern Neck	2019	1	170
Tazewell	Burkes Garden	2012	1	100

transitions.

As bishop/overseer of Central District, Glendon was involved in the leadership function of Virginia Mennonite Conference. At the conference level, his gifting and work ethic soon had him serving as secretary of the executive committee and eventually as moderator of the conference.

As a leader in the VMC, he was soon called upon to represent the conference in the wider church. And so began a two-way street of mutual influence. It is fascinating to me, for example, that in 1971 there was a major consultation around the reorganization of the broader Mennonite Church. And in 1974 there was a major revision in the organization of Virginia Mennonite Conference. Glendon was absorbing ideas from other conferences that he brought back to VMC. For example, from Lancaster Conference he picked up a mentoring idea out of which grew Virginia's Paul/Timothy program. Meanwhile VMC helped shape the Mennonite Church by providing it with a goodly number of moderators – the position Glendon filled from 1979 to 1981.

Glendon was fascinated by the principles that guided things. An example that shows up in his writings is the deeply held assumption that “the congregation is the primary expression of the church.” So, church agencies were to help serve the needs of the congregation. That list of curiosities for Glendon could go on and on...

Let me note one more thing about Glendon's leadership in the church. He was one of the last of what I call, “briefcase administrators.” He and the likes of Harold Eshleman carried the beginning of mission and school endeavors while working from home. They paved the way for the next generation (myself included) to be paid for the development of

### Shenandoah Historian's Event

John Roth will deliver a public lecture on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at the Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., 6:00 p.m. Admission is free. Dr. Roth,



formerly a history professor at Goshen College, now works for MennoMedia, with the Anabaptism at 500 Project. Roth will speak about the Mennonite Church at its Quincentennial. All are welcome!

church institutions.

Let me speak personally for a moment. Ruth Ann and I arrived in Harrisonburg in the fall of 1972 for my first year at Eastern Mennonite Seminary. With a little bit of listening, I soon figured out that Virginia Mennonite Conference had recently experienced the leaving of a group that would later become South-eastern Mennonite Conference. Glendon along with then Moderator John R. Mumaw worked carefully with that division.

I remember Glendon as a personal encourager. More than once after he heard me speak, he thanked me. Once he said, “you're fresh.”

Another vivid memory is a picture I saw in some publication with Glendon and several others and Glendon's eyes were shining. Consider the cover of our bulletin. See those eyes? He was alive from within. Glendon brought together the administrative work of the church with a keen emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Well done, good and faithful servant. You have entered into the joy of your Lord.



Eastern Mennonite School YPCA Cabinet (Young Peoples Christian Association), 1938.

Front row, L-R: Earl R. Delp, Sadie Hartzler, Ernest Bennett, Hubert Pellman, and Emma Catherine Shank. Back row, L-R: Robert O. Hess, Joseph H. Garber, Robert Henry Garber, Grant Stoltzfus, Harry A. Brunk, unidentified, Melvin Ruth, Melvin Glick, Anna Rohrer, Daniel W. Lehman, Charles Hertzler, and J. Otis Yoder.

Photo from EMU Archives; names credit to Archivist Simone Horst

During the 1930s and '40s, the Eastern Mennonite School's Young People's Christian Association carried out many service and mission activities. Groups from EMS traveled during breaks or the summer, visiting and ministering in places like the Knoxville Mennonite Mission, Tenn. YPCA students and teachers initiated the mid-'30s ministry at the Gay Street Mission in Harrisonburg. For years thereafter, students taught, distributed tracts, visited in homes, and attended services at Broad Street and Chicago Avenue Mennonite Mission.

Virginia Conference Archivist Simone Horst found this photo in the EMU archives in the Hartzler Library. The EMU library is named for Sadie Hartzler, one of the faculty sponsors in the photo above.

The Editor's surprise in the photo was to discover that Emma Catherine Shank, above right, was one of the six orphans when Daniel and Abbie Shank died in the 1920 influenza pandemic. She was five when her parents died, and they are buried in the Zion Mennonite Church cemetery. Emma Shank married Earl Delp, seated left. When they graduated from EMS in 1938, both about twenty-two, they moved to Newport News, Va., where they became Superintendent and Matron at the Warwick River Mennonite Church city mission. For six years Earl and Emma Delp served the new church in Newport News, and Earl wrote correspondence a half dozen times that appeared in *Gospel Herald*. Earl and Emma had three children when they lived in Newport News. Later, Earl was a Virginia Conference Minister and Bishop, serving mainly in the Northern District.



A Singing at Cove Mennonite Church, Mathias, W.Va., June 6, 2004.

Ray and Lucy Helmick, Gladys and Merlin Harman, Margaret Shenk, Sue Ringgold, Kitty Pangle, Lois Bowman, Winfred and Glee Delawder, Desiree Whetzel, Ashley Brooks, Lorisa Hege, Keturah Whetzel, Alina Hege, Virgil Weaver, Grace and Sanford Hege, Karen Moyers, Naomi and Stanley Moyers, Dwight and Fannie Heatwole, Mark and Dorothy Showalter, Esther and John Landis, Allen Hertzler, Ruth L. Burkholder, Carolyn Propst, Bud Propst, Dalton Hege, Rita and Richard Delawder, Garnett and Esther Whetzel, Janie Fitzwater, Donnie and Janie Lester, Jesse Link, Boyd and Sharon Burkholder, Duane and Zola Showalter, Mark N. Lehman, Virgie Fulk, Evelee Barb, Justin Hege, Ray Propst, Ruby Weaver, Judy Estep, Norman and Mary Ketterman, Harold Emswiler, Carolyn Whetzel, Missy Miller, William Barb, Martha Whetzel, Kenton Hege, Eileen and James Shenk, Thelma and Stanley Good, Heidi Showalter, Lydia and Wayne Weaver, Preston Showalter, Donnie Halterman, Irene Mullenax, and Emily and Tom Weaver.

Photo by David Showalter; Menno Simons Historical Library

## A Sermon on Music

By Bishop Lewis J. Heatwole

Preached at Bank Mennonite Church, Dayton, Va., April 30, 1906, with excerpts, taken from *Herald of Truth*, June 7, 1906

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).”

On this beautiful Sunday morning all the face of nature seems wreathed in smiles and sunshine. With hill and dale and mountain side clothed in the verdure of spring, we have all had a befitting

stimulus to inspire our hearts and tune our minds to melody while on the way to this house of worship.

Referring to the wonderful success that has attended the gospel meetings that have in late months been held, both in the East and West, by our evangelists and ministers generally, may it not have been because of the great revival of gospel singing in these congregations that God has been so wonderfully blessing the direct evangelistic effort that has been made?

The import of our text this morning implies that the song service in a Christian congregation constitutes the spirit and the very life of worship. It is that which thrills and animates the soul of the believer with the joy and inspiration for praise and thanksgiving to God.

Some worshipers appear more or less indifferent about being exercised in this form of worship, and yet with such it would be thought out of all gospel order for a service to be conducted without the exercising of voices, or in the making melody in the heart to the Lord through the medium of song. Though the rest of the service be ever so interesting, the prayer devout and earnest--or the sermon powerful and convicting--still if the worship be without the accompaniment of song it would be as an offering without incense--like flowers without fragrance, and as birds without song. The Sermon may serve to leave lasting impressions on the mind, but it is the full and hearty exercise of the singing that encourages and cheers one most; and in truth all of us are inclined to go away from God's house with the echo of the songs we sing still lingering on our lips.

Music that is without sentiment or harmony invariably fails to reach the seat of human affections, but the song that is sung with melody will penetrate to its inner shrine, or open the windows of the soul and cause a chord to vibrate there that may be deaf and dumb to every other appeal.

Where a multitude of trained singers are all joined together as it were in one voice, the effect is often overwhelming. Your humble servant once heard in the city of Baltimore a chorus said to be composed of 4000 voices, engaged in singing the well-known harmony, "Silently bury the dead," and the effect was most unspeakably grand.

What a mighty impulse could thus be given the evangelist in gospel work, what an uplifting power might be given to all our church work, were our congregations to unite more in earnest, joyful song at time of public worship.

Fifty years ago a great wave of song swept through our Shenandoah Valley. Our fathers and mothers of a generation ago greatly profited by it to the extent that many families became singing families where before singing had scarcely been known. The young people of that time assembled in bodies for Sunday afternoon song services. The stirring hymns and anthems of praise that were then sung still remain with our people as a goodly heritage, and they cling to the memory and linger upon the lips of our older people.

Music, to be strictly sacred, must be that which is produced by the human voice-box. It is God's instrument for the exercise of that species of song which alone makes melody in the heart, and by which his name can most appropriately be praised and glorified by men.

Music in the home and the proper cultivation of the home sentiment is all right. Patriotism and a love for one's country may also be proper; but to have these to partially or entirely absorb the mind to the exclusion of a love for sacred song, wrongly diverts the energy of many of our people. What we need most in our day is a home sentiment and a patriotism that prompts us to sing of that home and that country that God reserves for us in the glory world.



Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., hosted the 2022 Virginia Mennonite Conference Missions rally and delegate sessions, July 14-16, 2022. This was the fifteenth time Zion hosted Virginia Conference since the church began in 1885. The last time Zion hosted the Virginia Conference was in 1956, when Truman H. Brunk Sr. was moderator. Bishops of the Northern District, which includes Zion, in 1956, were John L. Stauffer, J. Ward Shank, and Timothy Showalter. In 1956, ten bishops, seventy ministers, and twenty-four deacons attended. The moderator of Virginia Conference in 2022 is Sara Wenger Shenk. The Editor served as a delegate for Zion at the 2022 Virginia Conference assembly. *Photo by the Editor*

The *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian* is published quarterly by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, established in 1993.

Officers of the Historians: Chair, James L. Hershberger; Treasurer, Norman Wenger; Secretary, James Rush; Lois Bowman Kreider; Gerald R. Brunk; and, Elwood E. Yoder, Editor

Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians  
5736 Brookside Cir.  
Lowville, NY 13367

If you have an idea for an article or picture for the *Historian*, contact the Editor at [elyoder@gmail.com](mailto:elyoder@gmail.com).

All past issues of *Shenandoah Mennonite Historian*, from 1994-2020, can be found at [mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net](http://mennonitearchivesofvirginia.net). This site includes a link to over 1,600 photos related to Mennonites in Virginia, provides a way to subscribe to *Historian* online, and connects readers to the Editor's history blog.

An annual individual membership fee for the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians is \$10.00 per year, which includes a subscription to the *Historian*. Additional family memberships are \$5 each. Send membership fees to James Rush, e-mail at [jamesrush@comcast.net](mailto:jamesrush@comcast.net), phone 540-434-0792, or U.S. mail to James Rush, 5736 Brookside Cir., Lowville, NY 13367.