

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Lloyd Cressman, June 25, 1946

Levi T. Pennington

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Lloyd S. Cressman,
2330 No. Halsted St.,
Chicago 14, Illinois.

June 25, 1946.

Dear Friend:--

It was certainly good to get your letter of the 21st., for it was not only as the Indian said, "Long time no see" but also "Long time no hear."

We are certainly glad that things are going so well with you there, and we shall let a lot of other folks share the good news of that scholarship. To be among the first four in a class of forty puts a man right up among the pictures, and we congratulate you.

The Northwest Friends Service Committee for a long time confined its activities solely to the paying of the bare charges of Oregon Yearly Meeting conscientious objectors in the Civilian Public Service camps (and they were not willing to do that for Edwin Sanders except as funds were specifically designated for him, not only because they did not agree with his refusal to register, but because they held that having gone to prison he should have stayed there, and not entered a C.P.S. camp to become an expense to Friends.) A year ago or maybe two the yearly meeting instructed them to enlarge the scope of their work, but the chairman did not find it out until the middle of the year. But now, with the new organization of the Service Board under the new discipline, foreign relief is definitely a part of the work with which the board is charged, and it is the plan to have a service committee in every monthly meeting, to furnish clothing, collect funds for food and medicine, etc. And so I am referring Mrs. Nosler to the Portland member of the yearly meeting's committee, and I am sure that through the Portland Service Committee she can get her contributions to relief into the proper channels.

The antagonism of many in the yearly meeting to the American Friends Service Committee has led to the recommendation that relief go through the National Association of Evangelicals, who until very recently administered only clothing relief. But it was decided in the Service Board meeting at yearly meeting time that relief could be sent through any channels that were desired by the local meetings and the donors, and if Mrs. Nosler wants hers to go through the American Friends Service Committee, she can so designate it.

Yes, Carl Byrd is coming as our pastor the first of September. We feel a good deal better about it than does the Lent's meeting. A considerable part of that meeting have been determined that he should not leave them. There is another element in the meeting that have made it disagreeable for him, I understand, and they'll probably bear up under his departure with heroic fortitude.

Oregon Yearly Meeting closed its 54th. session a week ago tomorrow. There were a number of innovations, one of them being the delay of starting the yearly meeting till Thursday afternoon for the meeting on ministry and oversight and Friday morning for the yearly meeting proper, though the representatives

were called and instructed at the opening of the evening meeting Thursday, and they then retired and went to work, for under the new discipline they are to name half of all the different boards of the yearly meeting. As you perhaps know, the new discipline went into effect as far as the organization of the different departments are concerned this year. It may work better than I anticipate, but when temperance and public morals, education, peace, ^{denial of} literature and perhaps another line of work or two are all put under one board; and when a man is named as head of that board -- well, maybe I've said enough, but I do not expect an ocean liner to be handled successfully with an outboard motor.

On the surface things went quite peacefully for the most part, though there were some differences of opinion. The two points on which there was marked difference of views, the matter of what yearly meetings we are to correspond with, and the matter of the deposing of Robert H. Dann from the ministry.

The former came out into the open when our epistle committee read excerpts from the American yearly meetings, including Philadelphia, New York, New England, Canada, and even the Pacific Coast Association of Friends. First there was objection to that last one, but before it was over they had objected to receiving or sending epistles to any of the ones named, and perhaps one or two others. They put into the hands of a committee the task of deciding just what yearly meetings shall share in our correspondence for the present at least. (Great fear that we may in some way be associated with Hicksites.) I was either very naughty or truthful (and often the latter is more annoying than the former) for when our own epistle was read and they were debating where they should and where they should not send it, I remarked that if we sent only to the yearly meetings that we thought were as good as we thought ourselves to be, we'd hardly need to write an epistlae at all, we'd have no place to send it.

You know a good deal already about the Robert Dann case. Last year it was referred to the committee on ministry with the instruction that they were to seek a detailed statement of his theological beliefs, as is required of one just recommended for the ministry, and that the committee was to have a personal interview with him as with a new ministerial candidate. The chairman of the committee admitted that he did not even know that they had been so instructed, but the report of the committee, which met to consider the matter June 17 during yearly meeting and while Robert Dann was away, probably on his way to New Zealand and Australia for a year of service under the Friends Service Committee, was as follows:

The committee on ministry met June 17, 1946 to consider the case of Robert Dann, referred to it at the meeting of June, 1945.

After carefully considering the evidence in the case and reading the correspondence in connection with it, it appeared to the committee that Robert Dann had lost his gift in the ministry and was not in harmony with the beliefs of Oregon Yearly Meeting. The committee therefore recommends that Robert Dann's standing as a minister of Oregon Yearly Meeting be discontinued.

(Signed) A. Clark Smith, Chairman.

There was really no question from the first as to what was going to happen, though there were some who still insisted that the matter should have been handled according to the discipline. But they wanted him out, and now he is out, with so much irregularity in the proceedings from the beginning that it leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Aside from these two matters there was little to mark the yearly meeting as anything out of the ordinary for Oregon. Richard L. Wiles, superintendent of Kansas Yearly Meeting, was the principal speaker at the evening sessions and for the inspirational hour. Five ministers were recorded to the one deposed. Of the 46 representatives to the meeting on ministry and oversight, 21 were absent when the roll was called.

There is much opposition to some features of the new discipline. One that is already a dead letter so far as many of the ministers is concerned is the one that says, "Every minister not a pastor whose membership rests within the yearly meeting, regardless of his place of residence, shall make an annual report to the yearly meeting on ministry and oversight and to the general superintendent.....All reports shall be sent to the clerk of the yearly meeting on ministry and oversight in the month before the yearly meeting convenes or earlier, and the former shall refer them at once, on the opening of the yearly meeting session, to the yearly meeting committee on ministry. The committee shall examine carefully and individually each report. If any report is unsatisfactory, or if no report is sent, the committee shall report the names of the persons involved to the yearly meeting on ministry and oversight with recommendation for investigation or action. The yearly meeting on ministry and oversight shall then do as it deems best in each case." There were some ministers who said, when this provision was forced on us last year, that they would not report, and that nobody could compæa them to. Of the 68, the total of ministers in the yearly meeting who are not pastors, 39 reported, and 29 did not. I made my report, but noted on it that I was ready to defend any minister who declined to do it. Well, if they do undertake to deal with those 29 -- they did not take it up this year, but they may next -- there will be some excitement, I should say.

Perhaps enough about yearly meeting -- maybe a lot too much. It was gratifying to see that no attack was made on the college nor on President Gulley at this session. The committee appointed to see if there was not some way for the yearly meeting to give the college \$25,000.00 in spite of the withdrawal of that request by the college board had done nothing, and was discharged at this session. If they had heeded my warning, the request would never have been made.

President Gulley made a resume of some of the progress made during this first five years of his administration, and some of it was decidedly impressive. Perhaps the most impressive thing was the increase in the endowment of more than \$120,000.00. Perhaps that was not quite so good as it looks, for a substantial part of that increase came through the selling, at a considerable advance over the purchase price, of a considerable part of the endowment, and investing the proceeds in stocks

at a lower price that were considered as sound but were more productive of income. The biggest single addition to the endowment came through a gift of that Mr. Roberts who was head of Roberts Brothers department store in Portland. Rebecca and I are the only ones connected with Pacific College who have ever seen him. I suspect that addition to the endowment was listed at \$50,000.00, as Pacific College was made one of the five beneficiaries to share equally in the bequest of a business building in Portland that is producing an income of 6% net on \$200,000.00 -- the building could be sold at once for \$250,000.00 if desired. Another gift was one of business property in Newberg that is worth \$15,000.00 at least -- that was also in a will that was made a good long time ago. I do not know how the "living endowment" was listed -- I raised between \$4,000.00 and \$5,000.00 on that one year, and most of it was to be repeated every year for five years.

George Moore has been released from his duties on the faculty to be the financial agent for the college for the coming year. He may secure half a million dollars for the college, but if he does one tenth of it, you can cancel my prophet's licence.

You probably know of the \$36,000.00 housing project on the campus, three four-family houses on the corner of Sheridan and River, the athletic field, and three on the north campus, beyond the place where the start of the new gymnasium stands forlornly. There is also a building on the south campus for the administrator of the project. Part of the housing, twelve families, are for students, and the other half for G.I.'s who are not to be in school. There have been Greek temples that were more beautiful than any of these buildings.

Wish I knew the things that you'd like to know about people and institutions in Newberg. You know, I suspect, of the community wide effort to raise money and clothing for the relief of the suffering peoples of Europe. Friends in Newberg gave liberally -- I believe the total was something like \$1,800.00 in cash, besides nearly a ton of clothing. *(We sent in \$2,140.00, but some of it was given by non-Friends.)*

We cannot get a permit to build a new parsonage, now that the old one has been removed and sold. They tell us that the only way we could get a building permit would be for us to employ a G.I. as pastor, and there seems to be a sort of inconsistency, somehow, in seeking a Quaker pastor among those who have been in the killing business so recently. A week ago Carl Byrd did not know where he was going to live when he came here. The last day of yearly meeting the folks thought they might have found something -- a woman who owns a house thinks she may be moving out of it soon, and promised to give the church the first chance to rent it. *(She is the daughter of that old Mrs. Jackson, whom you probably remember. She died during yearly meeting.)*

You probably know of the death of Lida Madsen and other Friends and friends here. But if you want to ask about anybody or anything hereabouts, do not hesitate to do so, and I'll do my best to answer.

With kindest regards from both of us to both of you,

Sincerely your friend,