

Levi Pennington

People

1-14-1947

Levi Pennington Writing to Clayton & Louella Brown, January, 14, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington

Recommended Citation

Pennington, Levi T., "Levi Pennington Writing to Clayton & Louella Brown, January, 14, 1947" (1947). *Levi Pennington*. 135.

https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/levi_pennington/135

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the People at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Levi Pennington by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

1000 Sheridan Street,
Newberg, Oregon,
January 14, 1947.

Clayton and Louella Brown,
Friends Mission,
Kitega, Urundi,
Congo Belge, Africa.

Dear Friends:--

This letter is being started on thin paper, not because I expect to write so much as to overload the mails if I should write on the customary bond paper, but because I never can tell when I start just how much I'll write before I get through. I want to play safe.

It was good to get your Christmas and New Year's greeting; better still to get it along with the personal letter.

"Drum time" was a new one for me, but I had no difficulty in seeing what it meant. We shall all be glad indeed that you are to have some time in the United States next year, and hope that it may be a happy and fruitful time, giving you some real rest and re-creation. Too often we do not give our furloughed missionaries half a chance for the rest they need and ought to have, but work them so hard at home that one might imagine them feeling relieved when they get back to the regular job. I know I used to feel a sort of sense of relaxation when college opened in the fall and I could get back to the regular job.

We have been very busy folks of late for people who have retired and therefore have nothing to do. My brother says that he wishes I were not so "actively retired." And I have seen a good many times when I thought the word "retired" was a very fitting one, especially if it were hyphenated, "re-tired", tired again. Here's how the year has gone with me thus far, with Rebecca cooperating -- without her help a lot of it would have been impossible.

I helped the New Year in by preaching at the annual watch-night service of the Christian church here, where I used the text, "His name shall be called Wonderful", speaking of Christ as being wonderful in what He was, son of God and son of man, God manifested in the flesh, the Word which was God made flesh and dwelling among men; wonderful in what He came to do, other religions showing man trying to get to God while Christianity shows us God trying, through the gift of His Son, to reach man; wonderful in what He has done -- the world with all its evil being a very different place from what it would have been had He not come; wonderful in what He is now doing -- you there have perhaps a better opportunity to see that than we do in many places in this country; wonderful in what He is yet to do, till all the kingdoms of the world become His kingdoms; wonderful most of all in His power to transform the individual human soul into His own likeness.

intend to
Well, I did not/tell you about every sermon and other address that I have given, but to tell of my activities this year, just as if that were important. (I can see that I am already getting so voluble that you ought not to try to read this letter until you have lots of time, with no pressing duties -- if there are ever such occasions with you. Perhaps

you could postpone reading it until you are on shipboard, on the way home. Will that be a somewhat easier time for you? I am such a poor sailor that at times if my inheritance of a fortune depended on my reading the will, I'd hardly be able to read it, or would hardly care enough. The three worst jokes in the world are homesickness, seasickness and lumbago e- and I've tried them all.

To resume, though perhaps I ought not. On New Year's Day the Friends church here had its annual Fellowship Dinner, a regular custom of late years for that day. It was the first time that we have been there for some years. Last year we were in Florida on New Year's Day, the state that is farthest from Oregon; and the year before I was suffering torture with polyneuritis -- in bed for five months and losing more than 30 pounds in weight. Well, at this New Year's dinner we raised \$125.00 to apply on the purchase of a heifer in this Heifers-for-Relief campaign. We have since put \$35.00 with it, and our church is the first one in Yamhill County, so far as I know, to make one of these gifts, so that we'll presently be furnishing milk for ten children, in China, for the next shipment goes to that country. Already there have been 4,000 of these bred and tested heifers sent to parts of the war-ravaged countries where there is food for cattle but no cattle. (And this last gift is in addition to nearly \$3,000.00 that the local church has sent for overseas relief in the past year.)

It is taking me a long time to travel twenty-four hours. Indeed I've not got that far, for that evening occurred our monthly meeting, of which I am now clerk, and we had a lot of business that night.

The next day Rebecca and I sorted and packed 315 pounds of used clothing for overseas relief. We've sent tons of this clothing, most of it used, though some of it is new. At one time we sent 121 pairs of new shoes, given us by Abe Wolfman, a Jewish second-hand dealer here in Newberg who has been in the clutches of the law repeatedly, but who gave us these shoes rather than sell them, as he had a chance to do. They were old-fashioned shoes, with high tops, but they covered both the toes (which some shoes these days do not) and the ankles, were of the low heeled varieties wanted for overseas relief, and were of fine leather. They will be a godsend to many a woman across the water -- I forgot to say that they were all women's shoes.

And still I do not get on with any speed. I'll try to hurry. The next day I got these boxes of clothing shipped, and attended a meeting of the county leaders in this Heifers-for-Relief campaign, where I was the principal speaker, as I had organized the county before Christmas, and supposedly knew more about it than anybody else in the county. I am on the executive committee for the county, and also on the state committee.

The next day was a sad one. I learned of the trouble in the family of a minister who is a good friend of mine, his 17 year old son having been involved in a number of burglaries and being in the county jail awaiting sentence, having waived grand jury investigation and pleaded guilty. I worked on that case. The next day, Sunday, I was in the morning service, and then had charge of the evening service, as our pastor was beginning a series of evangelistic meetings in Springbrook. I

spoke on "How to Meet Temptation" that evening, mostly or at least largely to an audience of college students; but I'll be merciful and not tell you how I handled that subject.

Monday there was a good deal of work on the case of this preacher's son, and then a trip to Portland for a meeting of a committee to plan united publicity for the various agencies doing work in overseas relief. Merciful again -- I'll not tell you the plans we made for that.

I'll skip Tuesday and Wednesday, for though I was busy enough both days, it was just in packing things for the Good will Industries, catching up with my correspondence, talking with the sheriff and district attorney about this preacher's son and what ought to be done in the case, etc. But Thursday I went with the parents of the boy, who was up for sentence that morning. To my surprise; the judge asked me to speak in the case. I had no speech prepared, and I made no attempt to condone the boys crimes; but I did suggest, though I was not sure I had a right to speak so to a judge till he told me I had, that the State Parole Board make some further investigation as to the boy's background and such things as that, before sentence was imposed. Well, after I had spoken, the judge did better than I had suggested. He released the boy on parole, without sentence, so that if the fellow now behaves himself for the next three years, he is entirely free of any charge, without the prison term of years, which might have been imposed, to blacken his record and handicap his future. I think the boy was grateful; I know his parents were, since both the judge and the sheriff assured them that it was my influence that secured this leniency, by which I hope the boy will profit.

I'll try to hurry. An address at the Methodist church was the principal extra the next day; Sunday there were two young men with us one of whom was to face a federal judge today for violation of the requirements under conscription, and judging by the action of the federal judges in this area recently he will probably not far badly; after they left yesterday I had a long conference with Handsaker, head of this Heifers-for-Relief campaign for the Pacific Northwest and two Brethren ministers of Southern Oregon, one of them a graduate of the college, who wanted suggestions as to how we had organized this county for this campaign, and how we had conducted two other community-wide campaigns for relief. They would have been glad if I could have promised to spend a week or two in southern Oregon in the interests of this campaign, but I did not promise that. My own health is not what it used to be -- I was laid up for more than two weeks by a cold that I contracted while organizing this county, and Rebecca's health was far below par all last summer, though she is much better now.

One of the things that has been very hard on her, and on me, is the college situation. With an avowed determination to make the college more intensely evangelistic, and with a perfectly clear intention of getting control of it, a minority of the college board have taken advantage of the absence of some members of the board and the removal from the state of another, to force Emmett W. Gulley's resignation, and thereby to throw away a quarter of a million dollars in one lump. (A very old man who has known me for a third of a century and Gulley half as long had made his will in favor of the college for \$250,000.00 and perhaps more, but threatened to cut it down

to less than half that sum when Gulley was attacked a year and a half ago, but went the whole way when he was given a five years contract and promised loyalty and cooperation. When he learned that Gulley had been forced out ^{he} changed his will, cut the college off without a cent, is giving the entire estate to another school, and plans to get the money to work before he dies. When I think of all the struggle and sacrifice that it cost to get the endowment we have, and think that our net endowment was about to be nearly or quite doubled, and when I realize that the college board, the faculty and the student body have been split into hostile factions and the breach in the yearly meeting widened, it makes my heart sick.

Well, I've talked far too much about me and Pacific College and Oregon Yearly Meeting and heifers and clothing and money for relief and all that sort of thing. Let's talk about the Browns some more.

We were interested indeed not only in your prospects for furlough in the United States, perhaps making the return trip with Prescott and his family. I hope that that dream comes true. How strange it seems that you have two married daughters and a son who is now a man. I am sure it will be a great treat to a mother to have you home, even if she cannot see you as plainly as she used to.

What a joy it must be to see from year to year the actual and relatively rapid advancement among the natives there of the kingdom of God in the hearts and lives of men and women and children. I can realize that you regret in a way to leave it, even on furlough; but you will be able to do more work in the long run because of the visit back in the United States; and perhaps your furlough will result in others responding to the call to the foreign field, perhaps your own field there. Three million speaking one language -- I did not know that that was true among the natives in any part of Africa.

We met Ralph Chate during his brief stay in this part of the country. His wife was in the hospital for a time while he was here, and we did not get to see her, but we hope that we may have that privilege before they return to Africa.

What a variety of tasks you have. We have grown a bit accustomed to many lines of work in addition to the evangelistic, which was so nearly all the work of missions at one time. We now think of education and industrial and agricultural advancement and other things that are not exclusively spiritual as essential parts of mission work; but a leper colony -- well, I had not thought of that in connection with your work there, though of course I knew that leprosy is still in the world, and I had no reason to suppose that your part of the world is exempt.

My guess is that it will not be too hard for you to adjust yourselves to the America you will find when you get back, though of course you will find some changes. We in the Pacific Northwest have been far less affected by some of the undesirable things than have other places. The coal strike, for instance, did not affect us as it did the east and middle west. Most of our houses are not heated with coal, but with wood or sawdust or oil or gas or electricity, generated by water power. Most of our locomotives are oil-burners; our gas is developed not

from coal for the most part, but from a low grade of oil; and so it goes. Of course if the strike had long continued we'd have felt it much more, for both land and water transportation depend on coal outside of this coastal area.

You ask about the new gymnasium. It is not entirely finished, but it is being used. Some rooms were completed early, long before the main part of the building was even under roof, and some of these rooms, though without heat, were used by men students as sleeping rooms.

The old college building, while greatly damaged, was left with walls intact, and it was repaired and largely remodeled. I have not been in it since the work there was completed, but they say it is a much more effective building than it was, and I can well believe it.

Perhaps you know that the college purchased the big house just across the street from Mrs. Woodward's home and made it into a second girls' dormitory. They finished five rooms and a big bath room on the third floor, so they have ten girls up there, besides those on the second floor and some, I think, on the first.

The field secretary of the college has promised that within a month from now he will have five or six new Ph.D.'s under contract with their salaries underwritten, and that next fall the college will have a student body of 250, with additional dormitory space for the extra hundred and more that all this would mean. Maybe he believes it, but I do not. He was given leave of absence at one time to raise \$50,000.00 in three months, and he raised about \$5,000.00. He was to raise \$50,000.00 in three months after last yearly meeting, and if he raised enough to pay his expenses he had not so reported at the end of that three months. He apparently helped to stir up the opposition to Gulley. Maybe he believes his own pipe-dreams, but I shall have to be shown, though I was born in Indiana, not Missouri.

But here I've rambled on and on, and it is surely time for me to end this, for there are a number of things that have developed since I started this letter that need attention without any more delay.

With best wishes from both of us to all of you, and the hope that we may meet you more than once while you are home on your furlough, I am

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.