

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to Catherine Woodward, January 23, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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January 23, 1947.

Mrs. Catherine Woodward,
223 College Avenue,
Richmond, Indiana.

Dear Friend:--

First let me say that I am sorry that I could not get this letter written the day I received yours, but it has been impossible to get at it until now. Yesterday was the first time I have had a chance to see Gervas Carey (his wife has been ill with the flu, and I have had to be away from Newberg, we have had company, etc.) and last night Ray Newton was meeting with Friends here, the meeting lasting till nearly ten o'clock and a good many of the friends staying till long after that.

First as to the request of Puget Sound Quarterly Meeting to be transferred to Oregon Yearly Meeting. I knew nothing of this until the receipt of your letter, though I found that Gervas Carey did know about it. As you say, it has been under consideration, in one way or another, for some decades now, and it would seem that there would be no especial hurry about it at this time. But there are elements in the situation that may be reasonably responsible for the desire for haste.

You know, of course, of the request made by the Evangelism and Church Extension department of this yearly meeting for forgiveness for our violation of our agreement with Indiana Yearly Meeting a good many years ago, the agreement by which we agreed to stay out of Indiana's territory in Washington. This request was decided upon during my illness some two years ago, and I understand that it included a request that Indiana release Oregon from the agreement, which it had never observed, and that Indiana did so release the territory. This has probably made the Puget Sound folks believe that they cannot in the future depend on any substantial help from Indiana, and had better look to Oregon in the future.

Another reason for haste may be the proposal for the organization of Pacific Yearly Meeting, a thing that is being considered by the Pacific Coast Association of Friends, and by such meetings as the University Meeting in Seattle. Maybe the Puget Sound Friends want to get into a nearer yearly meeting before such a problem as that would involve has to be solved.

My own guess is that the reason for haste is the reluctance of the Puget Sound Friends to be orphans so long. If they had got their request to Indiana Yearly Meeting at its last session and that body had acted favorably, they would still have had to wait till June before they could have been received officially by Oregon Yearly Meeting. If now they had to wait till the next session of Indiana Yearly Meeting and then wait after that till Oregon Yearly Meeting of 1948, the matter would be "up in the air" and they would not know what nor where they were going to be for nearly a year and a half. They could get the whole thing settled by next June if your permanent board took favorable action and they were received into Oregon Yearly Meeting.

As to the question of the effect of such a transfer on Pacific College, Gervas Carey is of the opinion that it would have no particular effect one way nor the other, and I agree with him on that point. So far as I can see, the college interests are not involved. I do not see that the change would do the college any good, nor do I anticipate that it could do any harm, so far as the college is concerned.

I am not quite sure whether the request for this transfer came officially from the quarterly meeting or from Herbert York personally and other proper persons(!), whoever they may be. I suppose your permanent board could make the transfer if they desired without an official request from the quarterly meeting, though it would have been much better if the request had come in the regular, official way, as I suppose it did.

Gervas Carey was pastor at Seattle for some time, and of course is closer to the situation there than I am. He tells me, and perhaps he would not want to be quoted, that he understands that Floyd Schmoer and Ben Darling are no longer the power in the University Meeting that they used to be -- and that is putting it much less emphatically than Gervas did, on the basis of information he had received from that area. Floyd, I believe, is in Hawaii, and Gervas says his wife is soon to join him there, and Ben has lost his place of leadership in the meeting, which, Gervas says, has been taken over by a group of Hicksite Friends. If this Pacific Yearly Meeting is established, my guess is that University Meeting would join it, by exactly what process I do not know. I do not know the nature of their membership, nor if they have members who belong both to University meeting and to some meeting with General Conference connections. If that is the case, there would be difficulty in their becoming and remaining members of Oregon Yearly Meeting. But that is perhaps nothing for your Permanent Board to worry about. Maybe the University Meeting would in some way disconnect themselves from Puget Sound Quarterly Meeting before the acceptance of that quarterly meeting by Oregon, even if that were completed before June has ended.

If all this can be of any help to your Permanent Board, or to you personally, I shall be glad indeed.

We are more than glad that you enjoyed the holly and the spruce. Sometimes we can't do much about sending holly to anybody. One year it did not have many more berries than a calla lillie would have had. Last year we were in North Carolina at Christmas time. The year before I was laid up with polyneuritis, and suffering torture, as I had been for weeks. And what next Christmas will bring nobody is wise enough to know. But 1946 saw the finest crop of berries our trees have ever had, I think, and we were more than glad to share it with you and with others.

We shall certainly want to see Elizabeth if she does come to Oregon after her graduation, and if it were possible for you to come, that would be grand. When she comes she must bring a lot of her verse, for we shall want her to read it to us -- we might even let somebody else hear some of it.

Must hurry and get this into the mail this morning.

Sincerely your friend,