

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to Rev. Jake Cunningham, May 20, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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May 20, 1947.

Rev. J. Frank Cunningham,
521 So. Howard St.,
Newberg, Oregon.

Dear Friend:--

Your letter of the 16th. was awaiting me on my return from a week's absence, and as I am leaving today for Grants Pass and Medford on this Heifers-for-Relief campaign, I am answering it at once.

And I have not much in the way of news in regard to the situation in Europe, and less in regard to the conditions in Asia. The outstanding facts remain about as they were, with no really big changes. Some of the things that hit me hardest are such facts as these:

Of the two billion people in the world, one fourth of them are living so far below an adequate food supply that the conditions of all of that 500,000,000 are those of near famine, and of many of them actually famine.

There are considerable areas in which there is not left a single child that was born in 1945; much larger areas in which nine out of every ten children born die before they reach the age of one year.

The diseases attendant upon mal-nutrition have greatly increased. Tuberculosis has increased in some areas three or four times what it was before the war. Such diseases as pneumonia are far more deadly because of the low vitality arising from mal-nutrition and starvation. This sort of thing can be multiplied, for there are so many diseases that are readily thrown off by a well-nourished child or adult, but that take occasion of poor physical condition to kill by the thousands. Of course rickets is a disease from which many of the children are suffering, largely because of lack of milk.

The loss of dairy cattle has been unprecedented in Europe. In Poland nine out of every ten were killed. Other countries did not suffer quite so heavy a loss, though the destruction of dairy cattle was almost as great in some of them.

It requires about 2,600 calories to maintain health if the daily ration is to be all that it ought; Americans' daily intake per person is about 3,600 on the average. We tried a German general as a war criminal for cutting the ration of Poland to 1,500 calories; but there are millions of Europeans now living on 1,250 calories or less.

Well, that's the sort of picture in the large. We get quantities of side lights on the situation. One of the more recent letters from one of our workers over in Europe tells of the utter hopelessness with which so many are facing the future there, and stresses the fact that requests for help have been reduced to just the barest necessities. College and

university professors of former years, physicians, lawyers, ministers, artists, musicians, scholars and all the rest, who used to be eager for books, music, and things of that sort, now ask only for food, clothing, shelter and fuel. There seem to be no other desires -- and not much hope of receiving these basic necessities for the maintenance of physical life.

The evidences of the joy that comes to the family and the community where these heifers are placed is overwhelming. The writers who express their thanks try to be reasonable and not overdo their expressions of gratitude, but it is not easy for parents to be moderate in their thanks for a gift that they know means that their children, otherwise doomed to die, are going to live and grow to maturity because of this gift which means milk and nourishment and life. Every heifer provides milk for from ten to a dozen or more children.

Wish I could be of more help to you and these young people. Hope they may have no trouble in raising more than they really expect to get. They should aim high. There are numerous individuals who ought not to aim at a contribution toward the purchase of a heifer, but ought to write a check for \$160.00 or some multiple of it. How I'd like to know that ten or a dozen children somewhere across the sea are living and well and happy because I had provided them with food, not for the present only, not for a year only, but for year after year, with my gift increasing in volume and helpfulness as the years pass and new milk-producers develop -- five years from now what a lot of children I'd be feeding, and Europe and Asia will not recover in that time, we may be sure, though we all hope that conditions may greatly improve within the coming year. But next winter is going to be quite as terrible as was last winter, unless more is accomplished than has yet been done.

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.