

Levi Pennington

People

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## Pennington to The Finance Committee For The Parsonage, March 11, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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March 11, 1948.

To the Finance Committee for the Parsonage,  
c/o Homer Hester, Chairman,  
1114 E. Hancock St.,  
Newberg, Oregon.

Dear Friends:--

"Throwing a monkey wrench into the machinery" is the sort of thing I do not relish; but I have found already so much dissatisfaction with the action that was taken last evening that I should not be at all surprised to encounter a move at our next meeting to undo what we thought we got done, and it seems to me that you ought to know about some of it, and of my personal reactions after getting some additional information. As clerk of the monthly meeting it was my duty to seek to find the will of the meeting, and I did that last evening, and thought we had decided what should be done, and that the matter was settled. The decisions reached were not satisfactory to me, as you know, and they are less satisfactory now by far than they were then. It will still be my duty as clerk of the monthly meeting to carry out as best I may the will of the meeting. But now I am writing you as an interested member of the meeting; not as clerk.

First of all, I felt last night that the proposed parsonage was inadequate, and this morning I have taken a look at the Nazarene parsonage, on which I am told that the plans of last night were modeled, and I am more than ever convinced that the plans adopted are not only inadequate but that if such a building were erected, it would be discreditable to a meeting such as ours. The Nazarene parsonage looks "dinky" to me, and would look still less appropriate in contrast with our big church. I feel that we should all be sorry if that sort of building is erected. It is my personal conviction that if instead of looking at plans on paper all the people present had taken a look at the Nazarene parsonage there would not have been the degree of unity that we seemed to find last evening.

I learned this morning of a man who said that he had decided to give \$500.00 toward the parsonage that was originally planned, but that he could not see his way clear to give more than \$100.00 toward the one now proposed. Personally I was not in a position to make a gift nor a pledge when the matter came up some years ago now, and I confess that I am glad I did not, for if I had made a pledge toward the building as then planned and saw that plan reduced to the present proportions, I should feel that in justice my gift should be cut down in the same proportion, or even more, because the house as now planned is so much less satisfactory. If things go as I now hope they will, I'd give \$100.00 more for the larger and better house than for the one now contemplated.

And it is my personal opinion that it would be nearly if not quite as easy to raise the necessary money for the one formerly planned. When Whittier College started its first en-

dowment campaign, they set their stakes for \$100,000.00. They got about half of it raised, and apparently could go no further. Then Rainier Kelsey said to them, "We cannot raise \$100,000.00, so let's raise \$200,000.00". So they made that their goal and raised it.

I still believe that the original plan can be carried out for \$12,000.00, and considerably less than that in cash, for I am sure there would be more enthusiasm to build the more adequate building than there would for the smaller one. And I am still sure in my own mind that a bigger one is needed. I have no desire to question the statement that any member of the committee would be glad to own a house like the one proposed last night. And Mrs. Truman would be glad to live in a less pretentious place than the White House, and so would her husband, if it were not for the duties that are theirs because of their official positions. No member of your committee, and no member of the church, has the same church and social responsibilities that the pastor has.

And I wonder if the company last evening was not unduly frightened by the statement in regard to interest charges on whatever mortgage we have to give. I understood, and so did others, that the statement was made that the interest would be \$25.00 per month per thousand dollars. Now according to my mathematics, \$25.00 a month would be \$300.00 a year; and that, if my figures are correct, means 30 per cent interest, which of course nobody can charge.

I find that I did not properly understand the situation in regard to the sale of ground around the parsonage. I thought that we were to have 30 or 40 least 25 feet more to the west than on the old parsonage lot. I am told that the meeting bought 100 feet additional to the west, then sold 55 feet of it, so that if the whole 50 feet had been sold as was proposed by the committee, the lot would have been actually 15 feet less on Third Street than it had been before the purchase of the ground to the west; and that even selling 20 feet of it would leave only 18 feet beyond the old lot, not 30 feet. And Gervas Carey's earlier proposal was for the purchase of only 40 feet to the north, not 50; and that extra ten feet would mean a lot of ground so small.

A church in California recently financed a church building project in a way that might be considered here, it seems to me. They needed a bigger building than they could provide the money for immediately, so after raising what they could at once, individual members of the church loaned to the church the rest of the money needed, in small sums and at low interest rates. I believe that something of this sort might be done here, to prevent the necessity of one big loan and a mortgage.

These are some of the considerations that have prompted me to write this letter, in the hope that a way may be found to do what seems to me the creditable, the fitting, the adequate thing. As I have said, though I know of no definite plan of such a nature, I should not be at all surprised to see a move next Wednesday evening to reconsider our decisions of last evening.