

Ellison and Lottie Hildreth Papers

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To: Helen Barrett Montgomery

From: Megladding, Emily Miller, John R. Mott

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Please return

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
TELEGRAPH AVENUE AT JONES STREET
WM. KEENEY TOWNIE, MINISTER
TELEPHONE OAKLAND 2812
OAKLAND, CAL.

Oct. 8, 1918.

My dear Mrs. Hildreth:

I received your welcome letter some time ago and was certainly surprised to learn that you are in America. I sincerely hope and trust that everything will go well with you.

Evidently you do not know that Mr. Townier is in France in Y.M.C.A. work. He secured a leave of absence last Jan. 1st to be gone one year. He is now in charge of a "Unit" in central France. When he left I took charge of the pastoral, and for five months we had a different preacher every Sunday.

I hadn't expected to take quite such a responsibility but now I'm glad I had the opportunity for I have enjoyed this year's work. Folks have been so responsive and co-operative. In June we secured an excellent supply to fill the pulpit till Mr. Townier returns. This makes things somewhat easier.

I received the cunning little garments you sent and have had quite some fun with them. Several wanted to buy them but I wanted them for myself. Rest assured our school will duplicate the work they did last year. We had a great day last Sunday and I have delayed writing you so I could tell you about it. I discovered that there were quite a party of missionaries going out at the same time as the Bakers, so I got in touch with them last week and arranged to have them the guests of our church for last Sunday. We had the Bakers, Mr. Hilbert also bound for China, the Tuttle's from Assam, Miss Hastings going out to Rangoon and the Wynds who are returning to Japan. We had a few words from each during the morning service and then they joined in the Lord's supper with us, the pastor utilizing them as he could in the administration of the ordinance. The A. B. Y. P. U. presented them with a huge bunch of carnations and they were lined up against the pulpit for everyone to shake hands. Then all were taken home to dinner by prominent families in the church, taken auto riding in the afternoon and back to tea again. I had the Wynd's for dinner and in the evening traded families with Deacon Meads who only lives one block from me and I then had the Baker's for tea. My only trouble was that I didn't have missionaries enough to go around. I do think our church was greatly blessed in this contact with "Real missionaries", they were such a band of live up-to-date christian workers.

I must tell you about the morning in the Bible school. I asked Mr. Baker to come over in time for the Bible school and tell us something of your work there. Well, he certainly brought the school a real live message. Among other things he had a string of Chinese money to show the children how the Chinese carry their money and the relative value of a Chinese coin to our pennies. He told how each was worth 1/25 of a cent and how one cent would pay for one copy of Mark's Gospel to be put in a Chinese name or a nickel would pay for the entire New Testament. On an impulse of the moment he said he would sell each one of the coins which he had for a penny apiece, the money to go to buy Gospels when he got to China. Well, instead of four or five as he expected, they fairly mobbed him. They were on his back and everywhere else and he didn't have nearly enough to go around. He had them so excited that the whole school was disrupted for the morning. However they are in fine shape to respond next Sunday

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

TELEGRAPH AVENUE AT JONES STREET

WM. KENNETH TURNER, MINISTER

TELEPHONE OAKLAND 872

OAKLAND, CAL.

morning, class by class, when they decide what they want to put into the boxes. Mr. Baker is going to take some pictures for us (one of our men said he'd pay for the films) and we are to get a book and keep in close touch with the work there. This actual contact with things seems to mean so much more to the children than any other kind of an appeal we can make. The party sailed yesterday.

Mr. Baker told us of Mr. Hildreth's going into Y.M.C.A. work at Vladivostok. May God protect and prosper him in his work.

By the way I found the roll of pictures you sent us last year, here in the office and sent them on when I heard you were here. Did you receive them O.K. I sent them to the address indicated on the back.

Well I think I have told you all the news. Excuse the looks of this letter but my typewriter needs repairing and the ribbon is worn out. I shall be glad to hear from you from time to time.

Trusting you are well, and with best wishes from the members of Oakland First Church

I am

Very sincerely yours,

Wm. K. Turner

Turner,

Thank you for the
material on the Liberty
Loan. I was much
interested. L.

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Chas. Chas. Nov 4 '90

Dear Mrs. Oldbreath,

all the good folks have gone to church and are staying home resting and playing with their precious kiddies. John is having his first experience with a piece of carbon paper and he is fast in his drawing drawing pictures from an old paper.

You see I slip a piece of carbon under my weekly letter to Mother and send a copy to Alice because they are both interested in the same news. After I am two weeks and Elsie Killely gets no letter.

We have heard from Elsie from Kober and she seems to be enjoying her trip very much indeed and getting along nicely.

Mr. Brown and Mrs. Clark got here Wednesday with Mrs. Binkett and we kept them in Kakehuk till yesterday when I brought her up here.

Friday night we had a lovely Halloween party at East Hill only as I was one of the hosts I should not

They it was lovely my self but they all
seemed to have a good time. Miss Bailey
had some beautiful costumes, paper patterns
and a decorated the room and put
orange shades with black paper fans and
etc. etc. etc. seats pasted on them, over
all the lamps and candles. We even
found some "pinnipeds" looking squashes
in seawater and making fish & herring.

we had told folks to dress up if they
could but we wouldn't bar them out if
they did not, so we had several Ghast
Finnis, Glass and Sam Worley. Ruth
Hall was a wonderful artist and told
our futures from a big caldron.

Margaret Brown made a very pretty
Ethiopian home - and Dexter was a blond.
I was a pumpkin head with a big paper
head that came down to my waist and
covered up my arms, and then my waist
with a bonnet-like shape. My clothes were



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on with me, to light them up. gym.
 Horrow and heeler slipped completely
 my out fit. The folks nearly had hit
 taking I sat down apparently on my neck
 and Mrs. Horrow was sure I was dead.
 she said, "I can tell by her legs."

We had the usual stunts, blowing
 walnut shell boats across the (back) of
 legs holding for apples (or rather holding
 them off) a string; because we could not
 possibly hold enough drinking water
 to hold for them. Mrs. Lewis told
 a great story and Mrs. Capen of course
 had to bring back her (fish) cat.

After eating a song and Mrs. Capen
 was just on her high horse. He
 made her to Mrs. Horrow acting
 out the word of all the sentimental
 song. All we were in gales of laughter.
 When we sang this he and Heston
 did a clog dance and cake walk
 which would have shaken down
 the house if it had not been of

stone and concrete in case they
kept calling for drinking water. Land
and fill the Flaming Bowl she told
Mrs. Capen said, "Randall is for getting some
before." Then we just started.

Clara is getting over her malaria, she
thinks very slowly. She had quite a severe
attack and as she has almost none been used
on her life she didn't know what to make
of it and thought she was killed. But
I think she will be quite herself in a
few days more.

Mrs. De Bruin writing a whole lot and
hardly said a word about John and Alice.
They seem very well and contented here.
but they seem to think about "Mumma's
pretty fragments" and it is what "mother
wrote like" that brought her to become
very poor. They play so much with
Bessie and the dog. Jim is her wife
and she seems quite fond of them
and they are so nice and good with
him.

John has finished some pictures

and a letter to you; he has showed
them with the carbon paper. He is
such a darling. I think he is
going to grow up like his father.

Mr Brown just said say enough
about the way Mrs Hubbard has
helped her out. He says with
her freight worth her, fifteen car
and Mrs Hubbard went with her to
the customs and helped her there
and then had it taken to his house
and tomorrow he is going to let
her bring it all up here and
her trunk too. We don't have to
bother with anything but have heard
bags certainly. I certainly is a peach.
He is just above the way than to go
way off at the far as long and then
them are. I think you can safely see
to have made my family go home to some
in front of I was in your place and
own down your feet. We think
about you a lot these days.

and we hope that the best
part will now be over and you
will begin to get well very soon.

Chris. came over to get some book
for you the day you left. but I
wasn't home and she didn't like to
help her self. I'll try to mail
some good ones in a little while.

A funny thing happened today.
Paul Creamer opened Mrs. Hildner's
book case & he & at her own house too
had pulled out a Life of Christ to
go by the paper cover and when he
opened it it wasn't a book of
Shelock Holmes Stories inside. It
made me think of my high school days
when I carried my Latin text around
labeled Plutarch's Lives or something
like that.

Now I just must say, lots and
lots of love to you dear and
I hope you will soon be strong
and well. Lovingly
Emily P. Miller

1310 S. 57th St Philadelphia Pa
April 12, 1900

Dear Sister,

I've been holding this letter over for a day or two because I wanted to send one to you along with it - It certainly is a very heart broken sounding letter and I'm so sorry for them all.

You would never in the world guess what I am doing now to try to make a living - I'm selling a set of books for children (or trying to sell them) There just didn't seem to be any ^{other} ^{thing} for me to do so I thought I'd try this - It is pretty hard for me to ring door bells, but mine out of ten mothers are friendly and once she ice is broken I really enjoy the interviews.

I'm so sorry you haven't been well and hope the witch in Florida has done you lots of good. Will you be coming to Philadelphia? I wish you could stop off for a day or two - even an hour would be lots better than nothing and I could

were down to the station just to say "hello"
if I knew your train.

Margaret Curry (Mrs E.H) gave me five
glorious days in February and then I spent
last week here in March. She is in-
terested in the "Oxford Group Movement" although
I think the people of the groups who have
didn't make a very good impression on her.
But she helped me a lot.

My mother was dangerously sick last
spring with a gas bladder infection & did I tell
you? and she will have to be very careful
all the rest of her life - It has aged her very
much, and my aunt, with whom I live is
growing very much more faith - she is so
forgetful, I have to write a note telling her
of any plans for the afternoon or evening, and
pin it on her bureau when I go out in the
morning (and then she or not she will take
it off and lose it)

I'm afraid trips to New England aren't on
my budget this year, but I do wish I could
see you. I have room for you and the boy too
if you could stop -

Lovingly

Emily

Thaiyong, via Swatow, China,

August 21, 1914.

Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery,

Boston and Rochester, U.S.A.,

My dear Mrs. Montgomery:

I was talking with you at the rooms just before starting for China, and happened to mention some experience in "raising the budget", and you asked me to write out an account of it, which I was quite willing to do. I have been so busy since arriving here that I have not been able to do so till now, but the vacation brings an opportunity, which I am very glad to take. You are welcome to make any use you see fit, which will do good for the work; only as the first personal pronoun has to appear so many times, I would rather that you would not publish the letter as it stands, without considerable editing to remove that feature, and without my name attached. I insert that feature, however, in order to make the account perfectly clear to you.

The church was located in Covelo, Mendocino Co., California. It is in the mountains half way between the coast range and the Sacramento valley in a fertile valley about four by eight miles in area, and is the shopping center for isolated ranches up to fifteen miles south, twelve west, twenty-five east, and up to a hundred north. But the ranches are strictly isolated I didn't pretend even to visit more than twenty five miles, and once when I spent my vacation and preached twice at a schoolhouse some sixty miles away, no preacher had ever been there except once for a wedding. In former days it had been a very wild and lawless country; at that time murder and stealing were rare, simply because the terrors of the law had become more threatening, and it wasn't wise to run such a risk of state's prison. The town had some two or three hundred inhabitants, three stores, two or three doctors, 199 the livery stables, one of which bought up the other (sure sign of progress ☺) a high school, a band, which was organized

during my stay there (another sign of progressiveness), Freemasons, Odd
 Woodmen of the World, and three churches, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyter-
 ian. The presbyterian church was first in the field, did not oppose
 dancing and card playing, which were among the chief diversions of the
 young, (and old, too) and had the support of all the wealth, fashion, and
 musical talent of the community. The Methodist church at the time in
 question was in a decadent state, sometimes having as few as two or three
 at its Sunday services, while its prayer meeting consisted of the minister
 and one woman, three or more Baptists, and sometimes one ex-Methodist.
 The Baptist church had had a struggle for existence; the other two churches
 combined to try to prevent it from being started, and had opposed it more
 or less ever since. Its attitude was that card playing in Covelec inevit-
 ably led to gambling, and dancing to other evils, not as a matter of
 theory, but as a matter of experience, absolutely irrefutable, and there-
 fore a church in Covelec could not do other than discourage them. Some went
 farther and put it more strongly than this, but even the minister went
 this far. But no success ever attended efforts to provide something else
 as a substitute, which would seem to indicate that in a backward community
 which had awakened and begun to progress, the Baptist church had not yet
 seen the vision. As a matter of fact the idea of the members was to hold
 the regular services on Sunday and Thursday and hope and pray for a revival.
 Further the church was handicapped by the fact that its most active member
 was considered a hypocrite by all the non-Christians, and some members,
 and was exceedingly hard to get on with, so that anything that he supported
 was handicapped by the fact; that he was constantly on the verge of a land
 lawsuit, which threatened to involve the church at any moment; and that
 one member who had posed as a lay preacher some little time previously
 was a less than honest real estate man, was openly despised by "the world"
 and regretted by the church, but could not be disciplined because he was
 always ready with expressions of intention to do better, in such a way
 that the only Christian thing was to give another chance - to fail.

The financial arrangements of the church were simple and easy to comprehend. When a new minister was expected they sent around a subscription paper, and each member who signed it at all signed for such a sum as he thought corresponded with his standing in the church and his financial ability. If it was convenient to pay and he happened to be asked for the money, it was paid; very few of the regarded it as a debt or an obligation. Those who attended services put in the contribution box, and this money was ordinarily used for running expenses, which amounted chiefly to kerosene oil, but sometimes included paint, glass and brooms and payment of a debt at the store. There was almost always a surplus in this fund, a deficit was always expected in the salary fund.

In my own case, the salary agreed on by the church was at the rate of \$45 per month (this was afterward changed, but I don't think the change need be described here) The committee raised subscriptions amounting to something less than \$30. per mo. and hoped that the rest of the money would come in somehow. These subscription took the form of "Bony Bort \$5." which means \$5. to be paid sometime during the year, if convenient. As a matter of fact nobody expected such subscription to be paid except in the fall. Then the crops had been gathered and disposed of and everybody owed everybody else for them; then the men who had hogs and cattle sold them, and cash came into the valley, and debts could be paid. But presently the stores and Montgomery Ward had got most of the cash, people had their supplies pretty well laid in for the winter (if a man could afford to be took a four horse wagon down to the County seat and hauled in most of his winter food in one load), and cash dealings became scarce. The stores never gave cash, only credits, and ordinarily they had most of the money in town indeed performed some of the functions of a bank. This is hardly a condition favorable to church finance.

I forget to tell how the benevolences were raised, but that is hardly important, because the year 1890-1891 their total benevolence amounted to \$100 for Home Missions. I do not know how this was raised, but suppose it was

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the old method of an appeal followed by a collection. The church felt no responsibility for benevolences; "We can't pay our minister, so why should we take some of the money that we ought to pay him, and send it to the heathen when the rich churches in the east can do it so much more easily". And the contention seemed from their point of view to be demonstrated at the end of the first year when the church owed their pastor \$800, which there was no ~~possibility~~ prospect of their being able to pay, and various non-church members would say, "I told you so; they starved out Brother Alexander and they'll starve out you, if you stay long enough". I'm afraid I can't very well keep out the pronoun from here on.

Well, that debt had to be forgiven the church, and a new financial arrangement made. ~~\$\$\$~~ About that time the financial year of the State Convention was closing, and we had as yet made no contribution to anything outside of Covelo. The church was receiving joint assistance from the State Convention and the Home Mission Society in the shape of a check sent to the pastor every ~~quarter~~ quarter. I had just received my check for the last quarter, and on my own responsibility sent it down to the State Superintendent on behalf of the church, so that at the last minute we did have some benevolence to our credit, and then when the church and I made the new agreement, one of the features was that they were to pay me the value of that check so that it should be their gift not mine.

By that time I had been there a year and knew the situation. I commenced a campaign to try to make the church feel the responsibility for the budget. The watchwords were "We can do it if we will" and similar ones. "I am more interested in the recognition of the responsibility than in the amount given", "the surest way for a church to get spiritual prosperity is to become interested in the greater work of the kingdom", the necessity of prayer, and the fact that our gift would not be lost on the gross amount. I told them frankly that for a church which had never undertaken such work I thought that to attempt to raise the whole budget would be a discouraging

task. So I picked out the three major items; foreign missions for several reasons, home and state missions on their own merits, and also because we were receiving from them more than they were asking us to contribute to all their work. The amounts were foreign $24\frac{85}{100}$ home $13\frac{24}{100}$ state $55\frac{00}{100}$. The home appropriation was due early in the year, perhaps the middle of January, say three months ahead, and I said, "let's work toward that; it's only $\$14$, and if we work hard we can do it, and then we shall see how we feel about it". Well it was an eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute gift, but it got in in time to be counted on that year, and we felt good, and thought we might perhaps handle the other sums, but they were bigger, and it looked harder.

Well, there was some activity along this line during the summer, but the most of the work was done in the fall, when the money came in. I was going to come up for ordination at the association (about the only time when you can get a council in those mountains) which was at Lakeport, about sixty miles away over four or five mountain ranges. I told the people publicly and privately and urgently that I wanted a good delegation to go down and see me thro, and I wanted to be able to report that we had raised the appropriation for foreign, home, and state, and if they saw fit, that my salary was all paid. But I wanted the budget in anyway. Well we didn't quite make it. But we went down to Lakeport with a delegation of six and a half, and we had raised those three items, and also, ^{part of} our appropriation for the theological seminary at Berkeley $\$1\frac{25}{100}$; my salary was paid within six weeks of date, and if my memory serves me correctly all our bill at the store was paid. I couldn't swear to that, but I think I insisted that they should pay that before they paid me.

Well how, was it done. It was not done by a revival. We did have the services of an evangelist, which resulted in two baptisms. One was first-class and became a good worker, but the other was a woman who lived in the mountains some twenty or twenty-five miles away. Otherwise there were no tangible or even visible results. Some of the members were helped but the

personality of the evangelist aroused so much dislike and opposition that I do not think the church was in a specially stronger position when he left; if you prefer to put the blame of it all on the church, it shows at any rate that there had been no special spiritual awakening under his efforts. I believe that the result was due to an intelligent understanding of the situation (such as any pastor can have after a little while: it took me longer than usual because conditions and customs were so unfamiliar) the confidence of the people, which any pastor can have; the application of responsibility, gently and persuasively and reasonably, and not attempting too much at once.

I wish I might report more fully on the matter. But the following spring I left to go home and get ready to start for China. In the meantime the new budget came out and I fear the sequel is not so attractive. The committee which made out the budget for the year following the one I described thought that if they took account of the comparative strength of churches they might arouse feeling on the part of those whose appropriation was proportionately larger; therefore they decided to take the average per member for the state for the last year and for any given church assess it that amount per member. That made our budget amount to ~~about \$2500~~ ^{\$2500} an amount which would simply cause the church to resign the effort. And all my efforts to get the sum reduced were an absolute failure. I believe that if my successor had had a reasonable goal and then encouraged the people to try for it they would have reached it. If you are interested to know how near they came, you might write to Rev. Wm. Carey Whitaker, Willits, Calif. for copies of association reports for 1913 and 1914.

I might say that I was unmarried, had previously had only a summer pastorate, and visited the people a great deal. My term of service was from October 1910 to early in 1913. Hoping that this long account has not taken too much of your time, and wishing you all success in your work,

Sincerely yours,

Learned

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February 4, 1910

My dear Mr. Hildreth:

On my return from Canada, where I have been conducting a special campaign, I found awaiting me your important letter of January 4th. I have read it twice with care and sympathy. I have had a talk with Mr. Smith to whom you have referred, and would suggest that you arrange to have another interview with him. He can report to you our thought better than I can write it. You have many difficulties, but they are not without their advantages. You are much more likely, in view of these difficulties, to seek to receive the invaluable help of the Holy Spirit.

Very cordially yours,

James M. Brown

Ellison S. Hildreth, Esq.,
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