

Columbus Grove O.
April 25, 1918.S. F. and Ella Coffman
Vineland, Ont.

Dear Bro. and Sister Coffman:

Greetings,
Your letter was received and greatly appreciated. I know it has seemed ungrateful of me not to write sooner and tell you so, for I realize that you spent considerable time on the work for us. More than I had hoped for. While I knew that we could counsel you knowing you would be fairminded I had not expected you to give our work so much thought and attention and I feel that I have some valuable suggestions to present to our Com. where we once are able to meet. You understand that I am only one member of that Com. and that I counselled you as an individual but I hope to bring ^a pressure to bear upon the suggestions. We want to draft ~~the~~ ^a Constitution and then bring it before the Mission Board or Ex Com. ^{of Bond.} if possible, before we call a meeting for organization. While the Board has been encouraging us and members of it have been leading out at times, they after all are afraid, apparently, to encourage us openly because of what their critics may say. I cannot blame them so long as they do not say one thing to us and something else to others.

As you say, in so far as possible we want to avoid any possible friction with other organizations and I was glad for your view point along this line. We want to remain within our sphere. I have always recognized that there is danger that we may unwittingly overstep our bounds, but I have also been made to realize that there is ~~also~~ danger in knowing to do good and not doing it.

With regard to Mission Study and Educational work I would say that we have not been planning any thing along this line outside of our regular monthly meetings. We believe that a little time spent along this line at each meeting would be profitable and at times when the work is slack more time could be profitably spent. Matters should be informed in order

to bring influence to bear upon young people and children. So far as children's work is concerned I confess I did not give this matter so much attention as Sister Burkhead and I do not see so much in it as she does, but we have some children's organizations as well as a number of girls' organizations and I think we should have a Committee to ~~include~~ ^{include} all. Even in these the practical nursing and aid work is taken up very enthusiastically and the study part is as yet left in the background. I feel quite safe in saying that I do not believe there will ever be any serious overlapping along this line with other organizations.

There is a spirit of helpfulness in our children which should be fostered. This has been partly met with the Mission Bands "quarter fund" but children outgrow this as they enter their teens, at least ours did. Of course I do not think they do so some or far as or where they can be given more space than I could give.

Our school girls served one summer under a supt. and then we dropped it again for several years. We spoke of it again this spring and one of the girls said "We want to come and sew but we thought you did not want us."

I had a letter from Heston Kan. the other day. The sister said the young girls are sewing for relief work that the boys S.S. classes contributed money towards the purchasing of goods and the girls are making the garments. I had thought that "Young Peoples work" was a misnomer but according to this it is not. I know of several G.P.M. that contribute towards the sewing or practical work.

I believe that these children should be taught to save dimes or nickels towards the foreign mission work and be practically trained along this line also.

Your suggestion that the work of the various secretaries, supervisors and superintendents be defined is timely. The work is all so new to all of us that it seems like we may be in better position after a while to know just what our work should be. At least that is the way they all who are at work are expressing themselves. I am watching developments in the different Districts carefully and they certainly are intensely interesting. One reason why I have felt that we should have a good many sisters as officers is because we all have our

home duties, we want to avoid overburdening any one sister with a great amount of work but give a number something to look after. In the way of Offices we cannot do as our brethren are doing, heap a lot of official work upon ourselves and then live off the Church. Most of us can take care of one distinct line of work but not many of us can do more. I question sometimes if ^{some of} our Church officials are not loading themselves down to heavily with the various Boards for their own good as well as that of the Church. In this respect the Church is growing narrower than it was as it appears to me.

I am glad you like the name "Association" I think it is the name for us, but several of our Com. don't like it so I don't know what the final decision will be. Yours was the first criticism we had on the name "Branch" and the only one so far. We ^{had} discussed this point and concluded that "District" does not quite cover our need and would be confusing at times. My attention has been called to this also outside of our Com. We are making no distinction anywhere between M's and A.M's and therefore our Districts are not divided as are our Conf. Districts. For instance in Ohio we belong to the Western District of A. Conf. The A.M's in Western Ohio belong to the Eastern A.M. District. The M's in Wayne Co. belong to the Middle District of A. Conf. The A.M's belong to the Eastern A.M. District etc. We concluded since we are used to speaking of the M. branch and the A.M. branch of Mennonites why not sweep the whole confusing business aside and say the "Ohio Branch". Also, I wish to say that after Ohio is organized we hope to have "District meetings" Our Mennonites in Ohio are divided into three distinct groups and are already known as "Districts". In these "District meetings" we would include ~~all~~ both M's and A.M's and if we called ^{this} "Ohio District" I don't know what we would call the latter. Other Branches may want District meetings. You had one at Markham, I was told, when sister Burkhardt was over. Your sisters after a while might ^{want} ~~see~~ some too. Sister Burkhardt said the A.M's in Canada were real keen yet. They might want some

"District meetings" Perhaps we could call these latter "Branch meetings" but sometimes "Branch" seems larger than District. ^{and this also would be confusing in Eastern Middle & Western District} We shall reconsider these terms and perhaps some way out will present itself before we need to reach a final decision. I liked your suggested change of Supervisors and Superintendents very much.

While I like appropriate names I am not so set on names as some people. I think what we do matters a great deal more than what we call ourselves. The names I had given you were too long to suit me and I liked your idea of shortening them. After I had written you and this Relief sewing came up. I wondered if we had it full enough or big enough for all the work we have always done and aim to do. That if we drop out "sewing" if we should not substitute something else to include the practical side of our organization. We have it in the purpose ~~and~~ but not in the name, and I wondered if this would be better "Mennonite Woman's Missionary and Aid Association." I have not yet consulted the Com. on this.

I noticed your question How many V. Pres.? I would reply to this as many in each Branch as there are Districts. For instance in Canada I think I would have one for your District unless you have the Pres. and I would have one among the A. M. S. In Ohio I think I would have three, one for each District, and let each one have special supervision over that District. You see with our practical work there is considerable to look after. The women just naturally divide their work. In the Franconian Branch they have already divided their work into three districts of their own accord. Bro. M. C. Tapp just writes from Franconia "Cousin Lydia Brown (our secretary) told me this morning that she had received almost \$300.00 for sending out and supporting a missionary. I was just thinking that it will make you in the Middle West get a move on you if you want to keep pace with the sisters in here." And this from the slow east. My grand parents on mother's side were from this part and I used to wonder if they would work victors after looking on after ten or more years. They were the first to bring this matter before their Mission Board and ministers. Canada was second. Our Eastern Ohio ministers are encouraging the sister. a number of Middle and Western ^{are} and we hope to have some Resolutions from them ere long. I have not yet heard how some of them stand.

I was glad to learn of your position on the matter of biographies and thank you for the encouragement. Some of our brethren seem to think that so soon as you speak of a biography you are guilty of ~~less~~ worship. I agree that God has a better reward than we can make and this has often really been a consolation to me when one hears the criticisms. I have not yet mentioned the Scottdale people but have been told that they would not encourage the work. I really begin to feel old at times for you know we were interested in Mission and mission work before any of the brethren who are now at Scottdale. Bro. K. was not even in the Church.

I want to thank you for your interest in our work. My only excuse for not doing so sooner was that I am always very busy in the spring. My aged uncle who is in his 80th year is living with us now and my children are all at home this year. Esther's school closed but Charly has three weeks yet. My boys will be in school that long too and I am considerable of a farmer just now. My correspondence is beginning to be quite heavy too.

We shall be pleased at any time for any suggestions you may have to offer. Tell us, don't tell others when you see where we might do better.

For Elias benefit I want to give a report yet of some Relief sewing which I imagine beats Vineland. I know it does Bluffton. One of the Iowa sisters reported their work last week. They had a two days sewing for relief work. The ministers told the sisters to buy their goods and they would hold a Church Collection to pay for it. The sisters wanted to try and pay for it themselves. They were given opportunity and collection was 188.44 They had a bal. of 58.60 The first day 68 women were out. The second 63. They run 23 sewing machines and made 383 articles. They used patterns Nos 1-5-7-10. This was in a church of 250 members. Two neighboring churches each had a two days

I have helped two associations organize by mail recently.
One under Lancaster Co Conf. The other in Washington Co. I.
I sent the latter the constitution as you corrected it and
told them it had the sanction of our Mennonite Bishop.
They, like you, chose the name "association" for their
local organization. Their three ministers and two deacons
are encouraging them.

I must surely close or you will
become weary reading all this.

Very sincerely

Clara E. Steiner

Alsask Sask. May 20, 1918
S. J. Goffman Vinland Ont.

Dear Bro and Sister Greeting
in the name of Jesus.

I will
now write as I promised
we arrived home a few weeks
ago all safe for which we
are very thank full to the Lord
for His kind protection.

Well we left John Henrys all
well. They had a son about
two weeks old when we left.

We have heard from them since
we are home. Their wheat all
dried up. And as we came
through California there were
quite a few farmers plowing
around their crops. So it don't
look very promising in California.
Well from Arizona we went to
Upland California

2
that is about 45 miles right east from Los Angeles.
We spent about one week there. Made our home with
one named Burkholder. He lives right in Mealand.
Has a fine place. and eight acres of Lemons. Which
brings him a nice some every year. From five hundred
to a thousand dollars an acre. He is a River Brethren
preacher. We had the privilege of going to their church
one Sunday. Which was well attended. They are some
thing like the new mennonites. Except the women
wear prayer head covering like our sisters. and
they seem to be more plain. Well he had a very good
sermon on the second evening of Christ. We enjoyed
it very much. There are a few members of our church.

there and as we have ³ no church there they go with them
to communion as ~~they~~ have open communion as the
new mennonites. We was over night at ~~Schertz~~ Schertz
He is one of ours He went out there the time Bro
David Garber was there. And as Bro David Garber
left for other parts. He said he would try it there
He said they near asked them yet to join their
church. But as there is no other place to go they go
to the Roman Brethern. Well we had a nice time with
them all we vissited several others of our peopple
They all said they would like if some of our
people would settle there they would feel more
at home. Well Dear Bro we must say it is
one of the

the most beautiful places⁴ that we have seen in
all our trip. They have a most wonderfull climate
at upland. Burkholder was telling me he has
been there now ten years and they hardly have
a fail crop of oranges. And the temperature does
not vary much all the year round. And there is
an ocean breeze comes up every morning and blows
a nice soft breeze until 5 o'clock and then it
gets calm. And it seems to be a very healthy place
Swarthendruer's woman weight 119 lbs when she
came there some years ago. her stomach was all
out of shape. she soon picked up and now she
weighs over 200 lbs. They have 20 acres of an

orchard ⁵ 15 acres of oranges and 5 acres of
lemons. And they certainly take good care of
these trees. My orange crop was not as heavy as
last year but they are bigger. Oh my it looks
beautiful to see the oranges and lemons hanging
on the trees as you walk or drive along the
high way. All cement roads through here.
Well we must say we had a pleasant time with
them people. And was glad to see that they
were hoping and trusting in God. If you ever
take a trip don't forget Upland in California
that is if you ever take a trip through California

Well we stoped a week in Los Angeles and we were lodging right across the street from the mission of our people. There was no one there when we came. So we passed our time looking at different places. until Sunday came then there was a little stir at the mission. When we got there they had the Sunday school started. There was only a small attendance but much interested was manifested. They had no sermon as Bro Staley was away at the time so in the afternoon they invited us to come to the church of the open door. We heard some good preaching but we could not make ourselves at home there.

because of the fashion and the open communion
one of our brethren asked me what I thought about
it. I said to him we have to be very carefull
now days. Because there are so many false prophets
in this our last days. He agreed with me and
was glad he met me. Oh how sorrowfull to look
unto the world as you travel. To see so many
dont care people. no fear of God or man or
ever death. Well how are you all getting along
my Bro jacob was out here a week ago. He
came out to see about his son that got drafted
for the war. But it did not do any good
they are going to take him. so he must come

he said he had no pleasure in visiting this time
on account of his son. I told him all he can do
now is pray and keep on praying. So we can see the
beginning of sorrows are here. Well we are thankful
that our boys are clear so far, but we dont know
what is before us the next few months or sooner.
Well we are have cold weather here now the last week
or two. Snowin and a strong wind every day. we are
all done sowin. The 3 boys have over 7 hundred
acres in wheat. Are you sowin out to our exposal
this year. It will be at carstain this year. So bad
about Bro Allen Gooch wife they dont expect she
will be here long. Well must close and may the
blessing of God be with us all. Bro and sister Bricker
to Bro and sister Coffman.

Vineland Ont. June 21, 1918.

Elias Bricker,
Alsask Sask.

Dear Brother and family:- Greeting in the name of the Lord.

Your letter of May 20th received and was glad to hear from you again. After your journey and experiences along the way it was very interesting to learn of the conditions and the circumstances with which you met.

We are acquainted with Brother Staley with whose family you met at Upland Cal. We have never been west of the Rocky Mountains. In fact, the nearest we were ever to those mountains was at the time that we spent in Alberta, and at that time you will remember that we had no time to go on pleasure trips. I often think of those days and the experiences of a young man in the work of the Lord, and especially in such important work as was committed to us. But the Lord was with us and we think of His mercies and the blessings that have since then been bestowed on the work in those districts, we have reasons to thank Him for abundant grace and many blessings.

We are thinking of the conditions at the present time and wonder how it is going with some of our dear friends who are not yet in the kingdom and who may be called on to enter the service of the country in bearing arms and with the knowledge that such service is not in accordance with the will of God. There are some of our young men who are standing in just such conditions at present. Some time ago an appeal was made to the Government in their behalf and we are glad to say that the government has given every opportunity to such to give expression to their faith and to unite with the Church. If it is their faith that the serving in the army is not in harmony with the teaching of the Word of God it is the faith which they should accept and for which they should live. It is their duty too obey the Lord in all things. Besides their privilege of accepting salvation for their own souls they are under obligation to seek the welfare of other souls and to refrain from destroying the lives of others which are precious in the sight of God. In this respect it is most consistent for such to seek the welfare of their own souls first and then to seek the welfare of the other souls with whom they come in contact.

It would be well that our boys look after these matters. There are several of your sons, I believe who have neglected this most important matter. I felt to write this letter more on that account, and hope that the boys will give this their earnest consideration. Some may feel perfectly safe on account of their being on a farm, but the farm will not save their souls nor will it save them from being called on for military service if the Government sees fit to lay their hands on them for such service. This is a time when men are called upon to show on whose side they stand, either for the Lord and His Kingdom or for the enemy of their souls. May God give them especial grace to take their stand on the side of Him who has given His life to save them.

We are especially glad for the privilege that has been our under present conditions. We have been greatly favored. Some of our boys in the East have been held in the camps for several weeks, but all have been released at the present time. The sons of Mennonite parents who have attended the Mennonite Church and have not united with any other Church who do now unite with the Church are given the same privilege of freedom from military service. The Government recognizes that we ought to have complete exemption the same as the Russian brethren but there was a misunderstanding at the time that this Act was made respecting the present Military Service Act.

I do not know whether you have been getting the information concerning our exemption or not. We have been mailing the copies of the letters to the brethren at Tofield, and that is the nearest congregation to you. It may be that you have been informed from that point.

It would be a great pleasure to be present at the conference at Carstairs this Summer, but it will be impossible for us to get there. We have had our Conference here at Vineland and it was a very interesting session and the Lord was with us in the meetings. We should be thankful to Him for His nearness and help in these trying days.

Our family is as well as usual, thanks to His grace. The children are all in school just at present. The eldest boy has another year to go to High School, and then he will be ready to go to work. He will be sixteen until October. The youngest is now nearly eight. It has been a great blessing to us to have our little family spared and to grow up, and we are glad that His love has touched the hearts of four of our children and they have confessed their faith in Him and united with the Church this Spring.

The fruit crop is not very heavy this Year. There seems to be a good many apples, but the Peaches, Cherries, and Berries are a light crop. The Wheat was also a poor crop here, that is the Winter Wheat. Spring grains are doing well so far. We have been having showers and while the weather has been cool it has been favorable to growth.

Would be glad to hear from you again when it is convenient. May the blessing of the Lord be with you all, and may your prayers include us as you make intercession for others.

Yours in Christian faith and love,

St. Mary's Mennonite Conference

Box 50 Mac Donald Hall
Nov 18/17

Rev. S. F. Coffman
Finland.

Dear Mr. Coffman:-

You will no
doubt be surprised to get
this funny little letter
I do not know what
prompts me to write you
on this particular matter.

May say I have been so
unsettled since I came
here and while ^{some of} the work
is hard yet it is congenial
probably some very un-
necessary but there we find

Such things in whatever sphere of life we work.

This is what I want to get at + clear in my mind is it the right thing for me to do to be here while the world is in this dreadful turmoil or should I be using the money to better advantage to ~~find~~ finish this course will mean two years and use up all the money I have saved up. I will then be in a position to act as Dietitian in a Hospital or any public Institution or as Housekeeper. Miss Watson says she is counting on us to fill the positions in the Military Hospitals of which they expect to erect Fifty in Canada. It certainly seems a great work and yet I am so unsettled I suppose because nearly everyone opposed + still opposes my coming here. I suppose I must admit my motives ~~is~~ in coming here might not have been as much for humanity's sake as for the

Salary in view. But then
one has their living to make
I called on the President
of the Business College
here and got his views
as to going back to business
life but still being un-
satisfied called on the
Manager of one of the Banks
here as to a position in the
Bank and while he claims
I could do well financially
in the Bank thinks I
would make a great mistake
in leaving a Domestic
Science course as the coming
years will demand women

who care manage and
provide for the institutions
which must necessarily
be erected for our returning
crippled + otherwise helpless
soldiers. I wish if you
can spare the time
you would tell me
frankly what you
think of the situation.

Hope this finds you all
well as it leaves me.

Hope I have made my
idea plain to you and

and the conversion of a
lot of us.

With kind regards to
all and again thanking
you for your consideration
I am,

Sincerely yours
Mary Wisner

ask to be remembered
at the Throne of Grace
I remain

Sincerely yours

Mary Mosner

Vineland Ont., Nov 20, 1917.

Miss Mary Wismer,
Box 53, MacDonald Hall,
Guelph Ont.

Dear Sister in faith:- Greeting.

Your letter came to hand and was read with interest and concern. Your proposition is certainly a rather perplexing one and one that will need careful consideration since you are anxious to do the right thing and also afford a degree of pleasure to those who are most concerned about your future welfare.

There is one thing that you should take into consideration first. What is that you have already done a part of a year's work in the school and your course this year will require only a few more months to complete. Would it not be best, if you have the means and the opportunity to complete this course this year and then decide before Fall what you will do regarding entering the school again for the second year. If you have the means now to finish the second year you would be able to take care of it until such a time as you may have the opportunity to take the second year work if you should think it best not to take it at once. Circumstances may look more favorable to you to complete the work by next Fall. And, if conditions should be more unfavorable you could postpone the work for a year without too great loss.

With regard to the work for which you are fitting yourself, I wish that you would think the matter over a few times before you would think of attaching yourself to the military branch of the hospital service. There will no doubt be many requests for such service, but there may be other openings just as useful and as much needed in which you would not be restricted as far as your Christian faith is concerned. We believe in being both loyal and useful to our country, but there are different ways of being such and we should choose what will be useful and unquestionable as regards our faith. At present we are considering doing some kind of relief work in view of the fact that the Government has not required any of our members to do military service. We hope to find such work that will be outside of that which is connected with the active service of the army. We should thank God for our exemption from military service and show our thankfulness in an exceptional devotion to the work of relief.

Do not allow yourself to become unsettled in any of your purposes in life. You may change your methods and your times, but keep to your purposes, unless you should find yourself wholly unfitted for the work you have chosen or find that it unfits you for attaining your highest usefulness in life or interferes with your Christian profession and hopes of life and salvation. Keep your religion up above all other interests. We cannot afford to neglect that or make the least compromise without injury to our selves, our life and our cause, as well as weakening the cause to which we adhere. We have the best wishes for you and confidence in your trust and faith and your victory for the cause of Christ and the good you may do to others in your life's mission.

We are as well as usual. Others are also as far as we learn. Today is the sixteenth anniversary of our marriage. We celebrated with happy memories.
Faithfully yours in Christ,

Ed. J. Hoffman

Mac Hall Nov 28/17

Dear Mr. Coffman:-

Rec'd your letter and was very grateful for same. Please accept my sincere thanks. I can truthfully say it settled me more than anything has since I have been here. I read it on the greater part of it, to a couple friends in the same box as myself and I think it was God for all of us. We have been attending