

September 28, 1947

The Rev. J. Lester Link
917 Edgemont Avenue
Bristol, Tenn.

Dear Pastor Link:

Mrs. Meyer had given me the letters of the Brummacks some time ago because she felt she was unable to interpret them to you in their full and real meaning while using as literal a translation as possible. Professional duties kept me from carrying out her request and my intention until last night. I wish both you and the Brummacks would understand and excuse the involuntary delay.

Accept my apologies also for the many slips in typing; it was early in the morning when I interrupted the translation, and just now I have re-read it and put the finishing touches to it. The translation is literally as exact as the contents permit without the risk of distorting their meaning. And -as Mrs. Brummack wrote in her letter- that is what they had wanted you to have.

There has been a rather busy time around the Medical Center: consultative work in Kentucky for planning a program of education in nutrition; school examinations; planning the procedures in this year's research work in nutrition. And, besides, the activities connected with medical practice every day. But, although a little tired, we have enjoyed it.

Hoping that you and yours are well, I am with best wishes and kindest regards

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Meyer.

Behlendorf
July 20, 1947

Dear Pastor Link and family,

Your letter of June 21, which included the picture of your family, reached us yesterday. Our joy was great, indeed, and we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts! My husband is in the Lüneburger Heide (Heath of Lüneburg) at the present time and he sent me a letter written to you for translation yesterday. Since I am not able to do it properly, I will call in Mrs. Meyer's help - as much as that worries me - and I am asking her to translate these letters for you so that you can really understand what we have wished to express. First of all, we wish to tell you how indescribably grateful we are to you and to all who contributed to helping us. Such love touches the heart since this world with most of its human beings has become so void of love and has forgotten how rich and full of joy the heart becomes, when one can give happiness; richer and more joyful, when one receives it! We are so happy with five in the family again having a toothbrush, with real soap, and with the paper for letters. How much did Almuth enjoy those many pencils, Elizabeth the note-books she can use for her classes in college. Students ~~must~~ often have to write on ~~expired~~ expired food ration cards such as our children use in the Ratzeburg highschool instead of note-books. Any kind of studying is very difficult. And, in spite of all this, people strive for their training, which they need as much for their lives as the air they breathe.

^{now} Every package was greeted with jubilation! Everyone of us has some clothes to put on; my husband, Dieter, and Friedemann, too, look like gentlemen in those good suits. Those dresses, which did not fit exactly were altered by Dorothy, who is a good hand at that; they are fitting well now and are enjoyed by everyone of us. It is not very easy to accept gifts, and to request further assistance, is even harder. But your help was sent by God, and, from this knowledge, I take the courage of requesting you to help us further on and not to regard this as lack of modesty or even as obtrusion. I would only be too grateful if it were possible for you to help us with food; it is for my husband, whose health has given way considerably and who is yet needed so urgently by all of us. His strength is breaking down due to the work, which has become too much for him, the long distances he has to walk because of the remoteness in which our village is located. He has no bi-cycle at his disposal for those long walks for which, under normal conditions, one would need an automobile. He so urgently needs a warm all-weather-coat for the severe winter, which will soon visit us again, and good, heavy ~~shk~~ shoes. The lack of heavy shoes is almost the greatest of our troubles, particularly with the children. We had to stop sending Almuth to school the food being too poor to allow her to walk the distance to and from school - 16 to 18 kilometers (about 10 miles). Due to overexertion, she acquired a heart ~~failure~~ weakness; we cannot stand it any longer to see this beloved child slowly perish. It cuts to the heart to witness all of them becoming more or less edematous and enfeebled.

I am enclosing a few old pictures, which we had taken along before my mother's property to ~~burn~~ was destroyed by fire;

these will enable you to some extent to form an idea of what our family looks like. You will see "Flocke", our Cooker-Spaniel, on one picture together with Almut; the dog lived through all the difficulties of our escape together with us, and she is so modest an eater as to make us almost forget her as far as the ~~sum~~ amount of food is concerned. She lived on dog food in the beginning, which has been unobtainable now for 1 year; but her feeding problems will be worked out in some way or other. We were unable to part from this affectionate animal.

But I will write some more about the joy we derived from the packages. After I had written you about 6 weeks ago, the CARE package arrived and another parcel with a beautiful coat and a dress (black and white). How great was the joy! How thankful we are for the combs, the thread, the buttons, needles of any kind, wash-clothes etc. Every one piece is a treasure for us. I do not know whether it is still permitted to send tobacco. We would be glad to pay the customs' fees only to help Dietrich to whom it is sort of medicine during his frequent pains. We will not use it for luxury.

We took a feeble-minded 17 year old boy into our present home, and my husband and Dietrich teach him. He is quite a load for this poor household of 3 rooms, but the parents could find anyone who was willing to help, and we need cash so urgently in order to be a little less restricted financially. Please, don't worry because of the high cost of postage, those few pennies for stamps don't mean much in these times of mad black-market prices! If we could just buy foreign exchange for our mark and send it to America to have clothes and food bought with it! But when will that be possible again? When will rice and cocoa be imported once again? Canadian flour is already a treat after one was used to groats or coarse flour. How grateful the smallest item is received, which makes life easier!

My husband finally agreed to leave for 10 days. With his physical reserves rapidly decreasing, such a short time is almost nothing, of course. But he has a few days with old friends from Pönnan, who rented a farm in the Lüneburger Heide (Heath of Lüneburg). At that place, he and Dietrich can get some real rest and for once satisfy their hunger. Since he edits the Church paper at Lüneburg, he has to be in Lüneburg every two weeks. I wished that, some time, he could get away for several weeks to get good food, rest, and sleep. And he is anxious to write his book on religious pedagogics, which has occupied his mind for years.

My husband is very modest, indeed, ~~and is very humble~~ regarding himself, a very good pastor and Christian, and an able worker and scientist. Of how much use ^{he} could be to humanity and how much he still could help if God would spare him. Please, dear Pastor Link, pray for him and us, we wish to have him with us for a while. We will be humble and try to live according to Jeremiah 45, 5. (And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give to thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.)

We all hunger and thirst after God's spiritual food,

even more than after physical food, and in spite of all this we are joyful in God, in the safety of His love, and in our trust in Him. He will arrange things to our best!

We like the picture of your dear children as much as we like yours and that of your dear wife; will you show the photos of our children to yours? After Almuth will have studied English a little more, she will write more frequently. There will be a time, perhaps, when our children will meet each other; Miraculous things often happen in life. Kindly return our pictures to us as they remind us of times passed and of our home country. There will probably more recent ones at some later time, which will show what we look like now. Almuth only still wears plaits, to her father's great joy, the rest have long curls.- May God keep you all! Give our sincere thanks to the members of your congregation for their charitable gifts, which made us so rich and happy. Accept for yourself ~~our~~ ~~heartfelt~~ the expression of our heart-felt gratitude for all your Christian love and for all the trouble you took in our interest, most of all, however, for your letters!

Sincerely,

(signed) Charlotte Brummack.

Behlendorf
July, 1947

Dear Pastor Link and family,

For a long time already I owe you an answer to your kind letter. My wife has already written you and has thanked you for all the help with which you are making our transition through these dreary times so much easier. May God reward you and yours and your congregation for your goodness! I hesitate to describe to you our existence with lamentations and lengthy words, though well I could. But you know yourself the conditions in to-day's Germany, and ~~what~~ how hard a lot has hit millions of homeless from the German east together with us. We would not be Christians, however, if we did not find reason time and again to thank God, Who has sent your kindness across our path as a sign of His mercy and His love. The suit, which I have the privilege to wear, also came from you, reminding me ~~at~~ every day of you and your help. Together with my loved-ones I must admit that God sent us your assistance just in time. Your food parcel for which my wife has probably thanked you very heartily, helped us very much.

I would have written you earlier, but for my frequent journeys. However difficult the travel in our delapidated coaches, however onerous the task of getting from place to place, I receive much strength from the fellowship with my brethren and friends, who like me had to leave our former congregation in Poznan. Memories of our former home country are distressing. But the hours with the Word of God and in the communion ~~with~~ the Holy Ghost strengthen us. It has been my assignment to take care of them all as far as they reside in the western part of Germany, and I enjoy doing it. I consult with them and try to help them to get work and food and homes and plan for their future, which, it is hoped, has as its goal not only emigration into far away countries. Of the 13 millions of refugees from eastern Europe, there are about 500,000 under my care, and I am establishing branch offices as it is impossible for me to do all the work by myself. In Poznan, I had resources and helpers for the work; but now, everything has been taken from us. There ~~are~~ ~~no~~ typewriters, no paper, no printing facilities. It is hard, indeed, after a war which left in its wake such horrible traces. On the other hand, one is all the more happy about the signs of love and confidence from the group of my companions in misfortune.

Besides serving my congregation here, there are several assignments for me with the Lutheran Church at Luebeck where I especially enjoy the work with teachers. We often read the Holy Scriptures, and ask ourselves afterwards time and again, "How are we to interpret it to the children". New problems of education are also discussed, which, in contradistinction to National Socialism, are to guide men in such ways as to make them a blessing. In all these more or less scientific activities, which, of course, are very much hampered for want of books, I cannot forget suffering and need in my own congregation here in Behlendorf.

You wrote about one case of death and expressed how many things moved your heart when you thought of the indifference of so many others. Here, in Germany, people are dead to almost everything. They have seen so many die that they are hardly impressed by death. Through Prenzlau -100 kilometers (or about 60 miles) north of Berlin- where I supplied some congregations close to the Russian front for weeks, ~~some~~ passed thousands of refugees by day and by night. They left the dead with us, and it frequently happened that I had to bury 20 people, one after another, without having caskets and without anyone being present besides me. War is a horrible experience, but specially so when it lays waste cities behind the front lines frequently burying under the debris hundreds of thousands and finally robbing millions of home and work and food. In this point, however, I agree with you: in all our trouble, we should never forget the sorrow of the individual person. It hurts to unexpectedly see an empty seat at the table in a house which had escaped destruction and to behold little children who have not strength enough to live. In all these days filled with sorrow, we receive consolation in looking up to God. How many have forgotten how to have faith and how to pray!

I have 10 days vacations at present; I had to get sleep. Many a thing has been beyond my strength. We celebrated Mission Day in Hermannsburg in the province of Hannover with about 10,000 people in attendance. A guest speaker of the Lutheran Church in America was with us, and everyone enjoyed his address. After my stay here, I intend to take a few days' rest on a quiet farm. I took ~~Walter~~ Dietrich along, who is an invalid and needs relaxation such as this one. All the rest of the family are at home with much work to do. Elizabeth is in Goettingen, Dorothy in Braunschweig. We pray God daily that He ~~may~~ watch over these two especially. Most hearty and most grateful greetings to you and all of your loved ones!

Sincerely,

(signed) Carl Brumback.

Konnarock, den 14.12.46

Meine Lieben,

es ist noch früh am Morgen, und Marga versucht noch etwas zu ruhen. Deshalb will ich versuchen, Euch in aller Eile ein paar Zeilen zu senden, die Euch sagen sollen, daß wir an Euch denken.

Seit längerer Zeit haben wir nichts von Euch gehört und sind etwas erstaunt darüber, da wir fast regelmäßig von den verschiedensten Plätzen sowohl der britischen wie der amerikanischen Besatzungszone Briefe hatten, auch von Berlin. Ich hoffe nur, daß nicht Krankheit der Grund Eures Schweigens ist! Wir machen uns einige Gedanken, warum Ihr schweigt. Gestern, oder richtiger vorgestern, ist zwar der englische Transoceanampfer "Queen Elizabeth" in New York eingelaufen, und es ist sehr wohl möglich, daß wir heute in unserer Post einen Brief von Euch finden werden.

Von Walter's Familie hatten wir Nachricht, daß das Paket von "United Nations Parcel Service", das Mitte Juli bestellt worden war, angekommen ist. Habt Ihr die Euren noch nicht erhalten? Auch die "CARE" Pakete vom 28.8. und 14.9. sollten inzwischen bei Euch sein, da "CARE" uns vor einigen Tagen mitteilte, daß sie jetzt nur noch 7 Wochen von dem Tage der Bestellung bis zur Ablieferung benötigen. Mit gleicher Post bestelle ich ein weiteres Paket für Euch bei "CARE".

In letzter Woche hat Marga verschiedene Dosen (je ein Pfund) mit Schmalz, Butter und Schweinefilet einmachen lassen; wir wollen versuchen, sie durch Walter und Tante Mariechen an Euch zu schicken. Wir warten nur auf den Augenblick, daß wir direkt an Euch senden können, was wir bei dem gegenwärtigen Stande der Verhandlungen der Besatzungsbehörden und -mächte nicht mehr lange dauern zu sollen scheint.

Aus Völkershäuser bekamen wir vorgestern einen lieben und langen Brief. Tante Mariechen will auch weiterhin unsere Sendungen an Euch weiterbefördern, trotzdem eine Bemerkung in einem Eurer Briefe sie scheinbar etwas verletzt hatte (und meiner Ansicht nach mit Recht). Ihr müßt ihr wohl geschrieben haben, daß sie nicht wieder etwas den Kaffee aus einem Pakete von uns herausnehmen solle; "wir trinken ihn selber gern". Wie wir Euch ja geschrieben hatten, hatten wir Tante gebeten, als Anerkennung für ihre Hilfsbereitschaft alles aus einem solchen Pakete herauszunehmen, was sie gern für sich haben möchte, und wie sie schrieb, da sie "dauchte, Kartoffeln, Gemüse und Brot sei erst mal wichtiger". Ich meine, daß es schon eine Leistung an Selbstlosigkeit ist, ein Paket einfach weiter zu schicken, dessen Inhalt man selbst für Jahre hat entbehren müssen. Es traf Euch ja auch nicht so besonders schwer, da in dem vorausgehenden oder dem folgenden Pakete

Zu den Mitmenschen
Freude zu machen:
ist doch das Beste
was man auf der
Welt tun kann.

So lang ich lebe, hast Du mich gepflegt
Bald starrte wie Sturm, bald saust wie Hagel
Bald warst Du leuchtend über meinem ^{bevorzugt.}
Bald hab ich Dich wie Taubel nur geglaubt,
Doch immer - schienst Du ferne oder nah -
Doch immer, immer warst Du selber da
Und verließst nicht, bis ich, vom Tod erwettet,
Nicht ganz in Deine Gnade hab gebettet.
