

CALIFORNIA CALLS AGAIN

20 Garden Lane, San Mateo, California

December, 1953

To Our New "Subscribers", Our Christmas Greetings
la st year went out as, "CALIFORNIA CALLING".

FAREWELL TO THE REDWOODS

We shall ever cherish our days in the Redwood Empire. Never to be forgotten is the memory of those picnics and hamburger suppers in Armstrong Woods State Park. How good food tasted among those 1300 year old trees and their messages of silence and beauty were far more refreshing and soothing than any to be heard on man-made machines.

But those pleasant days are over. We left Guerneville November 10, in the rain, and arrived in San Mateo, 90 miles to the south, in the sunshine. It made us feel that Guerneville was weeping to have us leave and our newly adopted city greeted us with a smile. Although we were at Guerneville less than two years we found on leaving that the roots of our hearts had gone down much deeper than we had realized.

The two last Sunday services hold an especially tender spot in our memories. At the next to the last service two darling children were baptized and two people joined the church. One of the little girls, Lucinda, is a daughter of a deacon who is also principal of the Guerneville Primary School. He and his good wife, with their four sons, stole a big hunk of our hearts and little Lucinda looked so much like our own daughter when she was one year old that thirty-two years of my life seemed like a dream for it was Elizabeth's thirty-third birthday when I baptized those two children.

The other child was the daughter of a fine couple I had married in the church December 26, 1952. The mother grew up in the church and is a member there. Her mother was one of the deaconesses last year. The father of this baby, Joyce, grew up in the east and joined the church at Guerneville at the same service that his daughter was baptized. The other member who joined then was Joyce's great grandmother who had been baptized in the Catholic Church. Another great grandmother of Joyce was present and the font which was used is a memorial to Joyce's aunt who lived only a few years.

Another interesting feature about that service was the tape recording which was made. One of my Rotary friends, a Catholic, has a good voice and a tape recording instrument. He volunteered to make a recording of the service including the Lord's prayer which he sang as a solo. The recording came out well and he gave me the tape to keep as a souvenir. I played it at a church gathering the last night we were there and can hear it whenever I am where there is a recorder. If I had owned one in Guerneville I might have done a better job at preaching and were I a young minister I certainly would want one so that I could hear myself as others hear me. Some day preachers may be able to get recordings which will show them how they look, as well as how they sound. Won't that be embarrassing!

The last night ~~were~~ were in Guerneville there was a pot-luck supper in the social hall with about 100 people present. Much to our surprise we were presented with a nice G. E. radio with gadgets so we can go to bed with a program playing which will be shut off automatically at the time for which we set the dial. We can also set the alarm to wake us with a favorite news broadcast or other program. As

a matter of fact, we don't use those gadgets much but we do enjoy the radio and are most grateful to our Guerneville friends for it. I closed my last sermon with the words "Affectionately yours" and we came away leaving part of our hearts still there. We have cordial invitations to return and hope that we may be able to do so next summer.

THE CALL TO SAN MATEO.

This was a complete surprise, and such a happy one. We have known about the church for some time as Elizabeth and John joined it several months ago and their two sons attend Church School there. The church membership has quadrupled in the last five years and now stands at about 1300. The Church School has nearly 700 students with more than 70 on the staff. There are five choirs and about 175 young people are active in the Youth Program.

I am giving half time to the church as Parish Visitor, taking part in the Sunday morning services and conducting a training class for those who want to join the church and others who may care to attend. I call it "What Every Church Member Should Know" and use four subjects: "Church History, Teachings of Jesus, Christian Beliefs and What This Church Is Doing." When I have finished with one group I plan to repeat it to another group. The church budget is nearly \$57,000 for 1954 and the last I knew it had been oversubscribed \$3,500. Nearly ninety men went calling December 6th at homes where cards had not been signed and sent in. I have been asked to preach at both services Sunday morning, December 27, with Mr. Gaskell, the pastor, present. What a challenge!

Another job that has been given to me is that of finding out if the elderly men would like to get organized. There is a Senior Circle for women who are seventy or over, and a Men's Club for men without any age limit, but this is especially for Men of Maturity. We are planning a luncheon for December 18 when we will put our ideas together and see if those present would like to have a group by themselves. Many churches have groups for men and women together but I haven't heard of any for the men alone. We seem to be in unexplored territory.

AN UNUSUAL CALL.

I am enjoying my church calling and one day I went to a home which had no connection with the church except that the wife had signed one of the Visitors Cards. When I mentioned that I had been in China she told me that she was born there. She is the daughter of Dr. Peck who was one of the early American Board medical missionaries and I have known his name ever since I went to China. I met his wife there and his son, Willis Peck, was in the diplomatic service there for many years. He died of cancer a year or so ago just a few miles from San Mateo. Mary and I were invited there for tea recently and met a woman whom we knew in China years ago. Her husband was also in the diplomatic service and is living in the town where Willis Peck died. She went to school with Elizabeth's mother-in-law who was here from Oklahoma recently and had no idea where this old schoolmate was living.

I could go on and on relating the glories of this new call but time is short and there is much to be done. We do hope that you all have Happy Calls from Old Santa and Father Time.

Affectionately yours,

Rob

Please share
this with your mother
& Mr. Ross

POSTSCRIPT TIME. (M.S.R.)

I used to write about the children, but now like all grandmothers, I boast about the grandchildren. All eight of them visited us last summer, and enjoyed picnics among the redwoods, but Lafayette measles prevented the anticipated Robinson Reunion.

The eldest, Katherine Robinson, is in first grade, and I was thrilled on Thanksgiving Day when she showed me a pile of flash cards, on each a word, which she arranged in sentences. What an interesting way to learn to read. She used her skill in drawing in making a workbook for reading and numbers. Her greatest joy is lessons in horseback riding. Jennifer Mary has started to kindergarten, having to go by bus to an afternoon session. She brings home songs and stories, and delighted us Thanksgiving by saying grace, one she had learned at kindergarten. Tommy aged three is growing like a weed, and as I could hardly lift him, I suggested he ask his grandpa to throw him high in the air. I noticed that Grandpa soon found a less strenuous way to amuse a little boy. He has rather a hard time to keep up with his sisters and their friends, and sometimes comes running to the house crying, "I hurt my feelings!" We find Lafayette and Walnut Creek nearer to us here than it was in Guerneville.

It certainly is a joy to live just a few blocks from the Ratcliffes, and to see the children at least once a day. Stephen walks to kindergarten at which he feels quite grown up and superior. Cowboy suits are still popular, but I fancy they may soon be supplanted by Space Men regalia. Grandma thinks that Stephen is an unusually intelligent boy, and likes to read to him, but was my ego deflated when I heard him tell his mother that he wanted her to read to him, for he didn't like an old voice. Sometimes he will accept me, and Bruce loves his own stories. Little Patty has not reached the story stage, but she has learned to change records on the record player and delights in the Christmas carols. She loves both grandparents, and favors us alike with the name, Baba. Bruce calls both of us Grandpa, as does Tommy. Bruce frequently answers the telephone when I call, and he always has the same reply, "I'm fine". And so he is.

As we have not seen Carol and Lynn since summer, I can't report on their clever sayings. Their parents write that Carol likes kindergarten, and that Lynn doesn't feel too badly to have Mummie's undivided attention at home. If Daddy is released from the navy in February, as he hopes to be, we trust that they will travel from Camp Pendleton to New Jersey via Lafayette and San Mateo, and that we shall catch up with them then.

From all our homes to all your homes we send Christmas Greetings and say again, with Tiny Tim, "God Bless Us Every One".