

Minami 15 Nishi
Sappo, Japan
January 20th 1938

Dear Brother John

Thank you very much for your letter of a month ago tomorrow. I hope all the Christmas services and festivities went well, and have resulted in an increase of Spiritual Life, which is a thing I'm interested in.

I like your Vicar's letter and its nice to find he is that sort of Grouper, if indeed he is. There is the other sort you know. Thank you too very much for all the things you say in your letter. It is nice to know we are still on speaking terms – in fact, if only you broaden the Group just a leettle more, I shall find myself inside (I hope), without even having moved. Perhaps that is the whole secret of the Group Movement – if you don't move to it, it Moves to you. I would like to point out that the Group stands to gain considerably by moving along to my little cubby hole, because there is such a wealth of good Sound Doctrine waiting for them (or It), and ready to Fill the Aching Void that Frank can never Fill.

I'm so glad the Group has given up Scalp Hunting. They used to hunt them once with a vengeance didn't they? But really, John, you must be careful, your letter is so eminently sane [Page 2] and sensible that if you aren't very careful you will be Un-Grouped. The Un-Grouping Ceremony has never been recorded by a third Party, and I for one must admit that it is An Entertainment at which I would Rather Not Assist.

In fact the only unbalanced point in your letter that I can see is not your own observation, but a quotation – to do with the “degree” of divinity which is ours. I'm so glad you saw the wrongness and absurdity of the statement, though you were Group-Loyal (Group Honest? Group-Absolute??) enough merely to say that the remark was “putting it an extreme way”. Which extreme you don't say, but I do – the extremes of Folly, Ignorance and Presumption all in one.

I like the “narrow Churchy sense” of the word “priest” don't you. I have just learnt the forms of Priestly Confession and Absolution: why wasn't I told before? I wish there were some penitents I could help with it.

What you call “my” doctrine about one life not being an extension of the Incarnation, is not mine at all. I borrowed it from the Holy Catholic Church. As it happens, I am a member of that particular Spiritual Lending Library, and if there is anything else you want, I can probably get it for you. I am a Life Subscription Member, it is the most satisfactory way.

And I have got as far as this without even mentioning your Christmas presents! Thank you very much indeed for them. I have had many a laugh from the Calendar already, and [Page 3] the Weekly Illustrated Annual is fascinating. I am much now interested in England and its happenings now that I am an exile from her green and pleasant pastures. This cubby hole which I have here is excellent as a cubby hole, but it has its limitations, especially for one who appreciates society.

I have sent all the news in my circular letter – there is a little news this time, because I went travelling for almost 3 weeks at a rate of over a thousand miles a week. I made the C.M.S. pay all right. Golly they do keep a tight fist on the dough.

Well well, I seem to have got on to Vituperation, and that is a warning to stop.
With lots of brotherly love (I have no one here to send sisterly love)

From Joe

PS You ask me what I think of I John V. 18. It is nice in its way.

As for Matt V. 48 (“Be ye therefore perfect”) I think it is one of our Lord’s funny jokes. I do really.

Margaret Norgett nee Wansey writes in Aug 2017

The ‘Group’ might refer to ‘Moral Re-Armament’, which John was associated with for many years.

The CMS is the Church Missionary Society. Joe (Chris Wansey) went to Japan as a CMS sponsored (paid) missionary.