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12-11-1938

### 1938-12-11, Letter from Charles Roberts to Louis Talbot and E.J. Peterson

Charles Roberts

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[Written on Hunan Bible Institute letterhead]

The Rev. L. T. Talbott [sic], D.D, President  
Mr. E. J. Peterson Business Manager,  
The Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Incorporated,  
558 South Hope Street.  
Los Angeles, California, U. S. A.

December 11, 1938

Dear Brethren:

This morning I have had two pleasures. First. A fine congregation assembled at the Milton Stewart Hall for a regular Sunday morning service. It is always a great joy to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to my Chinese friends. And now they are finding great comfort and hope in the Word. And, as he has been doing for several Sundays, the Governor of Hunan and his wife and a number of the provincial government come right on time and stay thru the service. Our subject this morning was "Blood". Ex. 12. Lev. 17 & Hebrews 9. The text Math. 26:27, 28. There is much shedding of blood in old China, but only His precious blood really can avail for a new China. We are a bit of a motely crowd at the Institute these days. The CIM Blind School for girls- their property was bombed sometime ago, but no lives were lost. The CIM Hudson Taylor Hospital- completely burned to the ground in the fire of Changsha. Two hundred refugees whose homes went up in smoke as a result of the "Scorched Earth Policy". And also a number of missionaries from different missions. At present we are twelve missionaries on the compound. My house has been a "boarding house" for the past week on the compound. Except for the sorrow and suffering all around us we have been living in there very thrilling days. And the end is not in sight. The Japanese are about 100 miles from us to the north and east, but temporarily have held up their drive us ward. We, of course do not know just why, but we are on the alert for any news that may indicate that a new drive has started. Altho [sic] we live in the city of Desolation yet we remain peaceful and happy, for in Christ is our hope. It has been a trying ordeal, this burning of a city. Half a million is our normal population. Even in the burning of Rome, or the great fire of London, I cannot find anything that quite equals this burning of the Capitol of Hunan. The Government is now trying to work out plans for relieving the needs of the sufferers. Two days ago 84,000 received \$5 each as a sort of balm. And a week before that 24,000 received travelling expenses and loans to start off in another direction away from the ruins of the city. It is estimated that 75 per cent of the city was completely burned to the ground. And much of what is left is useless. And the great marvel of this tragedy is that altho [sic] it is frankly admitted the city was "fired" prematurely, and three responsible officials have since been executed for not obeying orders, the citizens of Changsha have taken it "on the chin", and very little discontent by comparison was been noticed, which seems to indicate that Hunan wants to resist to the bitter end any invasion of her territory. And so we carry on "Preaching the Word" for many are finding comfort in the words of Jesus. Secondly, this morning I received a copy of the K. B. October. That shows you how far behind we are with our reading matter. And little news do we get from any source. No electric light, so no radio. Mail oh, once in four weeks or so. We seem to be able to get mail out, but not much comes in.

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I read with interest your announcement in the October number K.B. I am glad you outlined our work as I suggested for we have been getting a few letters here and there asking about the future of the Institute.

Our Mr. T just returned from a trip to Band No. 2 in the southwest part of Hunan. The band has been working in connection with the Methodist Mission. They located in a place called "White Waters." And already after only a month's work a number of people have not only become interested in the Gospel but have accepted Christ as their Saviour. The result is that after a talk the Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Changsha yesterday the Mission is sending an evangelist to "White Waters" to arrange for the permanent opening of a Gospel Hall in that small market town. That's good, eh? There is no question that the simple gospel is meeting needs these days. Then our beloved brother C. K. Cheng of Scofield Course fame has greatly recovered from his breakdown last Fall in Hongkong, and is able to do a little work again in his department. This week I received letters from West Hunan from Brethern CC and JK. They have been holding special meetings among students and others there. A goodly number of conversions were reported among boys of the Yale-in-China middle school which has moved from Changsha to West Hunan, and also among the Presbyterian middle school for girls which likewise moved from our city west-ward. All of this greatly cheers our hearts as we feel that while the regular work of the school is being held up due to disturbed conditions coming from imminent invasion, we are still on the wing and touching hearts that need the gospel. And would you believe it, but since our city was burned with nothing much remaining we have again been bombed! And a few bombs dropped at the railway station on which is only a few hundred yards from us as the crow flies, Shook my house, and also the shock was felt in our Milton Stewart Hall. A short time after wounded men and women were being brought into the hospital that is now located in our buildings. We find it all a bit trying, and sometimes wonder what this "war" is all about anyway. But I think the "Kings of the East" are on the march. So we keep looking up! I see in the K.B. you still have me down as treasurer! I have now assumed my office according to your letter of June 14, 1938. It was necessary this Fall for someone to take the leadership and most Institutions had to fall back on foreign personnel much as most of us have wanted to see our Chinese colleagues take the leadership in these matters, so I am signing all letters and documents necessary, as per your appointment- Superintendent. You caption us with -An uncertain future. Well perhaps it is so, but we trust our Father will carry us thru the crisis that is before every Mission in China, and give us a FUTURE until He comes. We are encouraged by the information that Bible Schools and theological schools in Japanese occupied territory are able to carry on, tho [sic] perhaps on limited lines. I have already written you regarding finances. We shall be able to carry on until next June with our drawing from the home end, if it is your desire that we use our surplus first. I also wrote you a letter regarding added foreign personnel. We need additional missionaries. It is impossible for one family to carry on. Fortunately we have both been in good health and are able to carry a full program, but in this semi-tropical climate with uncertain conditions to constantly cope with it is really necessary that one have competent help. I have received word that my old friend Jim Graham has visited Biola again. Also I think you will do well to get in touch with others like him who have not only ability but a knowledge of things Chinese. These words are written to keep you in touch with the work and our needs. We daily pray that God's blessing may rest upon you all at Los Angeles. And we shall be glad to get further word from you regarding plans for H.B.I. Yours in the Blessed Hope

[Signed]

Charles A. Roberts  
Superintendent – Hunan Bible Institute