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1938-10-13, Letter from Charles Roberts to Paul Rood and E.J. Peterson

Charles Roberts

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[Written on Hunan Bible Institute letterhead]

The Rev. Paul W. Rood, 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.

October 13, 1938

Dear Brethren:

My last letter receive from you was in June. But we have been hearing such good things about Biola these last two weeks or so that we feel we much write you again and tell you how we all rejoice at the exceedingly good news we have received. We are anxious to hear more details about the burning of the mortgages etc. I have passed on the good word to a few of my Chinese colleagues who have in the past been given information concerning Biola's financial difficulties and they too reflect joy and anticipation for the future. May our heavenly Father continue to guide and bless you all. And now about Biola in China. This week we have been disturbed with air-raid alarms state at 9:30 in the evening and keeping us on the q.v. until the wee morning hours. Three times the planes came within our city limits, and one evening they roared over H.B.I. compound and we waited breathlessly for the first bomb to fall somewhere, perhaps near us, but in God's good grace to this city they passed us by and roared on to a more southern city, the city of Hangyang, where later we heard there was a great destruction and loss of life. And this happened just as we had closed a fine three weeks conference with our Biola Band evangelists and leaders. It has been truly one of the best and most spiritual conferences we have had in many years. The first week of the conference was for our own workers. The two last weeks included delegates from different parts of the province and city churches. Our chief speakers were Mr. CC a brilliant young college man who has had a remarkable spiritual experience and has a most humble manner in presenting the Word. And Mr.K. Mr. K was a former movie actor in the China films. Having decided to end his life in the Hwangpu river at Shanghai some years ago he was rescued by a sailor from an American gunboat anchored nearby. Later he was lead to the Lord by Paget Wilks one of the outstanding missionaries in Japan who was on a visit to Shanghai several years ago and led special meetings in that city. Gospel stor4ies are most vivid. He held evangelistic meetings in several of the churches each even during the conference, and each evening the partic8lar church was filled to overflowing with listeners. And a goodly number accept Christ by coming forward and kneeling at the alter. We are most happy over this period of Conference and evangelic endeavour. Please see the enclosed photographs.

[Page 2]

This Fall and winter we shall have four regular evangelistic bands working in connection with three different Missions, namely C.I.M Methodist Mission, and the Evangelical Church. There are 30 evangelists and Leaders to-gether [*sic*]. The opportunities for preaching the Gospel are so large that we predict a most fruitful year of witnessing and service. Do pray for these men as they go forward. While we have just closed a very fine conference here at Changsha it does not seem the wise thing to attempt to re-open the school for permanent work at this period; The continual air-raid alarms and the possible frequent bombings we maybe called upon to experience are not conducive to study and we do not want to place anyone in unnecessary risk. I think I mentioned in a former letter that the Governor has seen fit to

ask all schools to close or to move further into the interior. Yesterday we heard over the radio that the Japanese have landed a large body of troops and military supplies near Hongkong. So the long heralded invasion of South China has begun. What this will mean to us we cannot foretell, but it looks as tho our southern outlet is about to be cutoff. I am glad that my family are in Hongkong. We may get bottle up! If you will look on the map you will see that we are on the Canton-Hankow railway. And if both of these cities should be captured then we are in a serious way so far as communication with the outside world is concerned. But now for the happy side of our lives. While we shall not carry on the regular school work the Lord has given us perhaps what is even a richer field of service. The Hunan Provincial authorities have been working on a scheme for short term courses for all of the Principals, teachers and secretaries of the primary and high schools in the country districts. The first batch of men, mainly principals of schools, is to meet in a town to the south of us for this first period of training, about 2,700 men. All preparations are complete. And now comes word of an invitation to send a special band of evangelists and workers to go to this particular place and present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to these men! It is an unprecedented opportunity. A Committee of Rural Evangelism has been formed by a number of prominent Christian laymen in this city, and the writer has been asked to serve on that Committee, for the promotion of this work and similar work in the future. The Hunan Bible Institute is glad to appoint three of its best Band-leaders temporarily to start immediately for the given point, and in two days more the writer, Mr. C & K will also proceed there. We have just received a telegram from Secretary in Charge of this training school- Welcome Evangelistic Band- And the authorities have placed at our disposal two large matshed auditoriums with a seating capacity of 1,400 each for mass meetings. This first period of instruction will last one month, and then a period of several weeks & then another large group will meet for training. So you can see the greatness of the opportunity not only of numbers but getting in touch with the educated classes. China is considering Christ as her only hope, and we must not fail her at this time of her greatest crisis. Pray for us. More later as we progress. I am mailing the six months accounts under separate cover. Please excuse haste but I seemed rushed these days. God bless you all. Yours in Christ,

[Signed]

Charles A. Roberts