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Charles Roberts

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May 16, 1947

The Rev. William Orr, D.D.,
Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Inc.,
558 South Hope Street,
Los Angeles, 13, California, USA

Dear Bill:

I sent a letter off to you yesterday and one to Louie. And then in came a cable from Mr. Davis: Roberts Biola Changsha Board authorizes you Grace return after my arrival if unable await my return Changsha meet me Hongkong July sixth Buildings for hospital approved hold other arrangements Davis Thank you for the permission to return, and we shall do so in due time. But since Mr. Davis left in the hurried manner in which he did, with no explanation to the Chinese save to Mr. Li the business manager that he was returning to America on an UNNRA ticket' to visit his mother who is in poor health, it has been slightly difficult to disarm them of the idea that there were other reasons behind the move! Hence I wrote you yesterday on the subject of the newspaper article which indicates that the 'wind' is up in that the Chinese feel whether it is Roberts or Davis they have not been let in on the move! And frankly they are having none of it. It has taken me several days to talk with members of the Alumni that there is nothing but sincere desire and willingness on our part and your part to have the Chinese brethren share in the future plans, and that there is NO desire to have this school dominated by 'foreigners', but to have a happy working-to-gether. Frankly if Mr. Davis is coming back with cut and dry plans it will be the height of folly for all concerned. He has barely been with us a few weeks, and no part in the actual teaching and set up, and my assent to his return was that he do so at his own decision and not 'to sell to the Board' anyone's ideas, but to make such purchases as he felt necessary, and that above all that he might let you all see the need for your representation in setting up a Board of Managers in China. And this I hope he has done. But the cable gives me to indication that anyone of you might be interested in coming to China in the near future. I have shown the above cable to Mr. Cory, and we have talked matters over as we see it from this end, and I have sent you the following cable: Davis cable received will return after September Bible Conference now being arranged stop Chinese Alumni and Leaders request roundtable talks with Biola Board delegates view organizing China Board strongly urge your representation and final decisions be made then Cory concurs letters follow Roberts

Please Bill I beg of you not to let us down. And forgive me if I seem impatient, but if 31 years of experience has any meaning at all in China, and knowing this set up from A to Z, why not let the Chinese in on it? Let them have their say to you, and lets not follow an antiquated thinking of making up their minds for them. You simply can't measure things by the standards at home and Western ways. I am sure you would get great experience by coming. And I have promised as did Dr. Keller in the past that Board members would come. Why not make September a real RED LETTER DAY for Biola in US and CHINA! I have asked Mr. Cory to also write you on the subject.

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And now a few preliminary words concerning the proposed Board of Managers. This again is not easy as we are located in an interior province and travel is not as easy as at home. And further nearly all of the Missions in Hunan while being conservative in general there are few in particular who might be termed

out and out Fundamentalists. I have therefore been slow to suggest names. However to-date there are three or four people whom I have contacted and who have expressed willingness to serve. Bishop Houghton of the CIM, and my very good friend Ernst Yin, the Rev. E.J. Bannan of Hunan Presbyterian Mission (I believe he had an interview with the Board last year before leaving Los Angeles), and the Rev. Mr. Tsai of the Church of Christ in China in Hunan, and a graduate of HBI. There are others. I am sure you will agree that a good Board in China and one that can meet when necessary made up of Chinese and Missionaries will settle all these little bickerings about property, and we can then arrange, rent or even dispose if necessary such surplus as will not be needed. And it will CERTAINLY save the Board at Los Angeles a lot of unnecessary meetings and worry by reason of the great distance. For years I have been advocating that we have a Board of Managers in China and that you brethren remain the Board of Trustees. And that the Board of Managers be responsible to the Board of Trustees for the operation of the school. This is the way many schools are now working, including I believe the well known University of Nanking. In this period of Missions it is absolute folly to operate on a one man idea, and especially if that man is a foreigner, no matter how capable he may be considered. In this connection I want to express myself that I also consider it essential that the school have a Chinese President. And that instead of a Superintendent that the missionary be Board Representative to work with the President and Board of Managers. This will doubtless take sometime to work out for a school of this kind and standing it will not be easy to discover a Chinese who will be able to take this position, and preferably one who has been in America and commands respect in China. I am sure you will all pray about this matter. Get the proper set up here with the financial backing needed and I believe, however, that should a man under God will be found. Perhaps Bill you will find my letters a bit tedious reading, but I only want what is His will. I am ready to come home and plug hard for Biola in US and in China, but I won't feel happy to do so if the same old loose way of running this Institution and under dominant foreign control is to continue. It would be a will 'o the wish sort of thing. So again be patient with me if I seem to be pushing a little hard, but the events of the recent few weeks are so full of warning as to pronounce the ominous. Regarding the Hospital Dr. Eitel wires me that he expects to arrive in Changsha at the end of this week and we shall look after him as in the past, however I feel again that any permanent arrangement should be made thru a Board in China rather than an individual. He also has written me about a Hospital Board also. It is possible such can dovetail its activities when the time comes. So then until September we shall just 'carry on'. And now may the Lord bless you and guide and if it be His will bring some of you to us. Ever truly yours in Christ,

Charles

[Postscript had written at the bottom of page 2]

P.S. Please be assured that references to Mr. Davis are not intended in any personal way for I have been most grateful for his help. But I am looking at the long range of future *[illegible]* C.