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Charles Roberts

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Hunan Bible Institute
Changsha, Hunan, China

December 5, 1947

The Board of Directors,
Bible Institute of Los Angeles, Inc.,
558 South Hope Street,
Los Angeles, 13, California, U.S.A.

Dear Friends:

At our last monthly Mission meeting the enclosed discussions and motions were covered and acted upon. We hope from now on to send to you regularly a coverage of our monthly meetings. Before making a few comments on the enclosed, I would like to first of all again thank the Board for sending Dr. Louis T. Talbot and Mr. Russell Alder at your representatives to our annual Autumn Conference. I am sure they will have reported to you fully their findings. It is a great uplift to have them with us, and I know that more than you can imagine, the Chinese greatly appreciated the visit. And along this line I want to emphasize the importance of each year having a visitor from Biola to this Conference. In the old days this was a regular custom, when Dr. Torrey, Dr. Hunter and others made the trip. It was a time that we all looked forward to. For the coming September Conference we suggest that you early appoint someone to be with us. I would also like to suggest the name of Dean Sutherland. Reason: Our Student Body would be greatly enthused to know that the Dean of the Bible Institute at Los Angeles is to be with us. Kindly let me know at an early date if this is possible. And now for a few comments of the enclosed. Regarding salaries. I would like to add that we are not at all anxious to bring this question up, but true necessity calls for a consideration. During the 25 years that I have been connected with the Institute we have not had an increases of any kind, and during the lean years as the record will show, we all took a 50% cut. And today our allowance according to former regulations is still not up to original. And as you must know the writers' losses during the years of revolution '27-28, Communist occupation of Changsha '30, and then the Japanese occupation in '43 to the surrender, when all was lost, has been exceedingly heavy amounting well over \$10,000.00. And this included all our manuscripts of Chinese lessons and library, etc. which are difficult to replace. However, we are not writing this in any sense of complaint save that we are now all faced with an inflation, and I believe you

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at home to meet this same situation, that next year with all foreign commodities to be purchased only at a high rate, we shall in actual value be only getting a half of what we did in the old days, and at that time commodities were reasonable.. Therefore in asking an increase in allowances we do so reluctantly, but of true necessity. And for your information may I add that all the leading Missions in China – Presbyterian, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Church – have this autumn made liberal increases. This I would further add is especially necessary where there are small children to be educated. To send a child away to school now is so costly that no missionary family can stand the expense alone. Please do give this matter your earliest attention. When the brethren were here we took up the matter of completing the work of reconstruction of the buildings. As they themselves have seen, by the help of CNRRA a great deal has been done. Dormitories have been rebuilt and altho [*sic*] not altogether done in the best of

workmanship yet sufficient to have made it worthwhile and habitable. And now with the completion of Residence No. 3 the one that was still in ruins when the brethren were here, we are well on our way to finishing up the job. The roof of the Milton Stewart Hall is now in the process of being put on for permanent use. There are still a few other smaller jobs to be done and we hope to have all this sort of thing cleared up by the Chinese New Year, which comes in early February. You will see on the enclosed that there is an item for renovation of Residences No's. 1 & 2. This is necessary as Res. No. 1, built by UNRRA and used by them for nearly a year while being turned back to us is in such a filthy condition that no one would want to move into it. And Res. No. 2 being a large one is being made into a two apartment house. This will house Mr. & Mrs. Cory upstairs and Mr. & Mrs. Ebeling whom we hope to see at the end of this year. We have this week receive a letter from Mr. Ebeling of the China Inland Mission. He is arriving early in December at Shanghai. He writes "If the Lord guides we hope to see you soon". We trust that this appointment by the China Inland Mission will take place, and that coming of Mr. & Mrs. Ebeling will not only be their contribution to our Staff, but be the needed teacher we are looking for. Mr. Ebeling is, I believe, a Wheaton and Dallas Seminary man.

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The Board has asked how we may increase the student body which admitted is not as large as we would like it to be. The reason for this is as pointed out to the brethren while here, and I believe they made some observations on the subject, is the sudden increase in what I would almost term "mushroom" Bible Schools and seminaries popping up all over the place. And many of them I regret to say are being started by some of our Chinese brethren who feel 'they' must do or organize a 'Chinese' institution! However, the 'cash income' is rarely, if ever 'Chinese'! But it is an old story, is this individualism and lack of understanding of true co-operation in China. And I am almost tempted to believe that the 'Marshall Plan' is thought to include this type of theological Institution!! Hence instead of having a strong staff anywhere, we are scattered both in strength of faculty and number of students who are available. So the only alternative is, perhaps, to offer more and many scholarships, a plan that we did not want to fall back on. But it is true that economic conditions in this country are way below what they were before the war, and that many deserving students would come if there was a financial way out. So I propose to the Board that a yearly grant for scholarships be made on the basis 50 students. $\frac{1}{4}$ allowance for the first year, and if making good that this be increased to $\frac{1}{2}$ the second year, and full scholarship for the third year in the Bible Course, and same for the third and fourth year in the Seminary course. It may be necessary to begin with $\frac{1}{2}$ a scholarship in the first year; however we would experiment with the $\frac{1}{4}$ allowance at first so as to keep away from the 'rice student' idea, and to reach those who would be worthwhile. Truly the economic conditions in the Chinese Church are very pitiful. The total cost for such a program for the first year should not be over \$2,500.00, and it is doubtful if we should use more than one-half to three – quarters of this amount in the first year. Formerly our student body was largely made up full scholarships and we felt the results were not fully justified. Hence while realizing the great need for student help we would like to start again on a slightly different basis. Any amount the Board can officially grant for the coming Spring term will be greatly appreciated. And also in addition to the regular Spring term course we are planning and have already sent out circulars announce a Short term course beginning at the opening of the Spring term in

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February to run for eight weeks. And on completion of four such terms the student will be granted a certificate. The course is rather intended for layment and layworkers. The costs have already been placed into the budget. And now a word on the matter of the budget. We note that to the present the Board has not been pleased to pass the same. And we can perhaps understand to a degree the position. And we could like to explain that practically speaking, living in a land of wild inflation – U.S.\$ now NC\$150,000.00 black market – you simply can't keep up with it. We write cheques now for millions like we did a year ago for thousands! And nobody seems to know when and how it is going to end. So we propose to send you in 'short notice' a quarterly budget. And as of the first of the year will try and exclude all unnecessary time that would have to do with fixed assets – much as buildings, etc. As stated above we hope to have all this covered and practically thru by Chinese New Years. Please wait for our new budget which we will try and get to you before January 1, 1948. Concerning the Orphanage we have engaged several workers for this important work. And we will include in the budget the needs. CNRRA has asked us to wait a couple of more weeks before opening as they can't get their work completed per schedule. In closing may I be permitted to make a bit of a 'wail'. Since our brethren's visit we have only had one letter in nigh two months! What has happened to the Secretary and the Board motion that we were to have bi-monthly correspondence?? Our business department is pitiful in its lack of 'figures' of cash deposits! Won't you please send me the stubs of each cheque you deposit even if you don't write! But we do want your letters! If I recall, the Honorable President of the Bible Institute while relaxing at Changsha frequently groaned when the mail came in and there was found wanting 'mail'! It's a long way from home, and we are so much interested in your activities there as in your decisions for us. If there should be any anticipated changes in the way of a Secretary won't you please make it soon and let us get back to the bi-monthly letter schedule. Thank you.

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We are happy to report that our No. 1 Biola Evangelistic Band is making splendid progress at Supu, Hunan. I received a letter from them yesterday in which they reported forty-eight enquirers now regularly studying the Gospel with them and that thirty had definitely accepted Christ. And in a small monthly diary which they sent to me at the close of each month there are listed a number of people who are in good positions, such as teachers, petty officials and shop-keepers. Truly this is the time of opportunity. God willing we shall send out a student-Band during the winter vacation period which covers a month. It is needless to write that the calls for our evangelistic bands are numerous. We hope also to have another regular Band in the field next year. The Band work is one for our most promising features. We have just completed another printing of the Scofield Correspondence Course – 500 sets. The phase of the work, too, is very encouraging and when we get caught up with all the other must be done things and there is a little cash left over we want to see this department enlarged. Please accept the hearty greetings from Mrs. Roberts and myself to you each one for the Christmas season. And we would welcome a letter from you each one, but we know that you are busy people, and we want to add that we do appreciate your prayers, your efforts and your concern of the Institute here. Ever truly yours in Christ, HUNAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

Charles A. Roberts

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