

Board of Trustees, Meeting of 1914

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING

of the

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CAIRO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

November 30, 1914.

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The first meeting of Board of Trustees of the proposed Cairo Christian University convened at 10.40 A.M., November 30, 1914, in Room 1901 of the Foreign Missions Rooms, 25 Madison Avenue, New York City. The following members of the Board were present: Harlan P. Beach, LL.D., New Haven, Conn., Professor of Missions, Yale University; Ralph W. Harbison, Esq., Pittsburgh, Pa., Harbison-Walker Refractories Company; W. Bancroft Hill, D.D., Poughkeepsie, New York, Professor of Biblical Literature, Vassar College; George Innes, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa., George Innes & Company, Innes, Canada; M. G. Kyle, D.D., LL.D., Philadelphia, Pa., Lecturer on Biblical Archeology, Xenia Theological Seminary; J. K. McClurkin, D.D., Pittsburgh, Pa., Pastor Shadyside United Presbyterian Church; George M. Paden, Esq., Pittsburgh, Pa., Union National Bank, Cashier; George L. Robinson, D.D., LL.D., Chicago, Illinois, Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis, McCormick Theological Seminary; Fred. O. Shane, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa., Shane Bros. & Wilson, Millers; Charles R. Watson, D.D., Philadelphia, Pa., Secretary Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church. Mr. E. E. Olcott, New York City, President Hudson River Day Line, Lincoln National Bank, Director, arrived during the afternoon session. By invitation, Rev. W. I. Chamberlain, D.D., was also present.

1. TEMPORARY ORGANIZATION

In calling the meeting to order, Dr. Watson submitted a tentative Agenda for the meeting, stated that Dr. J. K. McClurkin had been asked to preside until permanent officers were elected, that Dr. Chamberlain of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, had been asked to be present as a visitor because of the relations which it was hoped that Board might sustain to the movement and that Mr. W. W. Cleland was present to take notes of the meeting so that the Minutes of the First Meeting of the Board might be recorded with sufficient fulness to preserve something of the discussions as well as any formal action that might be taken. It was explained that word had been received from Dr. Henry Wallace of Des Moines stating that on account of his health he found it impossible to make the long trip East to attend this meeting. Notice was given that expense accounts should be handed to Mr. Paden, treasurer pro tem., to be paid out of a special fund provided by a group of men designating themselves as "Stewardship Incorporated."

2. PRAYER

Dr. McClurkin then took the chair and emphasized the thought that to begin with prayer was indeed to begin so great an enterprise aright. He then suggested that all should lead in prayer and there followed a season of prayer of marked earnestness and solemnity in which all participated:- There was thanksgiving to God for tokens of His favor and guidance in the steps that had led up to the meeting, and for strong assurances of the sufficiency of divine help in realizing the vision that had been given; request was made for wisdom and guidance in every problem, that those present might be enabled to build even better than they knew, that the necessary funds and men might become available, that

the proposed University might be an effective agency for revealing to the world the life and power of Christ, that it might be used of God mightily to win the Moslem world to Christ and reclaim territory lost through the unfaithfulness of past ages.

3. LETTER

Dr. M.G. Kyle as chairman of the Committee on University of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church read the attached letter, reviewing briefly the history of the development of the proposal to establish a Christian University in Egypt and committing the further guidance of this movement to the Board of Trustees at their first meeting. The letter was received and placed on file. (See Appendix A).

4. HISTORY AND REASONS

The history of the University movement and the reasons for establishing a University at Cairo was the next item on the Agenda and the Chairman called on Dr. Watson to present this matter.

Dr. Watson: Our presence here is itself assurance of a large degree of acquaintance with the history of this University movement and also conviction as to the need which lies back of it. Yet there is value in reviewing the whole subject, for through discussion we may become more familiar with facts which as Trustees we shall frequently be called upon to present and we may also through discussion enrich each others apprehension of the importance of the proposed University.

1. History of the Movement: Here we lay hold of one of the strongest defences of the movement: The fact that it has stood the test of Time. (a) For 16 years this conception has persisted. Not only persisted, but grown. Reference made to letter prepared in 1898 or 1899 by Cairo missionaries giving six reasons for the University. (b) The University movement later was placed in hands of committee appointed by entire body of American Missionaries in Egypt. On it, such able educators as Dr. Alexander and President McGlenahan. (c) Later the matter passed to the Board in America and an educational survey was made by a Commission consisting of Dr. T.H.P. Sailer, President McGlenahan and Mr. Watson. Sixty institutions were visited. Some 70 educational leaders were interviewed. Government officials opened doors. The Islamic, the Government, the Coptic, the private and the Mission school systems were studied. Such men as Dr. Dunlop, British Advisor of Education, Heshmat Pasha, head of Department of Education, and Artin Pasha, were interviewed. All this contributed to the final judgment as to need for a Christian University. Then followed the recommendation of the United Presbyterian Board to its Assembly that a movement be launched to establish such a University, emphasis being laid on three things: (1) its Christian character; (2) its Interdenominational character; (3) its University character. Favorable action by the Assembly was followed by a selection of men to constitute a Board of Trustees and now we are met in the first meeting of said Board. At one point, development of events was perhaps abnormal. Public agitation for funds in Pittsburgh last spring preceded the First Meeting of the Board of Trustees and secured about \$170,000.

2. Is such a University needed? Double answer to this; for Egypt and for Moslem world. (1) For Egypt: a Christian University is needed (a) As regards the missionary enterprise in Egypt. Continuous missionary work for past 60 years has resulted in Protestant community of 40,000, besides the leavening of the Coptic Christian community, and has established 200 schools with 17,000 scholars. The missionary movement in Egypt has come to its second stage of development. Where the beginnings of the Christian missionary movement were

rooted necessarily in denominationalism, there is now a need for something to visualize the unity of these individual denominational missionary efforts. The University will do this. It will also help to establish the larger relationships, for example, national relationships of the Christianity introduced through missionary effort. (b) For moral upbuilding of the nation: Period of youth is the period in which moral character of a nation is established or undermined. In no part of world is youth so much in need of moral help as in Moslem lands. Where the recognized morality of a country is measured by a low estimate of woman, by polygamy and concubinage, it is easy to imagine to what depths immorality reaches. No institution of the highest educational rank exists in which Egyptian youth has a chance to come away victorious. (c) For the sake of religious influence: The University is conceived as a religious and missionary force. Customary to array educational work against evangelistic work. If so, the University is to be reckoned an evangelistic agency. Ordinary evangelism cannot touch classes to be reached by University, thus directly evangelistic. In addition, its School of Religion is to train missionary leaders. In this sense also evangelistic. Other contributions to religious influence also required. University is needed to carry to Islam the richest content of Western Christianity. Western science devoid of religion is nothing less than brutal. It annihilates not only Islam but the religious instinct and nature itself. A Christian University needed to contribute to the thoughtful Mohammedan the message and culture and learning of Christianity. (d) For the sake of the educational development of the country: The spirit of true education largely absent; utilitarian views dominate. Education regarded valuable only to answer the question, how can I best get a government position? Useless for all other purposes. Example given of an educated son refusing to work, making his father wait on him. Only a Christian atmosphere will impart the true conception of education.

(2) The Moslem world needs this Christian University. All that has been said regarding Egypt applies equally to Moslem world. (a) Inner circle of the Moslem world with its 200,000,000 Moslems is the Arabic speaking world of 45,000,000 Moslems. Largest single political unit within this inner circle of Arabic speaking Moslems is Egypt. Cairo is the center of Moslem learning. Witness the Azhar and Moslem printing presses. Cairo being increasingly recognized as important center for missionary work. Zwemer moves to Cairo from Arabia. Lucknow Conference in India selects Cairo as natural center for Missionary Study Center. World Sunday School Movement locates its secretary there. International Y.M.C.A. projects plans making Cairo important center. Cairo the greatest journalistic center in Moslem world. Missionary strategy calls for the establishing of a great Christian University at this brain-center of Islam. (b) The present war points to the utter weakening, if not elimination of Turkey's political power. When Islam loses its political power, even greater importance will attach to its intellectual strongholds. Essential solidarity exists between deistic or Unitarian conceptions of the West and the theistic position of Islam. Hence government officials of Christian lands frequently uphold Mohammedanism. The establishment of a Christian University is the opportunity of evangelical Christianity to drive in a wedge that will keep apart these two movements of Islamism in the East and Deism in the West. If those who believe in a divine Lord do not seize this opportunity, the power of Islam will be reinforced by other influences that proceed out of Western civilization.

(3) Will the University be attended? (a) Collegiate courses will command good attendance, for 16 years ago it was stated upon good authority that 500 students would speedily be available for such a college. Conditions even better today. Mission schools and Coptic schools will contribute students. Liberal Moslems anxious to safeguard moral character of children will send boys to Collegiate

Department. (b) School of Education should attract an encouraging number who serve the Missions in Egypt and the Coptic and private schools. So also for teachers in Mission schools in Arabia, Syria and all North Africa. (c) The School of Religion should draw three classes; Such missionaries as now attend the Study Center, native mission workers preparing for work among Moslems, Moslem inquirers investigating the sources of Islam and the sources of Christianity. (d) School of Agriculture should command a good enrolment, for Egypt is agricultural country. (e) Most important is the Extension Department and publication work to reach those who never come to the University campus, and to make available for the widest circles, all that the Schools of Religion, Education and Agriculture have to offer of original discovery or of helpful suggestion.

(4) Relationships of Control: There are several relationships conceivable: (a) Denominational: This has not been urged. While University conception originated in a given denominational camp, it was quickly recognized that its development could not be denominational. (b) Wholly independent of Church affiliations: This was considered, but for the sake of safeguarding the Christian and missionary character of the institution in the future and to adequately relate it to the missionary activities in Moslem lands, it was not regarded as satisfactory. (c) The proposed relationship lay between the foregoing two. That a majority of the Board of Trustees should be elected by or subject to the approval of such Foreign Mission Boards as are willing to cooperate in the University scheme. It is hoped that when Charter is applied for, two Boards will cooperate. If 11 out of 21 members of the Board of Trustees are subject in their election to their approval by these Foreign Boards, the remaining 10 may represent other denominations or interests that have not officially joined in the movement. Relationship to the Foreign Mission Boards deemed better than relationship to supreme judicatories of these Churches, because of specialized knowledge of Foreign Boards and their natural missionary contacts.

DISCUSSION:

A discussion followed in which many participated and among the points discussed and the suggestions made were the following:

The two Boards referred to as probably ready to cooperate were those of the United Presbyterian Church and of the Reformed Church in America. Dr. Chamberlain explains that the Board of the Reformed Church has not yet taken formal action, information having been sought on the following points: 1. Was the Foreign Board or the whole Reformed Church to take the movement up and did the Foreign Board's action call for approval by their General Synod? 2. The degree of the Board's responsibility for the actions of its representatives on the Board of Trustees. 3. The length of term of its representatives on the Board of Trustees. 4. How much might their Board be held responsible financially and morally? To these questions answer was given that cooperation involved the Board but not the General Synod; that it was not intended that the Foreign Boards should be formally responsible for the actions of their representatives on the Board of Trustees but only responsible for approval or disapproval of these representatives at the time of election; that the length of the term of service remained to be fixed; and that no financial responsibility was attached to cooperation. It was pointed out that Trustees once elected would no longer be responsible to the Board electing them or approving of them, although they would be expected to serve as a means of contact with said Board so as to maintain the viewpoint of that Board in so far as possible. No annual report to the Foreign Boards had been thought to be necessary, though it might be advisable. Dr. Chamberlain suggested the wisdom of having some constructive statement indicate clearly that Foreign Boards were not formally responsible for the actions or policies of the Board of Trustees beyond the

responsibility which attached to the approval of the election of certain members. The thought is to have the Board of Trustees apply for the Charter in their own name.

A discussion followed as to whether (a) the cooperating Foreign Boards should elect their representatives on the Board of Trustees, this latter body making nominations, or (b) the Foreign Boards nominate and the Board of Trustees elect, or (c) the Board of Trustees submit list to Foreign Boards for approval and selection, the Board of Trustees then to elect. The question of legal requirements was discussed, and it was agreed to investigate the Nanking University charter before the afternoon session. There was discussion as to whether the relationship to the Foreign Boards should be stated in the charter or in the constitution. The question was asked whether British societies should enter into cooperation with American agencies. Dr. Watson reported an interview in London with Mr. Manley, C.M.S. secretary for Africa, where the latter expressed the opinion that cooperation on a Board of Trustees located in America would be too difficult or formal to commend it and that the C.M.S. interests would be quite satisfied if allowed a representation in the Faculty or on the Board of Managers in Egypt; that Mr. Lunt, however, another secretary when on a visit in America, had expressed a contrary view; that an important point is really involved, whether the American and British views of education harmonize sufficiently for cooperative control. Opinions were expressed as to the practicability of such international control, as to the desirability of fully enlisting the sympathy of British and especially C.M.S. missions because of their contributions of students as well as of funds, and finally as to relations of the University with the Government in Egypt.

The question was asked whether any had argued for some location for the University other than Cairo. It was said that some had intimated that the College at Beirut should be made into a great University ministering to the Moslem world, but two objections at least existed: The national spirit in Egypt prevented Egyptians from attending a college in a foreign land; and furthermore, the recognized place of Cairo as the intellectual center of Islam could not be waived. Dr. Robinson pointed out that the majority of students from Egypt now in attendance at Beirut were only the children of Syrians now residing in Egypt. His opinion was that Beirut could not care for needs of Egypt. He reported interview with Kitchener, who suggested Alexandria; this thought to be suggested to avoid too great prominence given to it. Reported Heliopolis and Helouan as other sites suggested. Question was asked, Why not Constantinople? Answer given that Robert College meets need there while it is inadequate for need of Arabic-speaking Moslem world because of it representing another (Turkish) language area. Pointed out that Cairo University not meant to conflict with Beirut, for of seven departments in Beirut prospectus only two (Collegiate and School of Commerce) in Cairo scheme. No medical school planned for Cairo University because of Beirut medical school and because of strong Government equipments.

The morning session closed with prayer by Dr. Hill.

Luncheon at the Aldine Club.

During the lunch, served in private room, informal discussion continued. Dr. Robinson called attention to need of properly safeguarding future of Assiut College. He recognized its inadequacy to meet need and reported President McClenahan as favoring Cairo University. Both institutions needed.
