

Forging Connections with the rich and famous: Seventh-day Adventist Institution Building in Nationalist China

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My study of Seventh-day Adventist missionary interactions with Guomindang officials and the societal elite (wealthy business people and relatives of the Guomindang officials) illustrates that there was a much higher level, and more extensive, contact between these two groups than previously examined. I argue that, in forming these relationships with the Guomindang elite, the Seventh-day Adventist church was able to use these connections to further the programme of the church when it encountered government regulations which were unfavourable to it. Furthermore, these relationships led to unique employment opportunities for several missionaries most notably Paul Quimby and Elizabeth Redelstein, and also brought about substantial monetary donations to the church, particularly in relation to the building of hospitals. Furthermore these relationships were characterised by a naïveté which did not question the wisdom of aligning the denomination so closely with a particular political regime.

In comparison to other Protestant denominations the Seventh-day Adventist church, with its arrival in China in 1902, was a late entrant to the China mission field. The Methodist Church, for example, sent its first missionaries to China in 1848,¹ which pre-dates the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist church as a denomination. Despite this late entrance to the work in China, the Seventh-day Adventist church embarked on a programme of institution building and by 1949 there were eighteen educational institutions (this figure excludes small local church-operated primary schools), thirteen Sanitariums and Hospitals, three dispensaries and two publishing houses spread across the country.² Seventh-day Adventist missionary work in China tended to focus strongly on publishing, education and medicine. As Ron Lawson has pointed out, institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals and publishing houses are at the centre of Seventh-day Adventist evangelism,³ and the development of these institutions in China was consistent with Seventh-day Adventist missionary practice elsewhere. The largest concentration of Seventh-day Adventist institutions was in Shanghai where the administrative headquarters for the church in China were also located. This concentration of institutions around the church headquarters followed the typical Seventh-day Adventist pattern of clustering institutions around administrative offices.

From the late 1920s internal church documents, such as reports to headquarters; minutes from meetings; and letters, both personal and official, demonstrate an increased reportage of contact with

¹ Walter N. Lacy, *A Hundred Years of China Methodism* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), 39.

² Claude Conard, *1949 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 94 - 110.

³ Ron Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 4 (1998): 666.

the Guomindang elite and China's upper class. This increased recognition, by the political and financial elite, coincided with the establishment of Seventh-day Adventist hospitals and sanitariums. As Seventh-day Adventist doctors frequently treated Guomindang officials and other members of the societal elite in the Shanghai Sanitarium, the rise of the church's fortunes in China followed that of the rise of the Guomindang. It was during the Nanking Decade (1927-1937) that the Seventh-day Adventist church appears to have grown most rapidly in terms of institution building. The church certainly benefited from the increased stability in Guomindang controlled areas and from the patronage of wealthy Guomindang officials. However, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries did not limit their missionary endeavours to Guomindang controlled areas. Foreign missionaries operated in Japanese controlled areas throughout the 1930s. Some missionaries remained in these areas until the attack on Pearl Harbour and a German Seventh-day Adventist missionary remained working in Japanese-occupied China for the duration of the war. Unlike other Protestant denominations Seventh-day Adventist missionary activity did not slow down during the 1920s and 1930s. Under the auspices of the Church administration in Washington D.C., Seventh-day Adventists continued to operate in, and send new missionaries to, areas of China which were not under Japanese occupation. Furthermore, new missionaries continued to be sent to China during Second World War and the subsequent civil war between the Nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party.

The Seventh-day Adventist church's relationship with the upper echelons of Chinese society began early, with a business relationship with Charlie Soong (宋嘉樹 Sòng Jiāshù) in 1908. In 1896 Soong founded the Commercial Press Publishing Company. The Press printed Bibles, religious tracts and textbooks and Seventh-day Adventists rented part of the Press premises from Soong in order to run their own denominational publishing house. Soong was an early supporter of Sun Yat-sen. However, this relationship deteriorated after Sun's marriage to Soong's much younger daughter Qingling. All of Soong's daughters married prominent men. Ailing, the eldest daughter married H.H. Kung (at one time the Finance Minister of China) and Meiling, the youngest, married Chiang Kai-shek, who later became the President of the Republic of China. Meiling and her brother T.V. Soong (Song Ziwen 宋子文) are the two members of this family who feature most often in Seventh-day Adventist-generated discourse surrounding missionary contacts with the societal elite.

The Seventh-day Adventist church did not hesitate to publicise its connection with the Soong family. For example, in a 1949 publication John Oss, a long serving missionary in China, wrote,

Elder R. F. Cottrell tells how one of the Soong sisters, Mei Ling, who later became Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the wife of China's great military leader, used to play about the publishing house premises, as a little girl in pigtails.⁴

Miller's biography by Raymond S. Moore, *China Doctor The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, frames this relationship in more religious terms, noting that as time passed, the missionaries "came to see more and

⁴ John Oss, *Mission Advance in China* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1949), 199.

more the hand of God in those early negotiations with Charlie Soong.”⁵ The biography claims that it was this early relationship that led to Miller’s prominence as a surgeon in China. It states,

...in the years that followed, Charlie’s daughters became three of China’s greatest women: Madame H. H. Kung, Madame Sun Yat-sen, and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. *In part through this business association and the friendship growing from it, Harry Miller was destined to become one of China’s best-known doctors, personal physician to the Chiang Kai-sheks and surgeon to Madame Sun Yat-sen...*⁶

An American surgeon, Harry W. Miller was the Medical Director for the Shanghai Sanitarium. He also served as President of the China Division from 1931 to 1936. This made him the highest administrator for the Seventh-day Adventist church in China at that time. Miller first worked in China from 1903 to 1907 and then from 1908 to 1911, at which time he was returned to the United States due to poor health. While in the United States, Miller was appointed Medical Superintendent of the Washington Sanitarium. As a result of this appointment Miller treated a number of prominent Americans including, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and Alexander Graham Bell.⁷ This therefore, made Miller no stranger to treating, and socialising, with the elite of society, and it was during his time in the United States that Miller demonstrated his ability to parlay contacts with the social and political elite into assistance for Seventh-day Adventist mission work in China.

Miller was instrumental in establishing the Seventh-day Adventist Shanghai Sanitarium and Hospital. When Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in Shanghai ran into difficulty obtaining land deeds to property they wished to use in the construction the Sanitarium, Miller presented the issue to Alfred Sao-ke Sze (Shi Zhaoji 施肇基), China’s Ambassador to the United States. Miller had formed a connection with Shi Zhaoji through the Washington Sanitarium. Shi Zhaoji gave Miller a letter addressed to his “friend Mayor Kuo T’ai-chi of Shanghai” who was also in charge of the land office.⁸ Miller returned to Shanghai in 1925 to oversee the building of this Sanitarium and took this letter with him. Raymond S. Moore records that as soon as Miller “arrived in Shanghai, he made his way quickly to the mayor, who in a matter of minutes placed the necessary seal on the deed.”⁹ Without the intervention of Shi Zhaoji it is likely that the building of the Shanghai Sanitarium would have taken much longer. It was this institution which brought several Seventh-day Adventist missionaries into close proximity to the Guomindang elite and other prominent Chinese.

Miller’s contacts with China’s political elite were often publicised in contemporary articles written in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald (Review)*. According to Adventist sources, Miller formed close personal relationships with a number of prominent individuals. The relationship which was given the most publicity in Seventh-day Adventist literature was that between the Seventh-day Adventist

⁵ Raymond S. Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press, 1969), 61.

⁶ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 61. Emphasis added

⁷ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 73-74.

⁸ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 80.

⁹ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 80.

missionaries (in particular H.W. Miller) and the 'Young Marshal' Zhang Xueliang (張學良). Seventh-day Adventist contact with Zhang began in 1930 when he financed the building of a Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Mukden. According to Moore, Zhang wanted an Adventist institution because he had heard much about the Shanghai Sanitarium from Madame Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁰

Zhang Xueliang's offer to the missionaries is recounted as follows:

The Young Marshal made these propositions: He wanted a hospital in Mukden...and he not only would give us one hundred thousand dollars, but would provide us all the land we wanted...Before long we had a fine walled compound with a sanitarium and hospital, and homes for doctors and nurses, all a personal gift from the Young Marshal.¹¹

This institution was completed following Zhang's withdrawal from Manchuria due to the Japanese invasion, and the church continued to operate the hospital under Japanese occupation. The relationship with Zhang did not stop with the building of this institution, according to Seventh-day Adventist sources, in 1933 Miller was approached by W.H Donald, then advisor to Zhang Xueliang. Donald, working in agreement with Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai-shek, wanted Miller to provide his 'opium cure' for Zhang.¹² The treatment was a success. Zhang paid the token Shanghai Sanitarium fee and also gave Miller a check for \$50 000 as a personal thank you. Miller used this money to fund the creation of a Sanitarium in Lanchow (Lanzhou 兰州).¹³ As a result of his successful treatment for opium addiction, Zhang Xueliang was to become an important patron of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, particularly with regard to the establishment of denominational hospitals around China.

In 1934 Chiang Kai-shek appointed Zhang Xueliang to the position of Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Bandit Suppression (in reality this meant the suppression of Communist forces).¹⁴ Zhang was based in Wuhan and was in control of forces in Hunan, Anhui and Hebei.¹⁵ Around this time he approached the Seventh-day Adventist church with the request that the church build a Seventh-day Adventist Sanitarium in Hankou (Hankow 汉口), Hebei. The Central China Union Mission's 1934 Report notes:

On July second we received a personal check from Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang for #[sic] 10, 000.00 as the first payment to a fund for the construction, equipment, and maintenance of a Sanitarium near Hankow.¹⁶

¹⁰ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 2.

¹¹ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 3.

¹² Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-Shek China's Eternal First Lady* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 115.

¹³ Richard A Schaefer, "Legacy: Daring to Care: The Heritage of Loma Linda University Medical Center 1905-2005," (Legacy Publishing Association, 2005). <http://www.llu.edu/central/info/legacy/chapter23.page> (accessed 24.10.2013).

¹⁴ Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and the China He Lost* (United Kingdom: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

¹⁵ Aron Shai, *Zhang Xueliang: The General Who Never Fought* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 39.

¹⁶ M. C. Warren, "Central China Union Mission 1934 Report, 1934," McElhany Collection.

The report then recounts the background to the church's history with Zhang, making special mention of the cure of Zhang from opium addiction and the involvement of W. H. Donald in this incident. The reporter highlights Zhang's desire for a cure from his opium addiction as the starting point for the relationship with Miller and the Seventh-day Adventist church's medical institutions. Zhang's positive interactions with Seventh-day Adventist medical institutions contributed to his desire to fund this institution in Hankou. Furthermore, the successful treatment of Zhang by Miller began an exchange relationship between the two men which benefited both parties for several decades. The story of the Young Marshal's cure from opium addiction is repeatedly retold in a variety of literature connected with the Seventh-day Adventist church. Miller's biography expands on the construction of the Hankou Sanitarium claiming that other prominent personages in Nationalist China also contributed to the financing of its construction:

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, a great believer in our medical work, was in it with the Marshal, adding one hundred thousand dollars to the fund. Still later Madame Chiang Kai-shek spent twenty thousand dollars for a residence on the grounds so she could come for treatments whenever she was in the area.¹⁷

Seventh-day Adventist Sanitariums had a focus on educating people in healthful living. Vegetarianism was strongly promoted to the patients and the sanitariums also offered alternate medical services such as hydrotherapy. It is likely that these are the 'treatments' taken by Soong Meiling in Hankou.

In his 1933 report on the Financial Statements for the Shanghai Sanitarium, Miller, while mentioning the wide range of classes serviced by the Sanitarium, is at pains to point out the patronage of the elite, stating "We have had many prominent government officials at the Sanitarium."¹⁸ This desire to be seen as having 'connections in high places' is repeatedly evident in Seventh-day Adventist missionary reports to church headquarters and in articles published in denominational magazines. Furthermore, this reportage of political connections was not limited to the China context, but came from all mission fields where contact between the political elite and missionaries occurred. However, research would indicate that reports of this nature were more commonly received from the missionaries in China than from those in other areas.

Miller also highlighted the Sanitarium's most prominent patients in the 1935 "Chairman's Report for the Sanitarium and Clinic". He again noted that patients had come from a wide variety of locations and social classes, but then named the institution's most prominent ones.

Among our guests we would mention Mr. T. V. Soong, members of the H. H. Kung family, Mr. K. P. Chen, the president of the Shanghai and Commercial Bank, Governor Ling of Kwangtung Province, Madame Sun Fo, Yui Ming, chief of Shanghai's Foreign

¹⁷ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 10.

¹⁸ Harry W. Miller, "Financial Statements of the Shanghai Sanitarium & Hospital and Shanghai Sanitarium Clinic Year Ending December 31,, " p. 4, Thiele Collection.

Affairs office, Major-General Tsai Ching Chun, Chief of Police and Military Commander of the Shanghai-Woosung area, and a score of others.¹⁹

An examination of the above list shows that it contained some of Republican China's most powerful people. In 1935 T. V. Soong was the Governor of the Bank of China. From 1928 – 1933 he had served as the Minister for Finance for Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government. H. H. Kung (Kong Xiangxi 孔祥熙) was T. V. Soong's brother-in-law. At this time, Kung was the Governor of the Central Bank of China and also the Minister of Finance. K. P. Chen (Chen Guangfu 陳光甫) was one of China's richest men, a successful entrepreneur and banker who went on to become the head of China's Currency Stabilization Board. Madame Sun Fo (Chen Suk-ying) was the daughter-in-law of Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the Republic of China. Moore's biography of Miller also names some of Miller's more prominent patients such as Su Mei-chang (Tcheng Yu-hsiu 鄭毓秀)²⁰ who had a tonsillectomy performed at the Sanitarium.²¹ Tcheng was a prominent lawyer in her own right and wife of Wei Tao-ming (Wei Daoming 魏道), who was Ambassador to the United States during World War Two and later served as governor of Taiwan from 1947 to 1949.²² Miller did not bill these wealthy patients directly for their treatment at the Shanghai Sanitarium, finding it more lucrative if the patients made a donation to the hospital instead. For instance it is recorded that Tcheng made a donation of one thousand dollars for her treatment.²³ Miller was also able to turn these contacts with those patients who were in official positions, into advantages for the Seventh-day Adventist church when its work, particularly in the field of education ran into difficulties with government regulations.

In addition to medical clinics and hospitals, the Seventh-day Adventist church in China was heavily involved in the provision of education. Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy was strongly influenced by the views of Ellen Gould White (1827 – 1915). White was one of the church's founders and is considered by the church to be a prophet. Her key beliefs surrounding education were:

that it should aim at developing in its students a balance of mental, physical and spiritual powers. She particularly stressed the need for a practical education that connected physical labour with academic work.²⁴

Seventh-day Adventist schools in China were unique in the Chinese educational context in that they offered a mixed academic and industrial programme. The industrial programme also allowed poorer

¹⁹ Harry W. Miller, "Superintendent's Report ---Chairman's Report Shanghai Sanitarium and Clinic, 1935," Thiele Collection.

²⁰ Tcheng Yu-hsiu's name is also transliterated as Soumay Tcheng

²¹ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 89.

²² Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 302,371.

²³ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 89.

²⁴ George R Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 78-79.

students to earn money to finance their studies and enabled the schools to be financially self-supporting.

Along with other Protestant denominations in China, Seventh-day Adventist schools were affected by government insistence in 1927, that in Nationalist-held provinces, "Christian schools should register officially, abandon compulsory religious services or education, and install Chinese administrators and trustees."²⁵ Bays notes that there was also to be political instruction "under the banner of Sun Yat-sen's 'three people's principles' (*sanmin zhuyi*)".²⁶ This was anathema to the Seventh-day Adventist belief in the need for a strong separation between church and state. Thus, these instructions to register the schools and make religious instruction optional struck at the heart of Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy and practice. Seventh-day Adventist schools in China were largely evangelistic in nature and also served to train evangelists and ministers for the church, therefore the restrictions on the teaching of religion were a particular blow.

The flagship educational institution in China for the Seventh-day Adventist church was the China Theological Seminary and it was this school that came to the attention of Nationalist authorities in the early 1930s. The Seminary was located in Chiao Tou Chen (present day Qiao Tou Zhen 桥头镇) a small village 40 kilometres from the Nanjing city centre.²⁷ In 1931 The China Theological Seminary received a letter from the Kiangsu (Jiangsu 江苏省) Provincial Government Department of Education. This letter informed the Seminary of communication which the Department of Education had received from the Secretarial Department of the Central Executive Committee on Readjustment of Party Affairs for the Kiangsu Province and stated,

This Department, acting in accordance with Orders No. 524 and No. 630 from the Ministry of Education has requested your compliance with the same...The reply from that Bureau stated that the course of study in your school still included religion as a required subject...²⁸

It went on to acknowledge that the school had changed the name of the school to indicate its private nature and had

discontinued the use of the name of a religious body in connection with the same. But the fact that you have junior and senior middle school, junior college, and primary

²⁵ Shirley Stone Garrett, "Why They Stayed: American Church Politics and Chinese Nationalism in the Twenties," in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K Fairbank, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 291.

²⁶ Daniel H Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, Blackwell Guides To Global Christianity (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 125.

²⁷ In church documents this is also referred to as the 'China Training Institute', 'Chiao Tou Djen' 'Chiaotoutseng' 'Chiao Tuo Tseng' and 'Chiao Tou Tseng'. This paper follows Quimby and Youngberg's transliteration "Chiao Tou Chen."

²⁸ Chen Ho Sien, "Order No. 604, re Ministry of Education Order for Compliance with Regulations Governing Private Schools and in Case of wilful Disobedience to Deal in Severe Manner, March 28, 1931," letter from government department, p. 1, Thiele Collection.

departments, indicates that your institution is of the nature of a school. Therefore you should not, under the name of a theological seminary, make religion a required subject, thus mixing religious propaganda with school instruction.²⁹

The letter concluded with the warning that if the school continued to disobey or delay the Department would "be obliged to carry out the instructions of the Ministry and to deal very severely with you."³⁰ This warning placed Seventh-day Adventist schools in an extremely difficult situation. The church's educational philosophy made it impossible for the schools to comply, yet failure to comply would result in the closing of the schools.

In comparison, the Methodist response was very different to that of the Seventh-day Adventists. According to Lacy, every Methodist institution complied with the new government regulations.³¹ The Methodists found that despite the removal of compulsory religious instructions "all religious services and Bible classes were well attended."³² However, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries felt "that they could not compromise in any regard" and that the Lord would provide a solution.³³ They were determined to keep the China Theological Seminary running as a religious school and were able to use the high level connections they had made through the Shanghai Sanitarium and Hospital to achieve this.

Upon receipt of the letter from the Provincial Government Department of Education, Denton Rebok, principal of the China Theological Seminary, wrote to Harry Willis Miller asking for advice on the situation. On July 25, 1934 Claude Conard presented a report on Seventh-day Adventist education in China at the Seventh-day Adventist owned and operated Pacific Union College, in California. In telling the story of this incident Conard made specific mention of the fact that Miller received the letter from Rebok on the same day that H. H. Kung, then Minister of Agriculture and Industries, attended the Shanghai Sanitarium for medical treatment. The emphasis given to the timing of the letter and H. H. Kung's visit to the Sanitarium reflect the reporter's belief that there was a 'Divine Hand' at work and that the "Lord had some plan to safeguard His work."³⁴ According to Conard, at the end of the treatment, "Dr. Kung, asked Dr. Miller if there was anything that he could do for him."³⁵ Miller then explained the situation regarding the China Theological Seminary and as a result of this conversation, Kung suggested that, along with some organisational changes in terms of the courses offered that the school could,

pay more attention to industrial training and ally the school with the Ministry of Industries and Agriculture instead of the Ministry of Education. He intimated that the

²⁹ Sien, "Order No. 604, re Ministry of Education Order for Compliance with Regulations Governing Private Schools and in Case of wilful Disobedience to Deal in Severe Manner," p. 2.

³⁰ Sien, "Order No. 604, re Ministry of Education Order for Compliance with Regulations Governing Private Schools and in Case of wilful Disobedience to Deal in Severe Manner," p. 2.

³¹ Lacy, *A Hundred Years of China Methodism*, 165.

³² Lacy, *A Hundred Years of China Methodism*, 166.

³³ Claude Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China, 1934," p. 3.

³⁴ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 3.

³⁵ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 3.

Ministry of Industries would make no requirement of our school except to work out its own program of education and training.³⁶

This course of action was followed and the renamed China Training Institute continued to operate. Kung's assistance in this matter was publicised within the Seventh-day Adventist church in both Denton Rebok's biography³⁷ and Miller's 1969 biography by Moore. According to Miller's biography, this plan of action was followed by all Seventh-day Adventist schools operating in China and not one Seventh-day Adventist school was closed.³⁸ This would not have been possible, and the schools could not have remained open, without the intervention of H. H. Kung. Miller used his personal and professional relationship with Kung to further the Seventh-day Adventist church's educational programme in China.

Despite the initial problems faced by the China Training Institute within a few years its mix of education and vocational labour was attracting positive attention from other foreign groups in China, and also the Chinese Government's Ministry of Education. H. H. Kung's connection to the Institute certainly played a role in some of this interest. For example, in 1932 Kung, honorary president of Oberlin College in China, located in Taigu, Shanxi (太谷县, 山西),³⁹ sent a telegram to the China Training Institute asking that "school representatives meet with the dean and the executive secretary of this College and explain to them our plan of education."⁴⁰ Conard reports that the Oberlin College representatives were so impressed with the Seventh-day Adventist system that they

expressed a desire to study it further. They took the names and publishers of Mrs. White's books on education and went back to try and organize their school along similar lines.⁴¹

Furthermore, Conard claimed that the Oberlin Board asked the Seventh-day Adventist church to supply teachers to help them implement a similar programme, but this request was declined due to a lack of available staff.⁴² This refusal to provide an educator to Oberlin College in China was based more on a shortage of personnel than ideological lines. The Seventh-day Adventist church did, however, supply a teacher to one institution that requested their educational assistance.

As a result of the China Training Institute's success, in 1933 Harry Miller was asked by the Board of Directors to supply three teachers to "the I Tsu Schools for children of the Revolutionary soldiers and leaders."⁴³ These schools were an initiative of Soong Meiling. However, only one teacher could be spared from the China Training Institute, and Professor Paul Quimby, an American Seventh-day Adventist missionary was selected to be seconded to the I Tsu school. Quimby's autobiography (co-

³⁶ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 4.

³⁷ Herbert Ford, *For The Love of China The Life Story of Denton E. Rebok* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1971), 31, 88 - 89.

³⁸ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 107.

³⁹ "Oberlin Shansi", <http://shansi.org/fellowships/partnerships/china/>.

⁴⁰ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 5.

⁴¹ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 5.

⁴² Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 5.

⁴³ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 6.

written with Norma Youngberg) notes that he was initially very reluctant to enter the employment of the government school.⁴⁴ After receiving instruction from Miller that he should make himself available to the school, Quimby wrote to Miller and attempted

to impress on him my conviction that we as missionaries with a special message for China, should devote our total time and strength to giving that message. I told him that even though we had sympathetic regard for the government and its responsibilities, yet as missionaries we should not involve ourselves in secular pursuits.⁴⁵

Miller strongly encouraged Quimby to accept the position, demonstrating a pattern of accommodation to the requests of the Chinese elite which is evident in later interactions and requests of a similar nature. Quimby was summoned to an interview with Soong Meiling to discuss his proposed role at the school and he agreed to take on the role of advisor to the school board.⁴⁶ Quimby frames the reversal of his decision to work for the I Tsu school in a distinctly spiritual fashion. When recounting the interview with Soong Meiling, Quimby stated,

Her faith that I could fill an important place in its program and that the philosophy of education demonstrated at Chiao Tou Chen could fill China's educational need at the time did something to my thinking. I heard a faint voice of duty speaking to me as a vision appeared before my mind of opportunities for much wider service in this great land of China and of expansion of God's work.⁴⁷

He saw this new role as a chance to apply the 'God-given' principles of Christian education to a much wider field.⁴⁸ This reference to 'God-given' principles alludes to the educational philosophy of Ellen White. Quimby was not alone in seeing his appointment in this light. When he expressed doubt in his ability to fulfil the role to one of his fellow Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, he was told, "God is moving, and you had better move with Him. Get busy. Go to Nanking and do what the Lord and the Chinese people are asking you to do."⁴⁹ Quimby's descriptions of the I Tsu school closely match those recorded elsewhere,⁵⁰ and even though I have been unable to find any non-Seventh-day Adventist records of this appointment there is no reason to doubt that Quimby took this position given the extensive Seventh-day Adventist references to it in both published books and articles and unpublished archival data such as letters and reports.

Keen to maintain the separation of church and state, the China Division worked out an arrangement with the government school regarding Quimby's salary. According to Conard, the government school paid the China Division office

⁴⁴ P Quimby and N. Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1976), 84.

⁴⁵ Quimby and Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China*, 84.

⁴⁶ Quimby and Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China*, 85 - 86.

⁴⁷ Quimby and Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China*, 87.

⁴⁸ Quimby and Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China*, 87.

⁴⁹ Quimby and Youngberg, *Yankee on the Yangtze: One Missionary's Saga in Revolutionary China*, 87.

⁵⁰ Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-Shek China's Eternal First Lady*, 88.

an amount sufficient to cover Prof. Quimby's salary and something on the expense of bringing him to China, and our division pays him a regular salary, the same as our other workers. In other words, Professor Quimby has been loaned to them.⁵¹

Therefore, the matter of payment was really one of semantics, with Quimby remaining in Church employ while the school board was contributing to the funds of the Seventh-day Adventist church. This arrangement allowed Quimby to retain his service record with the church which entitled him to benefits such as regular furlough, and maintained the facade that Quimby was 'on loan' and not really in the employ to the I Tsu school.

The year following Quimby's employment at the I Tsu school, the Chinese Government Minister of Education referred a "representative of the League of Nations, touring the world and studying educational institutions"⁵² to Chiao Tou Chen. According to Conard, Chiao Tou Chen was considered by the Ministry of Education to be "one of the most outstanding schools in all China."⁵³ It is evident that by 1934 that the image of school had changed dramatically since being threatened with closure in 1931. This increased recognition for the school was due in part to Kung's patronage which had allowed the school to remain open, and the relationship that Quimby had, by this stage, developed with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. However, it must be recognised that the educational landscape in China had also changed during this time period.

In addition to the above request from the Chinese Government Minister for Education there was also a request in 1934 from the Minister of Education for Kwangsi (Guangxi 广西) "acting upon the recommendation from the government department of Education at Nanking."⁵⁴ The Minister toured the China Training Institute and then visited the Division office in Shanghai to enquire about the possibility of opening a school, along the same lines as the China Training Institute, in Guangxi. When informed that the church was not in a financial position to do this,

He offered all the land needed...and stated that the school would also be placed on the educational budget for support... we could have full liberty to teach anything that we liked [ie religious education] if we would only come in and start a school like our China Training Institute.⁵⁵

The Minister of Education went on to ask the Seventh-day Adventist China Division Educational Secretary to outline a course of study for the schools in Guangxi and "to tour the province with him as his special counsellor on education."⁵⁶ This was not the only request fielded by the Seventh-day Adventist church in China. The report of the China Division's Educational Secretary to the Spring Council in 1935 noted that

⁵¹ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 6.

⁵² Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 4.

⁵³ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China."

⁵⁴ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 8.

⁵⁵ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 8.

⁵⁶ Conard, "God's Plan For Education in China," p. 9.

Several calls have come to our division officers to assign our missionary teachers to various government and private institutions. The Commissioner of Education in one of the provinces earnestly requested several tens of our young people to go into his territory and help him carry out a practical type of education for his young people.⁵⁷

As far as I can determine these 'calls' were not filled as there was insufficient personnel to staff both Adventist and other schools.

The Seventh-day Adventist church, was not unique in being offered positions of this kind by government officials. For example, in 1933 the National Christian Council (of which the Seventh-day Adventist church was not a member) was asked to aid in a programme of reconstruction in Kiangsi (Jiangxi 江西).⁵⁸ The request was met with caution. Before making a decision, the issue was studied intensively. A sub-committee was formed and it

explored with particular care the troubling intricacies of church-state relations. Should the missions accept financial aid from the government? If they did would such a subsidy make "impossible or undesirable specifically 'evangelistic' work on the part of those working under the committee in charge?" But without an outside subsidy, how could the churches finance such a project?⁵⁹

The National Christian Council did decide to take on the project and this resulted in the formation of the "Kiangsi Rural Service Union, and this organisation became the agency through which the churches cooperated with the government."⁶⁰ However, they declined to do this under government auspices. The National Christian Council did accept a \$50 000 donation from the Chiangs as a contribution toward the project. The decision to operate the project independently from government funding was due in part to a desire not to be seen to be too closely aligned with a particular regime and also spoke to the concerns regarding possible limitations placed on evangelistic work through the acceptance of government funding.

There does not appear to have been similar discussion among Seventh-day Adventist administrators regarding any problems that could arise from fulfilling the above positions. I've been unable to find evidence of Seventh-day Adventist hesitancy to fulfil requests from the government. Rather, the Seventh-day Adventist church in China (at least in the cases for which there are records,) appears to have attempted to fulfil all requests of this time which made of them. The refusal to provide staff to educational institutions seems to have been largely due to a lack of available personnel rather than the result of philosophical concerns. This pattern of acquiescing to the requests of the rich and powerful was not unique to the China context. There are later examples of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries

⁵⁷ Report of China Division Educational Secretary, Spring Council 1935, "1935," p. 4-5, Thiele.

⁵⁸ James C. Thomson Jr, *While China Faced West: American Reformers in Nationalist China, 1928-1937*, Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 62.

⁵⁹ Thomson Jr, *While China Faced West: American Reformers in Nationalist China, 1928-1937*, 68.

⁶⁰ Paul A Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats The American Protestant Movement in China 1890 - 1952* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958), 236.

cultivating exchange relationships with Pinochet in Chile⁶¹ and Haile Sellassie in Ethiopia.⁶² However, it appears to have been much more pronounced amongst missionaries in China than those in other areas where the Seventh-day Adventist church was working. Furthermore, the connections that the missionaries formed with members of the Chinese political and financial elite were much more broadly publicised in church literature, both that which was published at the time, and after the withdrawal of the church from China, than high level contacts made in other countries.

The Seventh-day Adventist missionaries' contacts with the societal elite did not just result in monetary donations or assistance when government regulations were hampering the work of the church. In the case of Miller and Zhang Xueliang, Zhang also offered Miller the use of his personal plane. Miller made use of the plane on at least one documented occasion, to ferry a group of missionaries to Lanzhou for the funeral of C.C. Crisler. Crisler had died from pneumonia in Titao, Kansu(Gansu甘肃), 60 miles (96.5 kilometres) south of Lanzhou.⁶³ Miller's life sketch of Crisler makes mention of the use of the plane. Although the life sketch does not identify the owner of the plane, a copy of a photo held in the Ellen G. White Estate Gallery identifies the plane as belonging to "Marshall Chang" (Zhang Xueliang).⁶⁴



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⁶¹ Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism," 661.

⁶² Ron Lawson, "Church and State at Home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-Day Adventist Relations with Governments," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 2 (1996): 301.

⁶³ Harry W. Miller, "Obituary and Life Sketch of Pastor C.C. Crisler," *The China Division Reporter*, May 1936, 3.

⁶⁴ Ellen G. White Estate Gallery

<http://photo.egwwritings.org/index.php?q=aHR0cDovL25hcy5lZ3d3cmI0aW5ncy5vcmcvZ2FsbGVyaWVzLw%3D%3D>

Pictured, from left to right, Mrs Li (C.C. Crisler's secretary) Miss Bessie Mount (the China Division Sabbath School Secretary) Mrs Crisler (wife), Beatrice Crisler (daughter, employed as a music teacher at the Far Eastern Academy in Shanghai), H.W. Miller and Pastor O.A. Hall.

This identification is confirmed by the Guomindang logo partially visible on the wing of the plane in the left of the picture and by the men in military dress at the extreme right.

The close association between Miller and Zhang was to haunt the church in later years. In 1951 the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists obtained transcripts (translated into English), from the "struggle" meetings against the Seventh-day Adventist church in China. Among the accusations made by Pen Siang Sheng was a statement noting that when Chiang Kai-shek was kidnapped during the Xian incident, Soong Meiling sent Harry W Miller "a telegram asking him to save her husband by all means."⁶⁵ This incident is also recounted in Moore's biography of Miller's life. As the story is told by Moore, Miller was asked because of his close relationship with Zhang Xueliang. However, Miller felt it was not appropriate for a missionary to take on a political role of this nature and so suggested that W.H. Donald, TV Soong and Soong Meiling would be better situated to make the negotiations.⁶⁶ Although research has been unable to locate non-Seventh-day Adventist evidence to verify this claim, the mention of the incident in an accusation meeting would indicate that the story was widespread and well known, at least within Seventh-day Adventist circles in China.

Despite the connections which Seventh-day Adventist missionaries had formed with the political and social elite in China, the church was still a small church without significant influence in its country of origin, the United States. However, the Seventh-day Adventist church was able to gain influence in China and other countries because "their targets, the local people did not distinguish between the various missions."⁶⁷ All missionaries, regardless of their denomination (and the size of that denomination in the sending country) were viewed as importers of western culture, and possible providers of knowledge which could help advance China's move toward becoming a modern nation. Ron Lawson utilizes Church-Sect theory to examine the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist church, its engagement with the surrounding society, its missionary practice and its move from sect to fully fledged denomination.⁶⁸ Although China was not included in this study, Lawson's broader examination of Seventh-day Adventist missionary practice demonstrates that the behaviour of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in China was not unique. I would argue that the patterns of behaviour established in China were repeated by later generations of missionaries in a variety of countries. China was a precursor of this sort of interaction with the political and financial elite.

When discussing Seventh-day Adventist mission practice within the world-wide context Lawson notes:

⁶⁵ Pen Siang Sheng, "To Accuse the American Imperialists Used S.D.A to Invade China, 1951," p. 1, Thiele.

⁶⁶ Moore, *China Doctor: The Life Story of Harry Willis Miller*, 110-111.

⁶⁷ Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism."

⁶⁸ Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism."

Church leaders arranged for these [schools and medical institutions] to be built everywhere because they were at the center of Adventism's evangelistic outreach. However, the institutions soon performed the additional functions that they served in the U.S., such as providing opportunities for the upward mobility of members and involving Adventism with government bureaucracy and more broadly in the society.⁶⁹

This was clearly the case in the China context. It was primarily their medical institutions and schools which brought Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in China into contact with the societal elite, thus allowing them to form a network of connections that was used to assist the church in its missionary activity.

Seventh-day Adventist cooperation with, and courting of, authoritarian governments has not been limited to China. However, China is one of the *earliest* examples of this mindset in Seventh-day Adventist mission history. Lawson has argued that,

Underlying Adventist relations with governments is a political naiveté that causes church leaders to focus on short term benefits while being oblivious to likely outcomes.⁷⁰

This naiveté is evident in Adventist activity in China. Although Lawson's research examined Seventh-day Adventist activity in countries other than China, his conclusions can also be applied to the Adventist missionaries who were operating in China during the first half of the 20th century, and I would argue that the China missionary experience is, in part, the forerunner of these later interactions. The administration of the Seventh-day Adventist church in China attempted to fulfil all requests from Chiang Kai-shek, Soong Meiling and other Guomindang officials with seemingly little discussion or analysis of the implications for the church. Requests for personnel, especially in the field of education, which were turned down, were declined due to a lack of available staff rather than for philosophical reasons. In contrast, the National Christian Council studied the request to undertake rural reconstruction in Jiangxi intensively before declining to take on the project under government auspices and instead took on the project as a private enterprise.⁷¹ There appears to have been no similar high-level discussions among Adventist church leadership, either in China or at the General Conference in the United States, as to the wisdom of aligning itself so closely with the Guomindang government.

The close association of missionaries in a personal and professional capacity with members of the Guomindang, the extended Chiang Kai-shek family, and government institutions did cause damage to the Seventh-day Adventist church's image after the 1949 revolution as these associations were used against the church in subsequent Struggle/Self Criticism sessions. The naiveté of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries and administrators is further demonstrated through the uncritical public support given to the Guomindang government, and Chiang Kai-shek personally in contemporaneous church magazines

⁶⁹ Lawson, "Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism," 666.

⁷⁰ Lawson, "Church and State at Home and Abroad: The Evolution of Seventh-Day Adventist Relations with Governments," 305.

⁷¹ Thomson Jr, *While China Faced West: American Reformers in Nationalist China, 1928-1937*, 67 - 73.

such as the *Review*, and in assessments made of the Nationalist regime in later biographies and autobiographies of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to China.

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