

A Troubled Legacy: Seventh-day Adventist Writings after 1950

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a resurgence of Seventh-day Adventist interest in China. During this time period two publishing houses owned by church, Pacific Press based in California and Review and Herald Publishing Association located in Washington, D.C., released a large number of biographies based on the lives of missionaries who had worked in China from the early 1900s through to the 1940s. At least ten biographies and autobiographies of this kind were published between 1967 and 1976. Collectively, missionaries to China have been the subject of more biographies than those to any other nation. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, writing about China within the Seventh-day Adventist Church primarily occurred in the publication of the biographies and autobiographies of prominent missionaries. These biographies can be seen as a form of nostalgia on the part of the church for a vanishing world. (I am indebted to Winter's writing on memory as a site of nostalgia for this argument).¹ Of significance is the timing of the publications which occurred at a time when the political situation was shifting and the United States was moving towards recognition of the People's Republic of China. Unlike the 1940s where the denomination's view of China mimicked that of broader American society, by the late 1960s and early 1970s attitudes towards China within the denomination were out of step with those in the mainstream American community. There was almost a need to demonstrate, through the publication of these biographies, the denomination's continuing ties with the Guomindang regime, particularly since the denomination had established an active missionary presence in Taiwan following the 1949 revolution in China. Many of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries who had been working in China were relocated to Taiwan where they rapidly "established a training school and other facilities" including the Taiwan Adventist Hospital which opened in 1955.²

Discourses produced by, and about, Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in China contributed to a shared, or social, memory among the Seventh-day Adventist community (particularly in the United States of America) regarding the church's work in China. As Tamm notes "shared memories of the past are not accidentally produced by social groups" but rather are formed as a result of cultural mediation.³ The editors of the Seventh-day Adventist church's magazines and later, the biographers of the China missionaries, were the principal curators of this aspect of the church's memory surrounding its mission work in China during the first half of the 20th century. This formation of collective memory contributed to a sense of meaning and cohesion regarding the church's missionary activity not just within China, but also in the global context.

The biographies of prominent missionaries to China helped shape Seventh-day Adventist perceptions of the political situation in China and Taiwan post-1949. These biographies, through their praise of Chiang Kai-shek and other members of the Guomindang regime, demonstrated an attitude that was at odds with the moves in the United States towards recognition of the People's Republic of China. Furthermore these biographies also served to

¹ I am indebted to Winter's writing on memory as a site of nostalgia for this argument. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century*, 19

² Land, *Historical Dictionary of Seventh-day Adventists*, 59.

³ Marek Tamm, "Beyond History and Memory: New Perspectives in Memory Studies," *History Compass* 11, no. 6 (2013): 461.

bolster member support for missionary activity in other parts of the world (since mainland China was no longer accessible to Adventist missionaries).

Contact with Nationalist China's political and social elite served to raise the profiles of missionaries within the Seventh-day Adventist church community. Most of the biographies and autobiographies about missionaries to China which were published by the church's publishing houses feature those who had high level contacts. Missionaries working in areas removed from the centres of political power, where contact with the upper echelons of society was much more limited, were less likely to be profiled. The exception to this was if the missionary had had an 'exceptional' experience such as those who were frequently evacuated as a result of war,⁴ or were interred by the Japanese during the Second World War.⁵

Creating the Story of Harry W. Miller: "The China Doctor"

The discourse surrounding Harry W. Miller's contacts with China's political elite raised his profile within the Seventh-day Adventist church. Miller's name is still one of the most recognised names among Seventh-day Adventist church members when missionaries to China are discussed.⁶ However, the dominant image of Miller, as portrayed in the biographies is not fully representative of all of Miller's actions in China. The focus on Miller's contacts with China's elite served to shift attention from his behaviour in other areas of his life. Miller was able to achieve and maintain his high profile because of his contacts with this stratum of Chinese society and his promotion and publication of them. The missionaries, editors and authors who wrote about China for the English-speaking community of members created a story surrounding Miller which foregrounded his political connections and his medical success in China. This story continues to the present. A 2014 article in the *Record*, a magazine produced for Seventh-day Adventist church members in Australia, featured an article on the life of Harry W. Miller which focused largely on his political connections.⁷ However, in light of archival evidence discovered during my research I seek to challenge the dominant history of Miller as recorded by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Unique among Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, Miller was the subject of two biographies. The first biography, *China Doctor* was written in 1961 by Raymond Moore and published by Harper. This book was reprinted in 1969 by the Seventh-day Adventist owned, Pacific Press. A shorter version of Miller's life, written by Joy Swift, was published in 1990. This book, *The Long Road to China*, formed part of the *Hall of Faith* series.⁸

There can be no doubt that Miller formed significant political connections during his time in China. Hollington Tong (Tung Hsien-Kaung), former Ambassador for the Republic of China to the United States (1956-1958), wrote the foreword for the 1969 biography. Tong stated that he not only had a friendship with Miller, but also a familial association, pointing out that when the aunt of Miller's wife came to Shanghai it was Tong's wife who taught her the

⁴ Rose Christensen, *Invisible Escort* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1969).

⁵ Vinnie Ruffo, *Behind Barbed Wire* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967).

⁶ Anecdotally, I have had numerous instances where, upon hearing the topic of this thesis, Seventh-day Adventist church members immediately mention "the China Doctor, Harry Miller."

⁷ Lester Devine, "Record Rewind: Missionary Doctor", South Pacific Division Seventh-day Adventist Church <http://record.net.au/items/record-rewind-missionary-doctor> (accessed 4 December, 2014).

⁸ Joy Swift, *The Long Road to China The Story of Dr. Harry Miller*, ed. Marvin Moore, Hall of Faith (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1990).

Shanghai dialect.⁹ Tong also elaborated on Miller's other relationships with the Chinese Nationalist elite, which were formed during Miller's time in China stating,

Dr. Miller made many friends, a number of whom now hold influential government positions. The gratitude of both the government and the people for his work was expressed tangibly when President Chiang Kai-shek decorated him in 1956.¹⁰

This introduction by Tong gives credence to the claims of contact between Miller and high level governmental officials made in the biography and elsewhere in earlier Seventh-day Adventist literature.

Moore was a friend of Miller and the biography was written at Miller's request, from materials which Miller provided.¹¹ As such the omissions from Miller's life story are as telling as the inclusions. Moore's work gives great emphasis to Miller's relationships with China's elite, particularly his relationship with Zhang Xueliang and the wealthy clientele of the Shanghai Sanitarium and hospital. While this aspect of Miller's work in China also features in Swift's book, not as much detail is provided. Moore's biography of Miller is not comprehensive, nor is it intended to be so. Moore's purpose for writing the biography was to inspire the readers, to participate in mission service and philanthropy and to acknowledge what he saw as Miller's extraordinary character. However, this biography remains worthy of academic study as it is reflective of Adventist culture at the time of writing. Furthermore the selection of incidents retold, and the omission of others, helped to shape Seventh-day Adventist attitudes and knowledge about China. Moore's biography foregrounded the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries' relationships with the Guomindang and the Chiang Kai-shek family. This narrative of close connections with the political elite and the favours done by members of this social group for the Seventh-day Adventist church helped strengthen the understanding among members that their church had been influential and had occupied a position of privilege in Nationalist China. Miller's 1969 biography gave implicit and explicit support to the Guomindang regime in Taiwan.

Thanks, in large part, to Moore's biography, Miller is the best-known missionary to China within the Seventh-day Adventist church. However, this recognition also stems from Miller's own earlier writings about his connections with China's wealthy elite which were widely publicised in contemporaneous magazines such as the *Review* prior to the publication of *China Doctor*.

Moore's 1969 biography gave prominence to the curing of Zhang Xueliang's opium addiction by Miller, and the recounting of this incident forms the first chapter of Miller's life story.¹² In positioning the curing of Zhang Xueliang in the first chapter of the biography Moore created a framework in which the reader is led to understand that Miller was a man of substance: someone who moved in the very highest social circles, mixing with, and trusted by, the rich and the powerful. This connection to Zhang Xueliang had been promoted within the Seventh-day Adventist community throughout Miller's life. For example, in 1968 Miller was named 'Alumnus of the year' by graduates of Loma Linda University School of Medicine (a Seventh-day Adventist institution). This recognition was reported in the Seventh-day

⁹ Moore, *China Doctor*, iv.

¹⁰ Moore, *China Doctor*, v.

¹¹ Moore, *China Doctor*, vii.

¹² Moore, *China Doctor*, 1.

Adventist magazine *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, and the article reporting this recognition by Loma Linda makes note of his treatment of Zhang.¹³ Miller's obituary in the *Lake Union Herald* states that "during his first stay in mainland China he cured a Manchurian leader, Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang of the opium habit"¹⁴ indicating that this was a significant life event for Miller and something which loomed large in the Seventh-day Adventist community's memory of Miller whenever his work in China was discussed. In fact, the statement in the *Lake Union Herald Article* is not entirely accurate. Miller treated Zhang Xueliang for opium addiction in 1933 and this was Miller's third period in China, not his first.

Miller was an excellent self-promoter, apparently at the expense of the Sanitarium. By 1938, although the Shanghai Sanitarium had numerous prominent patients, this was due more to Miller's own reputation than that of the hospital. An internal church letter notes,

It seems that our Sanitarium in itself is not well known in Shanghai. Dr. Miller's name is, and it was his name that gave us the standing and enabled us to do the work which he did. Now that he is gone, we will have to build a good reputation for the Sanitarium itself. We are experiencing here an exact fulfilment of what you told Dr. Miller, that he was making a mistake in building the work so much around himself and not building an organization that could carry on if he dropped out.¹⁵

At this time Miller had been tasked with establishing a Seventh-day Adventist Sanitarium in Wuhan. The letter noted that Miller was repeating his behaviour in Wuhan: "Again he must carry on at Wuhan even though he builds around himself as at Shanghai. We have no one else for the Wuhan problem."¹⁶ From this correspondence one can surmise that there had been some difficulty between Dr Miller and the Shanghai Sanitarium, although the exact nature of this is not made clear in the text. Miller had also been removed from his position as President of the China Division at the end of 1936.¹⁷ The letter continues,

I truly sympathize with Dr. Miller. He has a superhuman work to perform. His wife is not well; his family is in America, and we cannot give him the financial help he needs. I am sure his transfer to Wuhan and his not being much desired in Shanghai is a great cross to him. It is a hard experience.¹⁸

Significantly, there is no mention of any difficulties, financial or otherwise, in either of the biographies written about Miller. Both of these works portray Miller in an extremely positive light, with Moore's biography verging on the hagiographic.

Miller's biographers are disingenuous in their use of the popular biography genre. This type of biography allowed both authors to avoid the true reasons for Miller's departure from China in 1939. Lay Adventist readers, with little or no knowledge of Chinese history or Seventh-day

¹³ "'China Doctor' Honoured by Loma Linda Alumni," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, June 1968, 3.

¹⁴ "Farewell, China Doctor," 4.

¹⁵ "February 11, 1938 Letter to McElhany," Griggs Collection, Box 2, Fld 4, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University.

¹⁶ "February 11, 1938 Letter to McElhany."

¹⁷ To date I have been unable to locate material regarding Miller's change of position in 1936. It is possible that Miller's term had simply been completed and new leadership elected. There was a General Conference session in 1936 and administrative posts are decided during these meetings. However, his removal and relocation to Hankou by 1938 may also speak to underlying concern regarding Miller's behaviour in the mission field. Further research is required in order to make a definitive statement.

¹⁸ "February 11, 1938 Letter to McElhany," p. 3.

Adventist missionary history in China would accept the biographers' reasons for Miller's departure at face value. However, these claims do not align with either Seventh-day Adventist practice in China during the period or with the broader political climate within China. Moore states that Miller was forced to evacuate China due to war conditions after the Japanese invasion of China.¹⁹ However, the 1940 Seventh-day Adventist Year Book shows no visible reduction in the number of foreign missionaries in China from previous years, (the 1940 Year Book reports the 1939 figures).²⁰ In fact, Miller was among the very few missionaries to return to the United States due to the Japanese invasion of China. Many foreign missionaries continued to work under the Japanese occupation (for example, the Oss family remained in Shanghai working for the Seventh-day Adventist church until 1942 when they were interred by the Japanese). Other missionaries were evacuated to what the Seventh-day Adventist church referred to as 'Free China' (areas of China not occupied by the Japanese) or Hong Kong to continue their work. As such, Moore's statement that Miller left China due to war conditions does not stand up under scrutiny.

Swift claims that Miller's departure from China was because the "enormously loyal Nationalist Party considered all foreigners to be a threat to the government and ordered all of them to leave China."²¹ However, Lacy's figures show that in the period between 1937 and 1940 the number of Methodist missionaries in China grew from 254 to 280. At this time Chiang Kai-shek was accepting a large amount of supplies and advisors from the Russians at this time.²² Chiang was also making use of missionaries and other foreigners, in China to represent the struggles of China against the Japanese to the broader American public in an attempt to win sympathy and support. Therefore, Swift's explanation of Miller's departure from China cannot be taken at face value either.

Examination of the archival record has revealed that Miller was recalled from China in 1938 due to 'immoral' conduct. The charges against Miller were multiple and credible. Furthermore Miller himself did not dispute the facts when confronted with them. The incident which brought the situation to a head was the case of Susanna Zi, a young student nurse at the Shanghai Sanitarium. In late November 1938, Susanna wrote to her fiancé Wei Poong breaking off their engagement as she was "not a pure, clean girl any longer..."²³ Poong then made a complaint to the China Division regarding Miller's behaviour and threatened to go public with the information if something was not done. A copy of this letter was obtained by the China Division and forwarded to the General Conference. Zi is very clear that she attempted to avoid Miller by hiding in patients' rooms but one night while she was on night duty "he did something bad to me."²⁴ In addition to her letter to Poong, Susanna Zi confided in Miss Follett who also worked at the Sanitarium. Branson notes that Miller, when confronted with the issue, admitted that "he could not deny anything that was contained in the letter."²⁵ Branson went on to note that Miller,

¹⁹ Moore, *China Doctor*, 118.

²⁰ H. E. Rogers, *1940 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1940), 103-104.

²¹ Swift, *The Long Road to China*, 70.

²² Taylor, *The Generalissimo*, 149.

²³ Zi, "23 November, 1938, Letter to Poong Wei," p. 1, Box WH 3038 – Miller, Harry W. MD Collection, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

²⁴ Zi, "23 November, 1938, Letter to Poong Wei," p. 1

²⁵ Branson, "29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany," p. 3

made excuses for his misconduct with her, especially on the ground that she was a bit forward, and was not the kind of person who should have been brought into the sanitarium. He said she was not a virgin when she came to the sanitarium and seemed to feel that his relationship with her had not done her any personal harm.²⁶

Branson went on to note that this “evidently is a peculiar psychology that the Doctor has developed in his mind concerning some of his actions.”²⁷ According to Branson Miller also “confessed to Mr Lee that the charges of Miss Zi were true and appealed to him to do what he could to stop the agitation the was being carried on by Mr. Poong.”²⁸ Mr. Lee was a senior Sanitarium employee and uncle of Mr. Poong.

Branson’s report also noted that some months prior to Susanna Zi’s case another letter had come to the Division office “written by a nurse in Hankow which also charged the Doctor with the same offense.”²⁹ When confronted with this case Miller admitted to a “serious indiscretion” and stated that his ‘relationship’ with Zi had gone farther.³⁰ Additionally, Poong, in his interview with Branson and other church officers indicated that he also had “another signed confession from a former nurse of the sanitarium, but that this woman is now married, and did not care to divulge her name...”³¹

Branson reported that the full foreign membership of the Division Committee was called and asked for counsel. According to Branson:

They stated that for many years unsavoury rumors had been circulated through the field concerning Dr. Miller’s relationships with some of his associate women workers, and now that the thing had come to a head as it had, there was only one step to take and that was to request the General Conference to permit us to return him to the homeland.³²

The above statements raise serious questions regarding the degree to which church administrators in China (and at church headquarters in the United States) knew of Miller’s actions and behaviour, and why he was allowed to remain in his position for as long as he did. It would appear that Miller was only returned to the United States once it became impossible to keep his behaviour out of the public eye.

Miller was immediately returned to the United States, this was done through the use of cables between China and the General Conference. Branson’s full report followed by mail. On February 28, 1939 Miller was informed that his ministerial and missionary credentials had been revoked by the General Conference.³³ As such, he was no longer employed by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

²⁶ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 3

²⁷ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 3

²⁸ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 4

²⁹ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 2

³⁰ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 3

³¹ Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 2

³² Branson, “29 January, 1939 Letter to J. L. McElhany,” p. 4

³³ “Three Hundred Twenty-Fourth Meeting General Conference Committee February 24,” 1939, p. 1055, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Continuing the research into soy milk which he had begun in China, Miller went into private business in Ohio, developing a production plant to produce Soyolac a soya milk product.³⁴ Initial attempts by Miller's friends to have him rehabilitated were not successful. In 1942 Branson, by then Vice President of the General Conference, turned down a request from W. M. Robbins, President of the Ohio Conference to have the Ohio Conference vote to return Miller's ministerial credentials. Robbins claimed that he was "fully convinced that the Doctor has fully confessed his wrong to the Lord and is living a consecrated Christian life."³⁵ Robbins further stated "I think that Dr. Miller's case is an exception to most cases of moral fall. My profound convictions are that few charges of immorality have a parallel with Dr. Miller's case..."³⁶ Branson was fully aware of the details surrounding Miller's case as he had been the reporting officer at the time of Miller's dismissal. Branson responded by rejecting the request to reinstate Miller's credentials noting:

The brethren [the General Conference Committee] do not know of any extenuating circumstances in connection with Dr. Miller's unfortunate experience in China that differ in any material way from the circumstances surrounding any of the other brethren who have passed through this kind of experience. They feel that the granting of ministerial credentials to Dr. Miller on the strength of his former ordination cannot be possibly sanctioned by the General Conference Committee...³⁷

Branson did note that the committee had investigated a way for Miller to be granted a missionary license, but this had also been rejected as they could not make an exception for Miller.³⁸ This indicates that, *at this time*, ethical morality was more important to the church hierarchy than any benefit which could be derived from Miller's political connections.

Exactly how Miller moved from disgrace to a Seventh-day Adventist missionary icon is a multi-faceted question. I argue that it was Miller's political connections in China which aided greatly in his rehabilitation. In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party gained political control over China. It was at this time that Miller returned to Shanghai, aged seventy. His return was despite internal church documents from 1938 warning that it would be very damaging to the Seventh-day Adventist church in China if Miller was to ever return.³⁹ According to Moore's account, Miller was asked to take over the Shanghai Sanitarium while on a private business trip in Hong Kong. He frames Miller's return to China as a result of his

hound-tooth-clean record of refusing to take sides in Chinese affairs...Dr. Miller's presence in China would be an embarrassment to no one. He knew, and was known by, both Communists and Nationalists.⁴⁰

³⁴ William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, "Dr. Harry W. Miller: Work with Soy: A Special Exhibit - the History of Soy Pioneers Around the World", Soyinfo Center http://www.soyinfocenter.com/HSS/harry_miller.php (accessed 24 March 2014).

³⁵ H. M. Robbins, "July 2, 1942 letter to W. H. Branson," p. 2, Vice President General Files of W. H. Branson, 1942, M- Radio Com Box 9, Fld 1942 R, General Conference Archive of Seventh-day Adventists.

³⁶ Robbins, "July 2, 1942 letter to W. H. Branson," p. 2.

³⁷ W. H. Branson, "July 10, 1942 letter to W. M. Robbins," p. 1, Vice Presidential General Files of W. H. Branson, 1942, M - Radio Com Box 9, Fld 1942 R, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

³⁸ Branson, "July 10, 1942 letter to W. M. Robbins," p. 2.

³⁹ Branson, "23 November, 1938 Letter to J. L. McElhany," p. 7.

⁴⁰ Moore, *China Doctor*, 129.

This was a crucial period for the Seventh-day Adventist church as they wished to keep foreign missionaries in China and retain denominational control over their medical and educational institutions. It may have been that, due to his alleged medical treatment of communist officials especially Zhou Enlai, during the 1920s and 1930s, Miller was seen by church administrators as having the necessary connections on both sides of the political fence to be able to influence the political landscape in favour of the church.

The level of official endorsement to Miller's return to China is unclear. He is not listed as employed by the denomination in either the 1949 or 1950 Seventh-day Adventist Year Book, and I have been unable to locate any official correspondence between General Conference officials and Miller making the request of him to go to China. This suggests that Miller may have been asked to take an unofficial liaison role with the Communist Party on behalf of the church administration. All foreign missionaries from the Seventh-day Adventist church were withdrawn from China by the end of 1950 and Miller's name does not appear on any documentation relating to the withdrawal of those missionaries.

As a further sign of this rehabilitation, in 1953 Ezra Longway a former missionary to China who was then working for the Seventh-day Adventist church in Singapore, suggested to Miller that the church was in need of a sanitarium in Taiwan and that Miller should be the one to establish it.⁴¹ In 1954 Miller went to Taiwan in order to assist with the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Taipei. Longway had been employed in China at the time of Miller's dismissal in 1938 and would have been well aware of circumstances under which Miller left China. That Longway would suggest to Miller that he open a hospital under the auspices of the church indicates that by the early 1950s Miller's rehabilitation was complete. The Taiwan Adventist Hospital opened in 1955 and, at the time of writing, the hospital website credits Miller as being the institution's "founding father".⁴² Moore points out that in Taiwan Miller was able to re-establish his connections with influential Chinese in order to facilitate the importation of goods and establish the hospital quickly⁴³ and it may have been for this reason that Longway asked Miller to take on the task. While in Taiwan, Miller was awarded the Order of Brilliant Star (景星勳章) medal. This award recognises outstanding contributions to the development of Taiwan and Miller was personally awarded the medal by Chiang Kai-shek.

Miller crafted denominational opinion about himself during the 1920s and 1930s through the articles he wrote for the *Review*. This shaping of memory was continued with a new generation in the 1960s and 1970s through the publication of Moore's biography, and Swift reintroduced Miller and the discourse of Seventh-day Adventist privilege to yet another generation of Seventh-day Adventist readers through her work published in 1990. As a result of Moore and Swift's biographies, successive generations of Seventh-day Adventists have been introduced to the sanitized version of Miller's life. Writing by, and about Miller contributed to the sense that Seventh-day Adventist missionaries held a position of privilege with the Guomindang regime. Moore's biography of Miller contributed greatly to the creation of the Miller mythology. This text, and the earlier articles written by Miller himself, tend to provide a shallow representation of the prominent people in China with whom Miller came in

⁴¹ Moore, *China Doctor*, 133-134.

⁴² "Taiwan Adventist Hospital: About Us", <http://www.tahsda.org.tw/en/AboutUs.php> (accessed 26 March 2014).

⁴³ Moore, *China Doctor*, 134-135.

to contact and, with the exception of his relationship with Zhang Xueliang, little detail is provided concerning those members of the political and financial elite with whom Miller had contact. The focus of much of this writing is on Miller and his actions. The people with whom he interacted are superficially characterised and remain two dimensional for the reader. Aside from the fact that Miller met and treated the prominent person named in the work, little is shared of that person's personality or character, or indeed of any contact Miller may have had with this person outside of his professional capacity. The name and position of the person is given great emphasis because, by knowing them, Miller's own position is elevated. Moore's biography situated Miller as a friend of the Guomindang regime and portrayed the political elite from that time period in a favourable light. It also highlighted the denomination's on-going connection with Chiang Kai-shek and the Guomindang government in Taiwan. This can be seen as an attempt to reassure the denomination that the time, energy and expenditure of financial capital in China had not been in vain, and that the success of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries was continuing even though their access to the People's Republic of China had been cut.

For Miller personally, his biographies served much the same purposes as the earlier articles written by Miller himself which were published in the *Review*. The biographers portray him as a role model and his 'life of sacrifice' is held up as something for members to aspire to. By eliminating Miller's dismissal from the public record the biographers created an almost hagiographic discourse around him. This selective cultivation of cultural memory does both Miller and the reading audience a disservice. There can be no denying that Miller lived an extraordinary life and made great personal sacrifices for the work of the Seventh-day Adventist church in China and other parts of Asia. However, the lack of transparency surrounding Miller's dismissal from China, and the lengths Miller's biographers went to in order to cover this up, suggests that Miller's political connections and the prestige they brought to the church by association were more valuable than acknowledging the damage that Miller's actions caused, not only to the women he was 'involved' with, but also to the reputation of the church in China and the impact which such actions by a foreign missionary inevitably had on the local church members. I suggest that a narrative which examines all aspects of Miller's life, not just his extraordinary achievements, but also the times when he did not behave in the manner one would expect from a missionary, would humanise Miller and open discussion about the impact and implications of Seventh-day Adventist missionary history and practice both within China and globally.