Power, Print, and Martyrdom:
C. C. Crisler and the Development of
Seventh-Day Adventist Missions in
China, 1916–1936

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Abstract

The life of C. C. Crisler showcases the development of Seventh-day Adventist missions in China. As a relative latecomer to the Protestant missionary enterprise in China, the Adventists developed mission strategies during an era of growing professionalization and bureaucratization, most notably through the medium of print. Crisler was the foremost architect of Adventist print in the two decades of his missionary service. It was furthermore print that secured his lasting memory and elevation to the status of martyr. Crisler’s heavy emphasis upon missionary success, based upon his interpretation of Ellen G. White’s writings, led him to equate such success with baptisms and the expansion of church institutions. After the Chinese Revolution in 1949 a reversal meant that Crisler’s memory and martyrdom were later for the most part largely forgotten.

Key words: Clarence C. Crisler, Seventh-day Adventist Missions, Protestant missions, print, martyrdom

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