

Adventism in China

Library director represents in Hong Kong

[Agenda](#) | Posted on January 15, 2015



Conference organizer Bruce W.N. Lo speaks to attendees at Hong Kong Adventist College during the conference. (Photo by Michael W. Campbell, assistant professor at Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in Silang, Cavite, Philippines)

by Lucero Castellanos-Guirre

A first-of-its-kind conference reflecting on Adventism in China and Asia held at Hong Kong Adventist College (HKAC) took place at the end of October 2014.

Lawrence W. Onsager, dean of libraries, had the opportunity to attend this conference, which is jointly sponsored by Adventism in China (AIC) and the Association of Seventh-day Adventists Historians (ASDAH).

Onsager represented Andrews University at the official opening of the Center for Chinese Adventist Heritage located in the Hong Kong Adventist College library.

“The purpose of this conference was to renew the interest in studying the history of Adventism in China—the early days and currently as well,” stated Onsager when discussing the topic of his paper, “On Fire for China, the Story of Erik Pilquist, Pioneer Adventist Missionary to China,” which he presented at the conference.

Onsager's paper is a preliminary study on the influence that Erik Pilquist had on the early training of the initial group of Adventist inland China missionaries and their methods for bringing the Gospel to the non-Christian Chinese.

Through his own research, Bruce W.N. Lo, the mover and shaker between Adventism in China, found Onsager's research on early mission work in China—work that Onsager had done while the library director at Union College in the 1980s.

“Out of the blue, last year Bruce Lo approached me and asked me for some of my research so I shared it with him and then he talked about this conference and suggested I might want to do a paper for it, which I did, and then presented,” shared Onsager.

“HKAC has made a request for the Center of Adventist Research to share historical resources between our center and theirs,” claimed Onsager. “That of course is not an official thing at this point, just a request. This will be quite easy from our part because our Center of Adventist research is working to develop an Adventist digital library.”

Technically, there is no Adventist church in China today, although conference presenters pinpointed that about 500,000 believers live in this country of 1.35 billion people. In the realm of religion the Chinese government wishes churches to be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-promulgating. By respecting these principles, the Chinese Union Mission has no authority over the Adventist churches in China.

Today, few Adventists are aware that missionary work was actively conducted in China during the first half of the 20th century. Through this conference the history of the church's mission work in China was brought back to light.

For more information on Adventist mission work in China visit www.adventisminchina.org.