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)
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.