

2014 Joint AIC-ASDAH Conference
Reflection of Adventism in China and Asia
Hong Kong Adventist College, October 30-31, 2014
An Abstract Submission

Christie Chui-Shan Chow
Princeton Theological Seminary

Title: *Jinianzhu dao gao* (Commemorate the Lord's Prayer): Indigenizing Seventh-day Adventism in China

Christie Chui-Shan Chow
PhD Candidate, Program of Religion and Society, Princeton Theological Seminary,
U.S.A

Keywords: Indigenization, world Adventism, Watchman Nee, the Christian Assembly

Abstract

The Chinese Communist discourse often frames Protestantism as a foreign religion and views it as a threat to the nation. Seventh-Day Adventism has no immunity in this regard. As with other Christian traditions, Adventism was compelled to pronounce its indigeneity by participating in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) during the early 1950s and to replace its allegiance to Western denominationalism with absolute loyalty to the socialist order. This paper draws on ethnographic investigation of the Adventist movement in China's Wenzhou to critique this state-making project. In line with the insights of Andrew Walls and Lamin Sanneh, this paper argues that what makes Adventist faith enroot in China entails not just the active engagement of Chinese Adventists with the ideas and institution of the TSPM but also their agentive efforts to appropriate other Chinese Protestant practices and idioms as means of reviving Adventism. During the mid-1970s, a number of Adventist house church leaders in Wenzhou adopted a unique style of prayer from the Christian Assembly, a homegrown Protestant group founded by Watchman Nee (Ni Tousheng). Through innovative adaptation, these leaders integrated this praying practice, later called *Jinianzhu dao gao* (Commemorate the Lord's Prayer), with a distinctive eschatological framework, and transformed the Adventist faith into a truly indigenized religion in China.

Contact: chui-shan.chow@ptsem.edu