

# How Heavy Is The Ink Brush?: The Theological Method of Dr. Lien Hwa Chow

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## Abstract

The trajectory of Dr. Lien Hwa Chow's life follows the amazing dynamics of globalization in the Twentieth Century. This means that a revolution in Christian theological circles occurred in his lifetime. Chow's Christian encounter began as a first-generation conversion from a sending missionary culture. This would have meant he was discipled in a highly translation oriented Christian theological method. Yet, as the Twentieth Century witnessed the decentering of colonial frameworks, Chow's translation theological method would have shifted to a more adaptation theological methodology. Chow, caught up in the political and social movements of global empires, was able to maintain both his local cultural fluency and develop a cosmopolitan proficiency. As a result, he was as at-home with peasant farmers as he was with global scholars and global political leaders. His life story uniquely positioned him to distill divergent global Christian theologies and offer a radically new perspective on the living God like no other time in Christian history. This essay examines Chow's evolving theological method identifying him as an early dialogical, "glocal," theologian. Second, the essay turns to Chow's unique emphasis on Creation theology as a way to celebrate God's mysterious presence in world cultures prior to the arriving Christian communities. Third, the essay notes the prophetic critique that Chow communicates for both his local cultural context and those from the Western missionary cultural by way of a contextual dialogue. Finally, the essay identifies Chow as a prototype of the growing edge of the Christian constructive theological project going forward.

**Key Terms:** Local Theologian-in-dialogue, contextual theologies, the Living God, Creation theology, Translation Model, Adaption Model, "glocal"