The Baptist Century of Macao

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ABSTRACT: Much has been written about the early Jesuits who made Macao a base for spreading Catholicism in China and beyond, but little attention is given to the trajectories of Protestant Christianity in the colony. This article evaluates the empirical findings and analytical insights of R. Lawrence Ballew's latest book, entitled *Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water: The Baptist Church Takes Root in Macao (John and Lilian Galloway 1904–1968)* (Macao: University of Saint Joseph, 2019), which discusses the origin, development and legacy of the American Southern Baptist evangelisation in twentieth-century Macao. Ballew draws on the letters and reports of missionaries John and Lilian Galloway to trace their personal calling to overseas ministry, and to contextualise their proselytising efforts in this cosmopolitan city. One of their enduring legacies is the strong Baptist infrastructure that they created and integrated into the local social and cultural landscape.

KEYWORDS: John L. Galloway; Lilian Galloway; Lin Zifeng; Pirates; Southern Baptist Convention.

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While many scholars have written about the early Jesuits who made Macao a base for spreading Catholicism in China and beyond, little attention is given to the trajectories of Protestant Christianity in the colony. Yet, familiarity with the latest scholarship on the history of Chinese Christianity and better access to archival materials have made it easier for researchers to examine the Protestant missionary activities in Macao. Faith-based charity and mission education feature in Macao's urban and social history, and people are now looking at the under-explored contributions of Protestant missionaries in this cosmopolitan city.

This article evaluates the rich empirical findings and analytical insights of R. Lawrence Ballew's latest book, entitled *Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water*:



LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY STREAMS OF WATER

THE BAPTIST CHURCH TAKES ROOT IN MACAO (JOHN AND LILIAN GALLOWAY 1904-1968)



R. LAWRENCE BALLEW



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The Baptist Church Takes Root in Macao (John and Lilian Galloway 1904–1968) (Macao: University of Saint Joseph, 2019), which reconstructs the origin, history and legacy of the American Southern Baptist evangelisation in twentieth-century Macao. Ballew draws on the letters and reports of both John and Lilian Galloway to trace their personal calling to overseas missionary work, and to historicise their consistent efforts to advance evangelistic, pastoral and educational ministries. One of their enduring legacies is the strong Baptist infrastructure that they created and integrated into the local social and cultural landscape.

This book originates from a doctoral dissertation that R. Lawrence Ballew submitted to the University of Saint Joseph in Macao in 2015, and is composed of nine chapters. Through a comprehensive review of the English-language literature on the Protestant expansion into southern China, the introduction highlights a variety of political, social and cultural obstacles facing the American Baptists in this Portuguese settlement. Macao's strategic location, together with the long history of European Catholic heritage and Chinese migrations, offered an opening for Protestant missionaries to establish a foothold in the colony. When Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the first Protestant missionary, set foot on Chinese soil in 1807, he divided his time equally between Macao and Canton (today's Guangzhou). In times of chaos and turbulence, Macao was a safe haven for people who escaped from the war-torn areas, and this provided a fertile ground for evangelisation and ecumenism.

Surveying the life story of John and Lilian Galloway, chapter one traces the origin of their calling to religious service. Ballew draws on the archival materials to contextualise their commitment to the Baptist ministry. With the arrival of American missionaries Jehu Lewis and Henrietta Hall Shuck in 1836 and Issachar Jacox Roberts in 1837 in Macao, the Baptists tried to start their work but felt restrained by the Portuguese authorities. Owing to doctrinal differences, the Catholic and Protestant missions

tended to ridicule and compete with each other in the field as elsewhere. They used separate Chinese terms to refer to Christianity, namely, tianzhujiao (religion of the Lord of Heaven) versus jidujiao or yesujiao (religion of Christ). This linguistic practice confused the Chinese understanding of Christianity, creating an impression that Catholicism and Protestantism were two rather different religions, with missionaries from both sides being rivals, if not antagonists. Because the Portuguese Catholics were not too enthusiastic about the presence of Protestant missionaries, the Shucks and Roberts eventually left Macao for Canton.

Before travelling with her first husband, Rev. Clarence H. Reeves, to southern China in 1892 under the auspices of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Lilian Fanny Lamont (1869–1954) was involved in proselytising Cantonese migrant workers in the United States. In the late 1880s, she managed a school, founded by the Congregational Chinese mission in Oakland, California, under the supervision of the California Chinese Missionary Society. After five and a half years of pioneer work in Guangxi Province, Clarence returned home with Lilian in 1899 due to poor health, and passed away.

Lilian later married Rev. Samuel Charlton Todd, pastor of the Vineville Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia. They left for Macao in 1903 under the sponsorship of an independent Baptist organisation called the Bible Missionary Society. In 1904, they founded the Faithful Blessing Church, marking the beginning of the Baptist ministry in the colony. When Samuel Charlton Todd returned home on church business in 1908, Lilian continued the work alone. Sadly, Samuel contracted typhoid and died, leaving Lilian a widow again. Lilian travelled back to the United States in 1909, visiting relatives in California, preaching to Cantonese migrant workers, and raising funds for her Macao ministry.

It was through the Vineville Baptist Church that John L. Galloway (1877–1968), of Canadian

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and Scottish ancestry, heard about the Todds' work in Macao. He went there in December 1908, and assisted the couple in 1909. In January 1910, John and Lilian, together with other members of the Bible Missionary Society in Macao, joined the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, which had a flourishing ministry in British Hong Kong and the Cantonese-speaking Pearl River Delta. In October 1910, John and Lilian got married in Japan and worked together to advance Macao's Baptist ministry. They survived the turbulent years of the Pacific War (1941-1945), when they utilised Macao's diplomatic neutrality to support fellow Baptist missionaries and Chinese refugees who fled to the city. Troubled by poor health and financial constraints, the Galloways lived at the margins of the Western expatriate community after retirement in 1950. Following the death of Lilian in 1954, John's health deteriorated. His adopted daughter, Yeung Kai Ching, cared for him until his passing in 1968.

The next three chapters concentrate on the Galloways' evangelistic initiatives in the intersection between Christianity and Chinese society. Chapter two assesses the successes and challenges of their decadeslong ministry in Macao. John L. Galloway never received formal seminary education, but he proved himself a capable evangelist and pastor. He learnt Portuguese and Cantonese, and preached to African soldiers and Chinese fishing communities. Chapter three throws light on the overlapping personal and church networks that the Galloways employed to pull in resources to support their work. Shifting the focus to the varieties of social relationships, chapter four refers to the effective use of Cantonese Biblewomen, literature evangelists and schoolteachers to reach out to working poor, orphans and river pirates. The most fascinating story concerns the launching of a Baptist boat ministry. Before the era of high-speed trains and highways, riverboat was the most convenient way to travel from Macao to adjacent islands and the Pearl River Delta. It was very common for foreign missions

to purchase their boats in order to reach out to village settlements along coastal and river waterways. The boat ministry reminded us of Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851), the first German Lutheran missionary to China, as he went up the Chinese coast on opium ships. When the crew dispensed opium, Gützlaff handed out Christian pamphlets. Another example was Florence Drew of the Evangelical Free Mission, who founded the South China Boat Mission in the early twentieth century. Unlike Drew who sailed along the waterways outside Canton, the Galloways' gospel boat served people in some outlying islands of Macao.

The Galloways' frequent encounters with river pirates during the 1920s and 1930s reveal the appeal of Christianity among the marginalised, floating population in parts of southern China where collective violence and crime were severe. On one occasion, John prepared for a service at the island chapel in Tau Moon. Suddenly, a group of sixteen armed pirates broke into the building and planned to capture him for ransom. Calm and composed, John offered them tea to show his respect and hospitality, and preached to them for two hours. The pirates allegedly found themselves in a different world, and their humanity began to resurface. The next day, a larger group of pirates showed up to meet John, attending the morning service and Sunday school sessions. Deeply moved by the gospel message, the pirate chief joined the church, left the gang, and invited the Baptists to build a chapel and school in his ancestral village. Other pirates befriended John, and permitted him to sail through the waterways without harassment.2 This instance illustrates the friendship and trust that the Galloways developed with the working poor.

In addition, John catered to the spiritual needs of Portuguese-speaking African soldiers who lived at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy. In the 1910s, he proposed to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to support the proselytisation of these soldiers. Nonetheless, due to the outbreak of a notorious racial riot between the Africans and

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Chinese in May 1922, the Galloways found it hard to organise a bilingual, biracial ministry under the Baptist umbrella. Sensitive towards the pains and sufferings of the sojourning soldiers, John organised a separate, Portuguese-speaking ministry shortly after his retirement in 1950.³ Another shining accomplishment of their ministry was mission education, a topic of discussion in chapter five. The Galloways launched the Ling To and Sing To Girls' Schools as well as a Boys' School to provide motivated Chinese students with moral values, academic knowledge and practical skills to thrive in a commercialised environment.⁴

Chapters six and seven highlight the financial dimension of the Baptist missionary activities. Unlike William Ashmore, Sr. (1824–1909), an entrepreneurial Northern Baptist missionary pioneer who invested his limited funds in land reclamation and real estate development in the treaty port of Shantou during the late nineteenth century, the Galloways were rather modest and conservative in financial management.⁵ They were not embarrassed to lobby their American supporters for more resources for Macao. Raising funds to pay for the salaries of Biblewomen, church staff and schoolteachers was always a top priority. Christians in the United States provided much of the operating expenses for Macao's Baptist churches.

Belonging to more than one social circle, the Galloways developed a horizontal network of support among their friends and relatives at home, and cultivated vertical patron-client relationships with prominent Chinese and international donors. This form of social capital allowed the Galloways to access outside resources in crisis. At the beginning, they solicited support from Mrs J. C. Clarke, Lilian's mother-in-law of her second marriage, to secure sufficient funds to purchase land for the first Baptist congregation in the colony. As time passed, they befriended affluent Chinese members of the growing Macao Baptist Church, especially the relatives of Sun Yat-Sen, in order to advance the Protestant influence. Another pressing problem concerned the difficulty of

reclaiming the American Baptist property deeds taken away by Japanese occupiers in wartime Hong Kong. Free to travel from Macao to Hong Kong after the Pacific War ended, John utilised his connections with Hong Kong's first Roman Catholic Bishop Enrico Pascal Valtorta to track down the missing financial documents. This enabled the Baptist Mission to recover the financial losses.

The concluding chapter pulls all the historical and thematic strings together, and the appendices contain many useful data including the Union Agreement (1910) between the Southern Baptist Convention and the Bible Missionary Society, detailed reports written by the Galloways about Macao, a list of Chinese terms and names, and dozens of valuable photographs.

Methodologically, Ballew reminds us to be sceptical of the credibility of missionaries' writings. When the Galloways wrote for the American audiences for fundraising and publicity purposes, they sensationalised their overseas experiences and criticised Chinese religions. Their background, education and perspective affected the way they narrated what they had seen. While reading their letters and reports, one should always take into account the discrepancies in expressed and private opinions. Sympathetic remarks made by the Galloways in private correspondence and diaries differed considerably from their public statements. The Galloways chracterised their vocation as proselytising to native idol worshipers. Out of their belief in Christian eschatology, according to which all heathens were destined for Hell unless they were converted, the Galloways expressed a sense of urgency that saving souls should be of prime importance. Yet, they told us little about how they came to grips with the popular religious mindsets of river pirates, and with the widespread customary practices ranging from ancestral worship and temple festivals, to polygamy and child betrothal.

Meanwhile, discussions over salaries for Chinese mission staff, the management of church properties, and

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the promotion of native clergy became quite intense in times of adversity. Worse still, the Galloways witnessed the horrifying practice of cannibalism in wartime Macao and struggled to help the refugees maintain normalcy and dignity. Seeing this gruesome behaviour as the last resort against starvation, the Galloways understood the ambiguities of daily sufferings in hopeless circumstances that beset everyone.

There are three major takeaways from Ballew's historical narrative. The first lesson concerns the spatial scope of the Baptist missionary movement in Macao. The local ministry was part of the larger Southern Baptist evangelistic outreach to Hong Kong and Guangdong Province. Macao's congregations maintained regular networks of exchange with Hong Kong, receiving much spiritual and material assistance. The bilateral church links manifested in the accomplishments of several influential Macanese congregants who led the Baptist institutions in neighbouring Hong Kong. For example, Paul Yat-Keung Wong led the Hong Kong Baptist Church from 1958 to 1976 and chaired the Hong Kong Baptist Association in 1971. Daniel Chi-Wai Tse presided the Hong Kong Baptist University from 1971 to 2001 and the Hong Kong Baptist Association in 1975, 1976 and 1978. Jachin Chan served as the vice-president of the Hong Kong Baptist University from 1971 to 1980 and the president of the Hong Kong Baptist Association from 1986 to 1990.6

The second lesson reveals Macao's unique position in wartime. Macao remained politically neutral during the Pacific War, even though the Portuguese were under mounting pressure to yield to the aggressive demands of Japan. Macao sheltered refugees from Japanese-controlled territories. Lin Zifeng (Lam Chi-Fung), Hong Kong's Baptist leader of Chaozhou descent, moved to Macao due to the chaos and uncertainties under the military rule. The Baptistrun Pooi To Girls' School, founded in Kowloon in the 1930s, also moved to Macao in February 1942, and the Pui Ching Middle School in Canton moved there when the provincial capital fell into Japanese

hands in 1938. In July 1944, Lin Zifeng became interim principal of the Macao Pooi To Girls' School and the Macao Pui Ching Middle School. He utilised his connections with the Food Control Committee, a Portuguese official body, to purchase food for teachers and students.⁷ As Lin continued to champion for Chinese Baptists in the post-war era, he referred to the sojourning experience in Macao as transformative:

In 1944 while Hong Kong was still under the Japanese occupation, I moved to Macao. Because of their principals being stuck in mainland China due to the War, the staff of Pui Ching and Pooi To in Macao was short of food and lack of leadership. Upon the recommendation of the school boards, I took up the post of Interim Principal of the two schools to help getting through the difficult time. With this experience of involving in education, my confidence in participating in educational ministry increased.8

In a similar fashion, Macao offered a refuge for Catholics in Hong Kong. In the early summer of 1942, a wealthy Catholic stockbroker, Seu Kon-Chi, visited Fr. Nicholas Maestrini of the PIME (the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions). He decided to go to Macao with his family, but could not carry the Hong Kong currency with him. He put HK\$100,000 (around US\$25,000) inside a brown bag, and asked Fr. Maestrini to store it for his family. At that time, the Japanese military forbade people to keep any Hong Kong currency. Fr. Maestrini placed Seu's cash on the shelf of his bedroom closet, until one morning in 1943, when four Japanese military police came to search the mission compound. Fortunately, the Japanese did not find the Hong Kong bills. Immediately after the incident, Fr. Maestrini placed the money in a jar, sealed it with candle wax and buried it under a wall in the courtyard of the seminary.9 When Seu returned from Macao to Hong Kong in late August 1945, Fr. Maestrini returned the cash. Knowing that the priest needed financial support

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to open a new Catholic Centre in downtown Hong Kong, Seu paid for the first month's rental expense. 10

The third lesson has to do with the Galloways' friendship with local Catholics and Baptists. The Galloways received food supplies from Fr. Mario Acquistapace, a compassionate Italian Salesian during extreme hardship.11 In the early 1950s, the Southern Baptist Convention was not optimistic about long-term investment in Macao and Hong Kong because of the fear of political uncertainties. 12 However, Baptist patron Lin Zifeng lobbied tirelessly for more resources from the United States. He founded and managed the Hong Kong-Macao Baptist Loan Fund Limited to give interest-free loans for acquiring church properties.¹³ These external resources enabled the Baptists to support elaborate educational and religious institutions in Macao.

In short, *Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water* presents a thorough study of the prominent Baptist personalities in Macao. One wishes that Ballew had consulted more Chinese Christian source materials, and dug more deeply into related issues like gender,

popular religions and church-state relationship. 14 Nevertheless, this well-documented, pioneering investigation not only supplants the earlier paradigm that conceptualised Christianity in Macao in the light of modernity from a Western perspective, but also reveals the anxieties and concerns of the Galloways in the longstanding process of Chinese-Western cultural encounters.

One enduring lesson of the Galloways' ministry is that their genuine friendship with Macanese Christians embodied what Dana L. Robert calls "a cross-cultural version of the kingdom of God" built on collaborative partnership. Both John and Lilian Galloway left behind a remarkable legacy of selfless service, inspiring more people to follow. The most notable is that of Brazilian missionary Marjory Vendramini, who managed the non-profit Cradle of Hope Association in 1994 to look after abandoned babies. Macanese Baptists provided volunteers and donations, and the missionary-run Hope Medical Clinic gave medical supplies and trained people to care for the orphans. This model of service and charity to those in need is one evidence of the Baptists' commitment to Macao.

NOTES

- 1 Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "The Lord of Heaven versus Jesus Christ: Christian Sectarian Violence in Late-19th-Century South China," *Positions: East Asia Culture Critiques* 8, no. 1 (2000): 77–99.
- 2 R. Lawrence Ballew, Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water: The Baptist Church Takes Root in Macao (John and Lilian Galloway 1904–1968 (Macao: University of Saint Joseph, 2019), 141–146.
- 3 Ballew, Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water, 146–152.
- 4 Ballew, Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water, 160–163.
- 5 Qiyao Li, "Missionaries as Developers: Industry and Real Estate under the American Baptists," in *Christianizing South China: Mission, Development, and Identity in Modern Chaoshan*, ed. by Joseph Tse-Hei Lee (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 105-121.
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- 8 To, "Lam Chi-Fung's Transformative Role," 76–77.
- Nicholas Maestrini, China: Lost Mission? Detroit (MI: PIME World Press, 1990), 279.
- 10 Maestrini, China, 291.
- 11 Ballew, Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water, 84.
- 12 To, "Lam Chi-Fung's Transformative Role," 92, 95; Ballew, *Like a Tree Planted by Streams of Water*, 93.
- 13 To, "Lam Chi-Fung's Transformative Role," 122–123.
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- 16 Hark Kelly, "No Room at the Inn for Baby Until Missionaries Took Him In," *The Baptist* Press, 4-5. December 14, 1994. Accessed January 23, 2021. http://media.sbhla.org. s3.amazonaws.com/7894,14-Dec-1994. PDF

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