

Missionaries' impact on family felt across generations

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SUGAR LAND—Missionaries who served in China around the time of legendary Baptist missionary Lottie Moon's death indirectly became responsible for several generations of Baptist preachers and lay leaders in Mexico.

When he was growing up in Mexico, Federico "Fred" Chow of Sugar Land could not remember meeting another child his age who wasn't Catholic, other than at the Baptist church he and his family attended.

"One day I asked my grandmother, 'Why are we Baptists?'" he recalled.

His grandmother Margarita Pangtay Chow told him about how his great-grandfather owned a mine in northern Mexico until the time of the Mexican Revolution. When Pancho Villa and his forces began to stir up animosity toward Chinese immigrants in Mexico, Chow's great-grandfather Alajandro Pangtay moved his family back to Canton, China.

"Going to school there, the missionaries were very nice to me," Chow's grandmother told him. "They taught me good things. They taught me about the Bible."

Consequently, when the family eventually returned to Mexico in the 1920s, they sought out Baptist missionaries and the churches those missionaries had helped to start.

"It shows how missionaries have an impact, even if the result of their work is not seen until years later," Chow said.

Likewise, Chow's great-uncle and grandmother on the other side of his

family were deeply influenced by a Baptist pastor and his wife in Tampico who showed them kindness and offered them protection after both of their parents died.

Impact felt across generations

The impact of Baptist missionaries and national Baptist ministers continued from one generation to the next in his family, Chow said.

In particular, the history of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Tampico, Mexico, has been inextricably linked to his family.

Juan Ramos Castillo—one of Chow's relatives—helped establish the church and was its pastor from about 1911 to 1920.

Decades later, Ernesto Aguilar—another member of Chow's family—was pastor of that church from 1988 until his death in 2005. Previously, Aguilar had been pastor of Segunda Iglesia Bautista in Mexico City.

Several other members of Chow's extended family became Baptist pastors and missionaries in Mexico and the United States:

- Librado Ramos was pastor in Mexico more than four decades, serving Primera Iglesia Bautista in Mexico City until his death in 1990.
- Job Ramos Lozano was pastor of Eliacim Baptist Church in Tampico until his death in 1994.
- Homero Ramos was a pastor and church planter for 50 years. He was instrumental in founding Baptist churches in Matamoros, Tampico, Progreso and Mexico City. He also was pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Reynosa and Emanuel Baptist Temple in McAllen.
- Sergio Ramos, who served in international missions, now is pastor

of The Promise Church in Dallas.

- Mike Hart is minister of missions at First Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla. He served previously as director of a Baptist academy in Blue Springs, Mo. He and his wife Kathy and their two daughters also spent several years as missionaries in the Philippines.
- Oliver Martinez is pastor of Iglesia Bautista Getsemani in Fort Worth.



Susanna Chow (3rd from left), now age 82, is pictured as a child with her siblings (left to right) Federico, Jose, Guillermo, Francisco and Victoria. (Photo courtesy of Fred Chow)

Chow specifically mentioned an aunt, Susanna Chow—Margarita Pangtay Chow’s daughter—who earned her doctorate in chemical engineering in France and worked for Pemex, Mexico’s state-owned petroleum company. Today, she lives in Mexico City and is the author of more than 300 technical papers and four books, holds several patents and is the recipient of multiple international awards.

“In the latter part of her career, she focused more on quality control and quality assurance models, lecturing on the subject in different countries,” Chow said.

Those lectures soon developed into “quality of life” messages, which she used as a platform for sharing her faith in multiple venues, he noted. At age 82, she continues to travel extensively throughout Mexico presenting her Christian message.

‘Family’s commitment still going strong’

When Chow was a teenager, his parents sent him to Valley Baptist Academy in Harlingen. At the academy, he became involved with Royal Ambassadors, and he was coached and mentored by Manuel Galindo, now pastor of Olmito Baptist Church in Cameron County, with whom he remains in close contact.

Chow went on to earn a degree in petroleum engineering from Texas A&M University. He worked 30 years for Halliburton, beginning as a field engineer and working his way through the ranks to the global director’s post.

After retiring from the multinational corporation, Chow formed his own energy consulting company headquartered in Villahermosa, Mexico.

Today he divides his time between his home in Sugar Land, where he and his wife Lili are members of Grand Parkway Baptist Church in nearby Richmond, and his business in Villahermosa, where he attends Iglesia Bautista Arrebatamiento. On any given Sunday, he is attending church in one of those cities or the other.

“A hundred years after my grandmother met missionaries who were ‘very nice’ to her, my family’s commitment is still going strong,” Chow said.