

From Gloomy Despondence to Light and Blessings

By Doug and Rahni Cho

I professed through Merlin Howlett of Alberta Canada and Bob Dye of Washington State in 1965 as a high school senior student in Kwangju, South Korea. I had listened to the bible talks for close to ten months, three times a week, before finally making the choice to accept Jesus Christ into my life as the Lord and Savior. I am grateful to these workers who brought the gospel to me. My wife, Rahni, professed in 1972 in Seoul through other workers.

In the year after I professed I entered the Korean Naval Academy to become a naval officer as forced by my father. That summer I came home for leave and was baptized by Merlin in a river near my hometown. In 1967 I was chosen from my academy class to go to the U.S. Naval Academy through a special program for foreign exchange students. During my time as a midshipman at Annapolis, I was privileged to lead a classmate, Tim Vaughan, to the truth. So, we became famous like a couple of celebrities among the friends and workers of the whole East Coast. Friends of MD and VA accepted and treated us like their own brothers and this made my four years quite blessed.

In 1971 I graduated from the Academy, was commissioned as an officer and returned to South Korea to begin a naval career. Earlier I had wanted to join the work, but the Korean government forced me to give up that desire. In 1974 I met Rahni in a small fellowship meeting in Seoul and we were married sometime later. In 1976 Tim Vaughan started in the work after serving mandatory five years in the U.S. Navy. We had our son born in the same year in Jinhae where I was an instructor at the Korean Naval Academy. Two years later we moved to Oregon for my doctoral program with a leave of absence from the navy. Our time in Oregon was very blessed as well with dear friends showing genuine fellowship and love. And our daughter was borne there.

Three years later I completed my degree program and we returned back to Jinhae, Korea. There we had a dream for starting a convention at our property and this came about in 1982. However, the five years we had convention privilege at Jinhae were like 'hell.' I won't go into

details, but we came to know the dark side of the workers, particularly during the preps. We endured the financial hardship laid on us in spite of the promise that “all things would be taken care of.” We also had a constant stream of visitors from other parts of the country as well as abroad and poor Rahni had to be a gracious hostess with a limited naval officer income, two little children and two dogs.

During these years we came to know the dirty secret of our overseer [DG], who was having an affair with an ex-sister worker and got her pregnant. She went through an abortion and attempted a suicide. Rahni and I had to clean up her bloody apartment while she was hospitalized and receiving tremendous attention of a dozen workers who converged to the town at the direction of the overseer. Yet, no one knew the true story except us. DG came to know that we knew the details. DG also was aware of his prior sexual harassments on Rahni before I met her. From that time on his persecution and harassment on us began intensely and continued for many years. He made it plain that he wanted to kick us out of the truth. However, we felt we had nowhere to go because we then believed that God’s salvation was only in this 2x2 way. So strong was their mind control and deception!

Fortunately, however, I was transferred to Seoul in 1988, whereupon we sold the convention property to a rich friend in Busan, who was drawing a lot of attention and adoration from all the workers. Our time in Seoul was like one of exile—like king David’s experience of being under Saul’s threat of his life. I retired from the Navy in 1992 and we immigrated to Maryland, U.S., where I had a job with a defense contractor. DG came to DC area as a visitor and wanted to have our assurance that we would not divulge his secrets to the world. For that he had yielded the overseer responsibility to Ernest Robinson. We gave him the assurance. I wanted to have the heart of David, who did not lay his hand on Saul although he could have easily killed him in two occasions. Now that he has been gone for a number of years due to cancer, we feel we can safely release the old secrets.

Our initial years in Washington DC area did not go well with the job situation. Early 1995 my father passed away and I went to my hometown to bury him. My mother was alone and I was offered a professorship at a university in the city. I felt this was a way open to me to do my duty as the oldest son to my mother. This meant my children had to be left to go to American schools in Maryland and the cost of supporting two homes was burdensome. And my health deteriorated as I had to work many hours with heavy responsibilities. I look back to those few years and see God’s hand of molding me through a hardship period before blessing us. Eventually I left the teaching job and entered the IT industry in Korea before the time came we had to leave Korea permanently and settle in Northern Virginia. Before that my mother died of cancer. After earning the U.S. citizenship, I was hired by the U.S. Air Force at Pentagon, where I have worked for the past decade. This was a new chapter in our life in many ways.

Soon after we returned to Virginia in 2004, our professing daughter left the truth. Her departure caused us to revisit all of the questions regarding the 2x2 way that had been bothering us over the four decades of professing. The following is a short list of those questions Rahni and I pondered and sought to find answers/ explanations:

1. Does salvation come only through the workers of the 2x2 way?

2. Are all other protestant churches wrong and are all Christians of those churches bound for hell?

3. Is meeting in buildings, not in homes, theologically wrong? Why must churches be in private homes?

4. Is the itinerant mode of the 2x2 evangelism the only way of Christian evangelism?

5. Are the workers/ pastors required to remain single according to the Scripture?

6. Why are the workers and friends not showing compassion to the poor and the needy?

7. Why is there sexual immorality among the workers and friends so much? Why do they cover up such scandals and not deal with them in forthright manner?

8. Why do the workers prohibit the friends from reading Christian books and literature? What are they afraid of?

9. What is the statement of the 2x2 theological doctrine? Where can we find a clear statement

of what they preach?

10. Why do we never see a financial statement of the 2x2 way of either a state, or a country as a field of work? Who handles the finances and to whom are they responsible?

We could not easily find answers to these questions. The conclusion we came to was that there were so many unanswered questions that made us lose our prior confidence that this was “the only true way.” We sometimes attended services of a couple of local Korean churches to get the feel of what it is like to meet with other Christians. To our pleasant surprise the services were very heart-warming and spiritually uplifting in contrast to the drab, lifeless meetings of the 2x2 way. It took several years to finally come to the decision point, early 2012, when we made the announcement of our departure to the F&Ws in both Korea and in U.S after 47 years in the 2x2 way. Mostly they were shocked and disappointed but warned us “not to burn the bridges.” And they were afraid that our departure might have an impact on the friends. In fact, several friends followed us and left the way in Korea because they respected our judgment. In influencing their decision, we effectively burned the bridges and became ‘enemies’ to the ‘truth.’

In January 2014 while I was serving as a deployed advisor to the Afghan government in Kabul, Lord God visited me and touched me. His command was to be His messenger. I trembled and wept for many hours that evening. The following day I searched and found Trinity Theological Seminary in Indiana, which teaches fundamental Christian doctrines. I registered with the school for the online master’s degree program in Biblical Studies, which I completed in spring of 2015. Then I continued the study into a doctoral degree program, which I have completed and am waiting for the diploma. During the seminary study programs Lord God opened the door of knowledge into His truth and way. Each course I took brought so much satisfaction in finding the answers to the multitude of questions I had. However, it has been a greater blessing to come to know our Father God in intimate ways through the studies.

In August 2015, my friend and brother, Tim Vaughan, passed away with cancer after 40 years in the work and was buried in Glen Burnie, MD, not far from the Naval Academy. During my last visit with Tim before his death, he told me that the Baptist church was acceptable as a way of serving God, in his opinion, thus agreeing with our decision to leave the 2x2 way. He had had intimate knowledge of our experiences. In the same week of his burial, I started teaching the Bible to my colleagues at the Headquarters of the U.S. Air Force at Pentagon on a weekly basis with official authorization. This mission has continued over the past three years. I built a website that posts all study lessons as follows for this mission: www.douglaschoministry.net Each weekend when I sit down with an open Bible to prepare for the following week’s study, Lord God sends an abundant shower of His knowledge and words from His throne. These experiences

have been assurances of His calling to His mission. And I am so very thankful for all the blessings that came to us through these experiences, so much so that the pains of the past wounds are no longer sharp and we can look back to our past years covered with our Father's grace of wanting to mold us into a character like that of our Lord Jesus.

I plan to retire from the Air Force early 2019. And my prayer is that God will open the doors to speak His words to those who hunger for His truth. Now that I have made connection to the former 2x2 members through TLC Connection, I wish to be of help to them in ways God directs me. Our God is so gracious and wonderful to His children. It is my prayer that our small lives are used in His hand to bring His blessings to those who seek in this dark world.

With humility and earnest desire to be used,

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