

# The Master's Mariner

July, 2014



Caring for seafarers  
around the world

*The Rev. Tae Hyun Kim*  
17.01.34 - 03.07.2014



On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Chaplain Tae Hyun Kim died after a long illness. He was 80 years old.

In June 2005, I had interviewed Tae and printed the interview in 'The Master's Mariner'. To refresh our minds about Tae

and his life, I've reprinted the article and trust that you may better understand the sense of loss we feel at this time.

### *Tae, would you tell us about your family?*

I am married to Nam Soon and we have three adult children. My eldest son is a lawyer and the leader of the English Mission of his Korean church. My second son is in finance and my daughter is a pharmacist, although both work in business development. My wife and I are very glad that they have grown up in God's grace and we have six grandchildren ranging in age from 1 to 10 years.

### *You were born in North Korea – how did you come to grow up in South Korea?*

At the end of WW2 communism came into the area we now know as North Korea. The communists targeted wealthy land-owners in the North, confiscating all their lands. At the time my father was a wealthy landlord and was one of the first to be persecuted.

So my parents and grandparents left everything behind and escaped on foot over the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel during the early morning. I come from a family of 5 children; my mother, brothers & sister are still in South Korea.

### *How did you come to put your life into Christ's hands?*

We were very poor in our new life in the south and suffered a lot of hardship, including living through the Korean war. Although I was in my early teens, I saw a lot of death and for 4 years I used to attend our church's daily 5am prayer meetings. During these prayers I came to realise that Korea would come to peace only through Jesus Christ and I then decided to dedicate my life to God's work. My grandfather was one of the first Koreans to accept Christ and was an Elder at the church when I was born.

### *What was it like for you to come to Australia ... and the Mission to Seafarers?*

In 1978 the Uniting Church of Australia invited me to Australia to work in the Korean ministry in Melbourne. At that time there were about 400 Koreans living in Melbourne and there was only one Korean church.

One night at c. 10pm a stranger rang to ask if I could help some Korean seafarers whom he had found lost in Melbourne's suburbs. The two seafarers had gone out to explore Melbourne, but when they tried to return to their ship, the taxi-driver couldn't understand them and in frustration had dumped them 'in the middle of nowhere'. A kind passer-by had found them, looked up the Korean church's telephone number and rang me.

I took the men to The Mission to Seamen in Melbourne and got the shock of my life! In the late 1970's and early 1980's the Mission was full of Korean and Japanese seafarers! For 2-3 years afterwards I used to drop in regularly to take Korean newspapers and books for them to read. One day the Chaplain asked me if I would work at the Mission every Saturday. Soon after I began work, three Korean crew were killed in an accident

on board a Korean oil tanker. I took the funeral service at the Mission, and that was how I really began to get involved in the ministry of the Mission to Seafarers.

***What motivates you in your ministry with the Mission?***

I enjoy meeting people from different countries and being able to help them in their time of need.

***How do you relax?***

When I have my days off, I relax by listening to music and looking forward to the next day.

***With whom would you most like to have dinner?***

I enjoy having dinner with my family. I am always thankful to the Lord for looking after my family and for providing guidance for them while I was working at the Mission.

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Tae's funeral took place at Greenwich Presbyterian Church on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July. With their permission, I have reprinted the eulogies given by Sean, Tae's eldest son, and Daniel, Tae's grandson.

Sean:

My father was born in Pyung An Buk Do in what is now North Korea during the Japanese occupation of the then one Korea in 1934.

Both of his grandfathers were elders of their respective local churches and it was natural for him to attend church from birth. He had a relatively privileged childhood.

The end of the World War II brought Korea's independence from Japan but also the division of Korea into South and North. My father told me that after the communist regime took control of the North Korea his school teacher would call his name every Monday and would make him stand in front of his classroom and apologise to his classmates for going to church on the Sunday before and promise that he would not do it again.

Eventually his family decided to flee to South Korea for religious freedom and in 1948 walked from their home near the Korea-Chinese border to Seoul (~360km). Soon after they settled in Seoul the Korean War broke out and they then went down to Busan (the southern tip of the Korean peninsula) to avoid the invading North Korean army. With the end of the Korean War in 1953 my

father's family moved back to Seoul. This is how he spent his school years and he instilled into me how I should make the most of my schooling.

My father was a Presbyterian Theological College student when he met my mother in the local church. They married during his final year at college. He spent several years in country villages planting churches and then worked as a chaplain at two Christian High Schools.

In 1974 he moved to Seoul as an Associate Pastor at Choong Hyun Presbyterian Church and in late 1978 he came to Australia as a pastor at Melbourne Korean Church.

In the early 1980's there were many Korean seafarers working on both Korean and international commercial ships and a large number of them were visiting The Missions to Seamen in Melbourne. At the request of Rev. Bolt of the Flying Angel Club in Melbourne my father worked at the Missions as a volunteer in 1982 and then became a full time Chaplain. He worked at the Missions in Melbourne and Sydney for over 30 years - even after retirement - until he was diagnosed with cancer in August 2013.

My father valued honesty and despised untruth. He prided himself in being transparent and didn't want to compromise with the temptations of mammon.

He was concerned about his wife until the day he died and he passed away peacefully praying to God.

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Daniel:

The word 'upright' comes to mind when I think about Grandpa.

Firstly meaning 'strictly adhering to rectitude, righteousness and honesty', as an adjective it is the perfect word to describe him. All of this



life, through hardships or comfort, he remained upright. What's more, is that he remained generous, faithful and happy.

As a noun, upright means 'a post fixed vertically especially as a structural support'. When I followed him to the Seamen's Mission or the Flemington markets, there would always be people, strangers, who come up to greet Grandpa. Later on I realized that these people had been all those that he had helped when they were in need, far from home. He had been their structural support. When I once fought with my parents, I ran away to him because he had always been my structural support. He was a very open-minded person relative to his time and I know that his life has touched more people than I could hope to meet.

I will miss your bedtime stories. I will miss your 라면 (ramyun = noodle) making. I will miss your songs and your angry look when your eyes go really round. Most of all I will miss you. 사랑해요 할아버지 (sarang hae yo happi... = I love you Grandpa)

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### Thank God for Sceptics?

During the spring of 1915, German U-boat attacks off the south coast of Ireland prompted the British Admiralty to warn the passenger ship *Lusitania* either to avoid the area or to take evasive measures in the hope of confusing any U-boats plotting its course. The Captain, however, didn't believe the warnings, so he ignored them.



Tragically, at 2:12pm on 7th May, the *Lusitania* was torpedoed on its starboard side. The blast of the torpedo was followed by an even greater explosion (the boilers?) and the ship sank 20 minutes later with the loss of 1,201 lives.

In the years before the start of WWII, political refugees from Nazi Germany had tried to warn European governments about the existence of Concentration camps in Germany, begging their intervention to abolish them. None of the governments believed them.

In 1942 a group of Polish resistants sent the Allies a series of six photos showing the burning of corpses in Auschwitz-Berkenau; hundreds more sent testimonies of other extermination camps. Yet nothing was done because the authorities didn't believe them. The truth of the reports and the enormities they described were only realised when the camps were liberated in 1945.

Even after the Japanese surrender in August 1945, numerous Japanese soldiers in the jungles of the Pacific refused to believe the announcements that the war was over, thinking them to be an enemy trick designed to flush them out of the jungles to be captured.



One of them - Hiroo Onoda was discovered in the Philippine jungle in 1974, and came out of hiding on 10th March, 1975 only after his former

commanding officer travelled to the Philippines to meet him and convince him that the war was, indeed, over.

Ignoring the evidence can have enormous consequences!

The Gospels describe another sceptic whose scepticism was, potentially, even more catastrophic than those I've just mentioned. His name was Thomas.

We all know him by the moniker, 'Doubting Thomas', but this seems unfair given that *not one* of the disciples expected Jesus to rise from the dead. Although (on numerous occasions) Jesus had told them that he would be killed and the rise from the dead, this prospect was so far beyond their sphere of comprehension that - even though Jesus had raised others from the dead - it didn't penetrate their minds to reshape their expectations.

If the disciples had entertained even a glimmer of hope that Jesus would ultimately emerge victorious, that glimmer had been obliterated by the savagery, the degradation and the enormous finality of His crucifixion.

When the women went to his tomb on that Sunday morning, the last thing on their minds was a risen Jesus; they thought only of the huge, immovable stone and beyond it, Jesus' cold, brutalised corpse, which they hoped to pack with spices to offset the stench of decay that was soon to come.

The unexpected removal of the stone and the shocking absence of the body produced in them no excitement or hope, but only a deeper distress and confusion, evoking floods of tears.

Despite all that Jesus has told them, they saw his body's absence only in terms of removal - resurrection never entered their minds!

Consequently, Jesus' appearance to them in the garden was so overwhelming that they couldn't take it in; Matthew records that they returned to the apostles in 'fear and joy', but when they told them what had happened, they were greeted with ridicule: *'these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them'* (the Greek word translated *'idle tale'* means, *'that which is totally devoid of anything worthwhile, idle talk, nonsense, humbug'*).

Nevertheless, an ember of hope was fanned. Peter and another disciple ran to the tomb and indeed found it empty, except for the linen cloths in which Jesus' body had been wrapped. So:

- the women didn't believe; *and*
- the apostles didn't believe.

No-one believed that Jesus had risen: *'they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead'* - they simply didn't know what had happened!

The only one who is said to have 'believed' did not believe that Jesus was *risen*; he only believed the women's testimony that *the tomb was empty!*

That all changed when Jesus suddenly appeared (as a physical human being) to the disciples, who were assembled - for security reasons - in a closed room. It's difficult to imagine the magnitude of their emotional transformation when Jesus appeared before them - one moment they were in a state of grief, depression, fear and confusion; in the next they were in a state of 'stunned jubilation' as they realised that the impossible had really happened!

But Thomas wasn't with them.

Later, when Thomas returned and they told him that Jesus truly had *risen* - that they had seen and touched him - and although they were jubilant and overwhelmed by what had happened, Thomas refused to believe them.

Thomas knew that the consequences of a Jesus risen from the dead are without parallel; he refused to commit his life's hopes and identity to a person - no matter how impressive they were in life - purely on

the basis of others' say so. He wasn't a person who would allow himself to be swept up by a euphoria when he wasn't able to identify with its basis.

It may have been that, in the wake of his grief and shattered hopes, he wouldn't risk having his hopes raised once more - only to have them devastated once again. The pain would be too much to bear.

It must have been a stressful week! The disciples were dealing with the overwhelming impact of a bodily-resurrected Jesus, whereas Thomas stubbornly refused to join them until he was confronted personally with the 'impossibility' of a risen Jesus.

When Jesus appeared to him, the power of Thomas'



stubbornness was suddenly released in an eruption in an epiphany of truth and belief as he professed the risen Jesus

before him to be, *'my Lord and my God!'*

Why is the 'doubting' moniker given only to Thomas? Why is he rebuked by Jesus when the others - none of whom believed that Jesus would rise - were not?

Although the 'doubting' moniker came from preachers and not from the Scriptures, Jesus chided Thomas because he disbelieved, not only Jesus, but also the unanimous testimony of the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead - just as He said he would. Life would never be the same again.

Probably because we know that a risen Jesus changes everything, most people avoid considering the question, *'Did Jesus actually rise from the dead?'*

Even if it's the ultimate 'inconvenient truth', we must decide - is it really true? I wish that more people were like Thomas, who appreciated the unparalleled significance of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Thomas wouldn't commit himself until he was convinced of the reality of Jesus' resurrection. Nor should we! There's



no 'blind faith' here! We're challenged to consider the evidence!

What about you? As you consider the evidence before you, ask yourself, 'Are the Gospel accounts fabrications or are they eye-witness testimony?' 'Is Jesus' resurrection the greatest hoax, or the greatest event, in history?'

Could Jesus truly be - as Thomas so shockingly concluded - '[our] Lord and [our] God'?

## *Chaplain Un Tay*

'Captain Xu' is no stranger to Sydney MtS. Chaplain Jong Jo and I first met him when he visited our Mission in mid-2012 at our previous premises. Over the past 18 months he visited us regularly before he signed off in November 2013.



Being a Christian, we spent much time encouraging one another and discussed many matters pertaining to his work, family, the Scriptures and our faith during that period.

After 3 months holiday, he signed on again in February 2014 - this time on board a new vessel. As a Christian, 'Captain Xu' actively shares his faith with his crew. In fact, recently he shared with me that three of his crewmembers have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ through his witness. He is also a keen Bible student. He has read the Bible cover-to-cover a few times and studies it thoroughly. He is writing a summary of Christian Beliefs that he can share with his crew.

Last year we gave him some good Bible Commentaries and books on Christian doctrine to build up his faith. He is very appreciative of our fellowship and follow-up and always looks forward to meeting up with us in Sydney.

When I met him again in March, I encouraged him to write his testimony for the Chinese 'Life Magazine', which has a circulation of 13,000 copies in Sydney and 25,000 copies Australia-wide. After much encouragement, 'Captain Xu' finally penned his testimony, which is published in the May edition of 'Life Magazine'.

Recently, his vessel called in again at Port Botany. We met up again and went to a friend's home for dinner. We had a great time of fellowship and

mutual encouragement. Please continue to pray for 'Captain Xu' as he seeks to be a faithful disciple and witness for our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for his family in Singapore and for safe voyages. We thank and give glory to God that our crew-visiting on board is indeed bearing fruit!

## **Cruise Season Over**

Over the cruise season in Sydney I have visited many crews on board various cruise vessels berthed at the Overseas Passenger Terminal and at White Bay. Sadly, it seems that more than 90 per cent of the crew have not heard of the Mission to Seafarers and that those who have heard don't know much about us. Unfortunately many of them don't know that we are only 10 mins away from the OPT.

When I go on board visiting, I try very hard to promote our Mission and invite the seafarers to visit us. In spite of my efforts, only a handful of crew actually visit our Mission. In the next Cruise season, I hope to be able to spend more time crew-visiting and to invite them to visit us regularly.

One very encouraging matter when I go on board visiting crew on cruise vessels is that I have many opportunities to interact with the passengers as well as the crew. On one of my visits, as I was walking past the dining area, a passenger identified me as Port Chaplain and asked, "*Are you coming with us? Easter is coming and we need someone to conduct the services on board.*" Although I wasn't going with them, I took the opportunity to share who we are and what we are doing as a Mission.

Pray that we may have more opportunities and easy access to go on board.

Thank you for your prayers and partnership in spreading the gospel.

## *Jack Starmans*



As MtS Chaplains, we deal with seafarers, stevedores (wharfies), paying passengers, and other assorted people connected with seafaring. But sometimes our connections are out of the ordinary. For example, last year we met 'M', who runs one of the local restaurants on

Hickson Road. We told him he could come and play table tennis anytime he liked - which he did!

One night, after playing table tennis, he sat down at reception for a rest. We began talking and he asked me about the Mission. I explained how it began and that the main reason for our existence is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. I was then able to explain the Gospel to 'M'. He took a Bible, and 'The Gift of God' booklet, and said that he would read them. Since then, every time I saw him, we'd catch up.

Last week, I met 'M' in a shop near the Mission. After talking about his family, who were holidaying overseas, I asked him if he'd given more thought to the Gospel. He said that he and his mates had joined a congregation near his home. Great news!

Ian once told me that we were links in a chain. 'M's friends had probably been praying for him; I was able to tell him the Gospel. But of course God has been working in his life to bring the growth. Some plant, others water, and some reap the harvest. God is so kind to use us in his vineyard!

## *Are you on Email?*

If you have an email address, would you prefer to receive 'The Master's Mariner' by email?

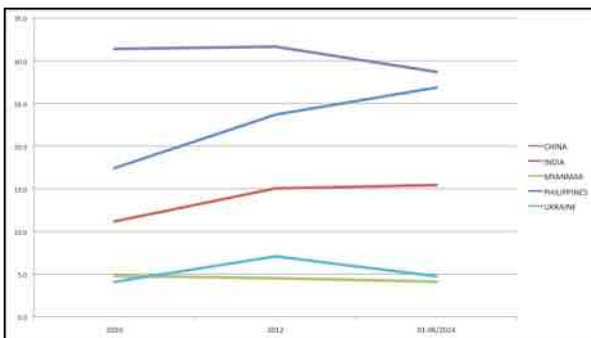
If you would like to do so, please email us at 'sydney@mts.org.au' or flyingangelsydney@gmail with your name and suburb so that we might transfer your details onto a new email roll. Emailing will save us quite a lot of time and money!

## *Some Statistics*

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014, we have:

- visited crew on **240** vessels;
- provided **724** free return trips to Port Botany;
- welcomed **3,612** seafarers to our Centre.

Over the years, we have seen many changes in the ethnic composition of crews arriving in Sydney. Recently, we have seen many more Chinese seafarers coming to The Mission (see below).



Part of the reason for the increase appears to be due to the fact that most Chinese-crewed vessels sail directly from China to Sydney, so that all the crew are very keen to enjoy some shore leave. Certainly, Chinese crews depart their vessels 'en masse'! They also perceive Sydney as providing cheaper shopping than Melbourne or Brisbane, so they are equally as keen to 'buy up big' while they're here.

We have catered for this increase by stocking our shop with Australian-made Doonas and health products - at prices that undercut Chinatown! (We were actually abused by a Chinese 'souvenir-shop' owner because of our low prices! We took it as a compliment!)

Filipinos may arrive in Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne and proceed to their next East Coast port fairly quickly. Although the crew may get shore leave during their time on the East Coast, this is usually spread between the three Ports, so that only some of the crew will come to our Centre during their time in Port. This is why we are so keen to visit them on board their vessels.

## *Our Nomination!*

Last year we were (for the third time) nominated for the International Seafarers' Welfare Assistance Network (ISWAN) Award of 'Seafarer Centre of the Year'. These nominations mean a great deal to us because the nominations must come from seafarers. We don't know who nominated us, but it is a great compliment to be so highly regarded by the seafarers to whom we minister.

Although we weren't short-listed this year, it is still very heartening to know that our seafarers think that we would have been worthy winners!

This year the Winner was The Mission to Seafarers Centre in Fremantle, W.A. and we offer them our heartiest congratulations!

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***Donations over \$2 to the Welfare Fund are tax-deductible.***

*‘For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.’ Ephesians 2:8,9.*