

# Liberated by Surrender



**Rev. Koonae A. Lee**

When asked to write this article, I realized, upon deep reflection, that for me "my call" was not an 'Aldersgate' encounter, but a series of events which evolved into my absolute and final surrender to God. It was New Year's Eve, 1999, at beautiful, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Everybody seemed to be uneasy as the year 2000 was swiftly approaching. Many real and potential complications were present, including the Millennial Computer Applications. Hotels supplied each guest with a flashlight, two bottles of water, and a series of printed warnings.

At that time, I had been in ministry for about seven years as a cross-cultural pastor. I was ecstatic to be serving the Lord in that capacity. Earlier, on thanksgiving weekend, I heard that the Bishop wanted to appoint me to a Korean church in New York City, and I was unable to share this information with anyone but God. What should I do? My heart was in turmoil. I had so many mixed feeling. Should I say yes? no?

Typically, on New Year's Eve, I would watch on TV, as the ball dropped in Times Square. This year, however, at the stroke of midnight, I ran out onto the beach under the full moon, jointly, God and me. I ran as fast as I could, and when I finally got tired, I slowed down and asked God to help me decide what direction I should take. That deep internal struggle went on from darkness to light. I do not know how long I was there, on that beach, but all of sudden, I noticed the sky was getting lighter. It was a beautiful, pinkish color and I realized the rising sun was shedding its glorious light upon the day and upon me! Tears rolled uncontrollably down my cheeks. I found myself lying prostrate on the beach, not caring who was watching. I was overcome by alternating waves of guilt and grace; humility and joy. Finally I said, "Here I am Lord! Take me. I will do whatever you want me to do and I will go wherever you lead me." Like Jonah, I had been running away and like Jonah, I resolved to obey the will of the Lord and go to whatever Nineveh, the assignment—with conviction and resolution. From that moment forward, the future opened for

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me with the eyes of faith, not eyes of fear. What a Freedom I have been given by grace, by surrender!

My surrender to God was truly dramatic. As I write it, I am reminded of another extraordinary Divine event that I call "1-2-3" all of which occurred years before my 'surrender' story.

I have raised twin sons. They were born and right after the delivery, I had a major complication, I had to receive a significant amount of blood—almost filling my entire body. I lay unconscious and near death for more than twenty-four hours. My system was shutting down one organ at a time. I had not discharged any urine for twenty-four hours, and the bleeding would not stop.

My doctor, who was the dean of Obstetrics at Cornell Medical School, told my husband, Sam, that the only thing remaining for them to do, that had not already been done, was to perform emergency surgery, a hysterectomy. Even that operation would not guarantee my life. Sam begged the doctor: "Koonae has a very profound faith. She is a pastor's kid (P.K.) please wait a few minutes for her pastor to come and pray for her." Sam immediately called the pastor as well as people who had my blood type. About twenty people came and prayed in a big circle in the hospital lobby at 3 a.m. The pastor also came to my bedside and, according to Sam, yelled and pleaded with God for my life.

Meanwhile, I was having a glorious, celestial experience. My body felt as light as a feather. I drifted upward, as though a cloud had lifted me. I felt as if I were in paradise, with a chorus of heavenly angels. Then something bright, as bright as a diamond shone in front of me. As it came closer and closer, I realized it was a blazing cross. I reached out and almost touched it. As it entered my heart, I cried: "Amen! Halleluiaah!" As I opened my eyes, I saw my husband, Sam, my pastor, Rev. Chang, the doctors, and the nurses, around my bed.

To make a long story short, I was in a wheelchair at grand rounds the following morning. Medical debates went on and on: "she should not be here, alive! According to the medical books, it is a fatal case. Then why is she here with us"? They finally concluded by saying: "It is a Miracle of God. We, as doctors, can do so much with medical

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technology. God is in control of all Healing. Praise the Lord!"

See! I was holistically healed and liberated! No longer was I confined in a box of my own ideas of serving God. In humble adoration, I sang unto the Lord in newness:

"All to Jesus I surrender; humbly at his feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;

Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender, now I feel the sacred flame.

Wholly thine; let me feel the Holy Spirit,

Truly know that thou are mine.

All to Jesus I surrender; now I feel the sacred flame.

O the joy of full salvation!

Glory, glory, to his name"

(Words by J.W. Van Deventer-UM Hymn 354 vs. 2, 3, and 5)

Like Abraham, I have to climb up to the supreme hill of surrender. All others are spectators! Lord Have your way in me!