

## **The Personal Story of Dr. Kyung Chul Kam (Chancellor, UAUT/UATC)**

### **Part 3: The Calling**

But now, I the so-called "First Reserve Elder" have a junior. The "Second Reserve Elder" has been born. It is none other than CEO Chairman Se Geun Jang of "Damteo", who currently serves as Chairman of the Presbyterian Men's Association.

During a time when the winds of life grew fierce and the rain fell heavily, I lost many things—but I gained even more. In the aftermath of the bankruptcy, I endured a year of severe hardship. That year became a season of refinement for me. Without it, I would not be standing where I am today. It was in the midst of that crisis that I truly encountered God and even earned the nickname "Reserve Elder." In every sense, the crisis turned out to be a blessing.

### **A Young Entrepreneur**

After graduating from university and working for a while, I took the leap and started my own business. Back then, there were no such things as government grants for young entrepreneurs like there are today. These days, government offers various initiatives to encourage youth entrepreneurship training programs, space support, marketing assistance, business funding, management coaching, and market access, to name a few. And in this internet age, it's easy to find and apply for these programs through online portals.

Compared to my youth, it feels like a completely different world. After a short stint in the corporate world following graduation, I jumped straight into starting a business. Since concepts like "startup support grants" didn't even exist at the time, I looked for something I could do with minimal capital and minimal staff. That led me to a small-scale outdoor advertising business producing neon signs and shop signage. I named the company "Dongil Advertising," which carried a piece of my dream.

Though I carried the title of president, I did everything myself. Whenever a job came in, I traveled anywhere across the country to handle installations. About six

or seven years into the business, I realized I needed to shift my target clientele to secure more substantial clients.

In order for the business to grow, I had to land bigger contracts. That meant I had to become my own head of sales. I started visiting public relations managers at large corporations like Daewoo and Lucky-Goldstar (now LG) every day. My only weapon was persistence. Day after day, I knocked on their doors. After a couple of months, they finally began to acknowledge me, and soon after, entrusted me with small projects.

Outdoor advertising is one of the oldest forms of advertising. It includes signs, banners, posters, neon lights on the streets, roadside billboards along expressways, subway ads, and even airport ads. The main goal is to repeatedly expose passersby to the same advertisement. In Korea, outdoor advertising began to take off in the 1970s, especially with the opening of the 'Gyeongbu'(Seoul-Busan) Expressway, which allowed for the construction of roadside billboards. In 1977 alone, over 150 of these were erected. By the time I was in my mid-30s, I had even begun supplying advertising services to major conglomerates. Across the country, there were more than 20,000 advertising companies, ranging from tiny firms to large corporations.

Within just six or seven years of starting my company, it had grown to rank among the top 100 in the outdoor advertising industry. People often ask me the secret to my success. My answer is always the same: ultimately, the secret lies in God's help. But I know that such an answer may only make sense among fellow believers. So I also tried to identify more objective factors both internal and external.

Each person is born with a certain gift. Whether we realize it or not, God gives each of us talents. What was mine? Then and now, I've had the ability to see what others don't. People around me have often affirmed this. In other words, God gave me creative insight. He gave me the foresight to anticipate what lay ahead. And beyond that, He gave me the drive to turn vision into reality. It took me years to fully understand that all of this was nothing less than the grace of God.

(To be continued...)