

In honor of my parents

[Cadet Joanna Wang](#)
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Silver Star Banquet address

By Joanna Wang, Cadet –

Fearing the Lord, walking in obedience, loving him, and serving him: these are words that describe my parents. They would be the first to tell you that they have not done these things perfectly, but they have sought to love and please the Lord every day of their lives.

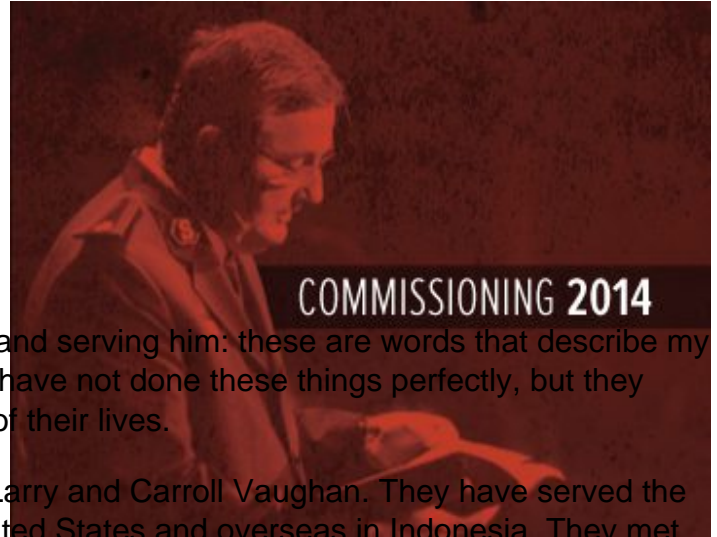
I have been blessed to grow up as the daughter of Larry and Carroll Vaughan. They have served the Lord together for over 42 years, both here in the United States and overseas in Indonesia. They met in seminary and before they even talked to one another, God told them each separately that they were going to get married. Can you imagine that? This was probably quite scary to them, but they were both people who trusted the Lord and they followed him down that path. Life has not been easy for them, but Larry and Carroll just celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. I praise the Lord for this because they have been faithful to the Lord, to one another and their family, and to the ministry that God has called them to.

My parents have been blessed with four children—three girls and a boy, I'm the youngest—and 15 grandchildren. They love all of us with a love that is deep, but the love that they have for their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is even deeper.

There are no perfect words that could adequately express all the ways that my parents have loved and supported me throughout my life, but I would like to share a couple of stories with you. One of the most memorable experiences with my mom happened when I was in high school and I was struggling with comparing myself to my best friend. I talked to my mom about how I was feeling one day and she wisely told me about a time when she was in college and she was feeling the same kinds of things. She was a new Christian at that time, and she was really struggling with comparing herself, and God revealed to her the fact that he had made her intentionally exactly the way that she was and he loved her with a love that she could never comprehend. God had made her for a purpose and he wanted her to accept and receive that love.

The Lord used this conversation to speak to my heart as I realized that God had also made me the way he wanted me to be. Of course, there were things in me that he wanted to mold and change, and thankfully he's still doing that work, but in his love he created me and I don't need to try to be someone else. I am so blessed and thankful that I was able to learn this truth from such a beautiful

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woman of God. There are many more stories that I could share about my mom and how she has shown me the love of Christ.

There are also many stories that I could share about my dad, but I am going to just tell you one. When I was a senior in high school, my dad drove me several hours away from our home to an all-state band audition. I was really nervous, and as we sat and talked, my dad told me something that I would never forget. He said, "I want you to know that it really doesn't matter how you do because I am already so proud of you. If you get into this band, it's just the icing on the cake. You've already done all that you need to do."

This really touched me because at that moment I was freed to just play the flute and see what happened. Yes, I was still nervous when I got there and performed, but I knew that my dad was already proud of me and that I did not have to do anything else to make him love me more than he already did. Years later, I realized that this love that my dad had for me was an earthly example of the incomparable love that my heavenly father has for me.

Psalm 145:3-4 says, "*Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.*" These verses describe the ways that I have been blessed by growing up with parents who have taught me so much about God. They have taught me how to study his Word and how to know and love Christ more. They have taught me how to cry out to God when times are difficult and to also cry out to him when things are great. What a godly heritage this has been for me!

I am incredibly blessed by their faith and by their love for the Lord and for others. This love for others has been shown to people in many different parts of the world, especially in Indonesia. God called them to serve his people and they have done so tirelessly for so many years. They have faced many difficulties and have sacrificed many things, but they have kept their eyes on Jesus. They have witnessed to and served Muslims, Hindus, animists, atheists, and people of other beliefs, and they have done so with the love of Christ. They are an inspiration to me and to so many as they continue to walk in obedience to the Lord, who is the love of their lives. They are truly the most loving, godly, faithful people that I know and I am blessed to know and to love them.

As I honor them today as my Silver Star recipients, I know that each Disciple of the Cross has many stories to tell about all who have ministered to them in countless ways. Each of you sitting in this room has inspired, encouraged, loved, taught, and blessed your Disciple of the Cross in many ways and we are so thankful for you and are honored and privileged to show our love and deep gratitude for you today. Thank you for letting God work in and through you as you have poured your lives into us. We love you.