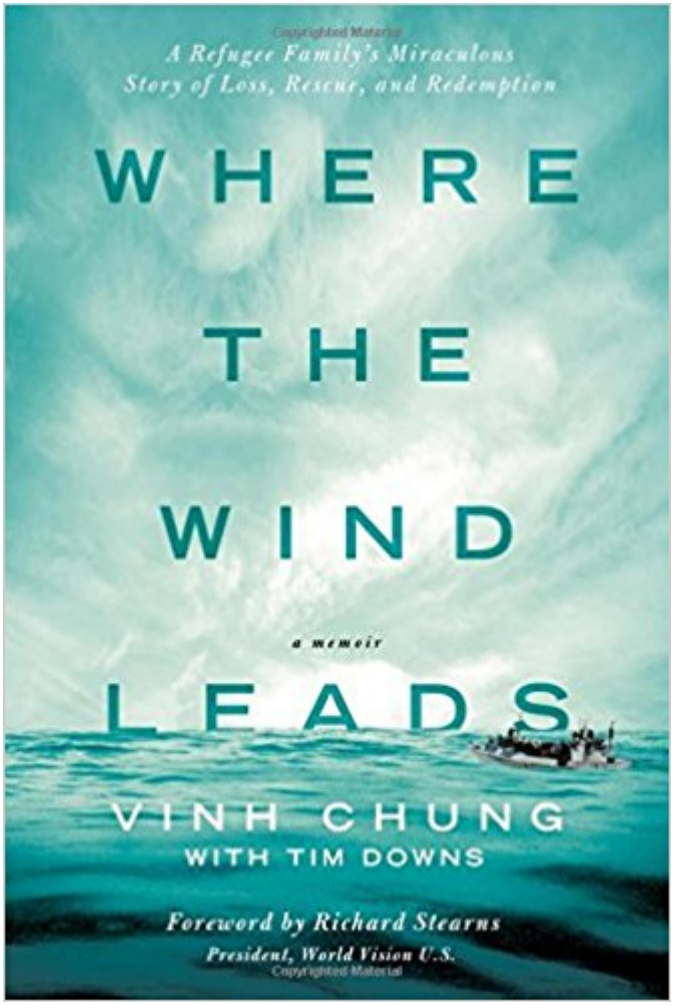
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Where The Wind Leads: A Refugee Family's Miraculous Story Of Loss, Rescue, And Redemption



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Synopsis

Back Cover:Ã¢â ¬Å“The account of Dr. Chung and hisfamily will inspire you to believe in second chances and miracles and the Godwho gives them both.Ã¢â ¬Â•-Max Lucado, New York Times best-selling authorMy name is Vinh Chung.This is a story that spans twocontinents, ten decades, and eleven thousand miles.When I was three and a half yearsold, my family was forced to flee Vietnam in June 1979, a place we had neverheard of somewhere in the heartland of America.Several weeks later my family layhalf-dead from dehydration in a derelict fishing boat jammed with ninety-threerefugees lost in the middle of the South China Sea. We arrived in the UnitedStates with nothing but the clothes on our backs and unable to speak a singleword of English.Today my family holds twenty-oneuniversity degrees.How wegot from there to here is quite a story.Wherethe Wind Leads is the remarkable account of Vinh Chung and his refugeefamilyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s daring escape from communist oppression for the chance of a betterlife in America. ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a story of personal sacrifice, redemption, enduranceagainst almost insurmountable odds, and what it truly means to be American.All author royalties from the saleof this book will go to benefit World Vision.Flap Copy:Vinh Chung was born in SouthVietnam, just eight months after it fell to the communists in 1975. His familywas wealthy, controlling a rice-milling empire worth millions; but withinmonths of the communist takeover, the Chungs lost everything and were reducedto abject poverty.Knowing that their children wouldhave no future under the new government, the Chungs decided to flee thecountry. In 1979, they joined the legendary Ã¢â ¬Å“boat peopleÃ¢â ¬Â• and sailed into theSouth China Sea, despite knowing that an estimated two hundred thousand oftheir countrymen had already perished at the hands of brutal pirates andviolent seas.Wherethe Wind Leads follows Vinh Chung and his family on their desperate journeyfrom pre-war Vietnam, through pirate attacks on a lawless sea, to a miraculous rescue and a new homein the unlikely town of Fort Smith, Arkansas. There Vinh struggled againstpoverty, discrimination, and a bewildering language barrierÃ¢â ¬â ¢yet still managedto graduate from Harvard Medical School.Wherethe Wind Leads is VinhÃ¢â ¬â„¢s tribute to the courage and sacrifice of hisparents, a testimony to his familyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s faith, and a reminder to people everywherethat the American dream, while still possible, carries with it a greaterresponsibility.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vinh ChungÃ Â graduated Harvard magna cum laude with a BA in biology and attended Harvard Medical School for his MD. Dr. Chung also studied at the University of Sydney as a Fulbright Scholar and completed a masters of pharmaceutical sciences. He completed his dermatology residency at Emory University, where he served as chief resident. He currently serves on World Vision’s National Leadership Council. Dr. Chung and his wife Leisle have three children and run a successful private practice.Tim Downs is the author of nine novels including the Christy Award-winning PlagueMaker and the highly acclaimed series of Bug Man novels. Tim lives in North Carolina with his wife Joy. They have three grown children.

ReviewWhere the Wind Leads, by Vinh Chung with Tim Downs.Most of the reviews of this book, at and elsewhere, seem to be addressed to a religious audience. The book deserves a wider audience -- among those more inclined toward the secular, toward humanism, toward science, and especially those with an interest in sociology.There is nothing in the book that should put such readers off. On the first page of the Forward, written by Richard Stearns, the President of World Vision U. S., Stearns writes:"All along the way good people, and many good Christians, intervened with a helping hand."A father is frantically running, carrying his ten-year old son, who is near death, to a hospital in a strange land. A woman stops him -- a stranger. She speaks French, which he can’t understand. She hands him a few bills and he is able to take a cab to the hospital. Leaving the hospital, again carrying his weak son, another stranger hands him $5, and he is able to take a cab back to the refugee camp. A stranger tucks a $100 bill into the shirt pocket of a three-and-a-half year old refugee boy who is rushing through the San Francisco airport with his family, and that $100 enables the Chung family to buy food in their new home in America. We know nothing about the religious perspectives of these strangers. We do know that they were good, decent, humane. And there is no

religious test that people must pass before they may pay taxes to support programs such as food stamps, subsidized housing, and free school lunches -- programs that helped to save the Chung family.Anyone who has an interest in "the boat people" who fled Vietnam after South Vietnam fell to the communists in 1975 will find this book enlightening. Who were they? Why did they leave Vietnam? How did they get to the United States? And how did things go for them here in America?The Chung family is Chinese, with roots in Vietnam going back several generations. They owned one of the largest businesses in the Mekong Delta -- a multi-million dollar enterprise.When the communists took over in 1975, they confiscated the Chung business, and the Chung home. Over the course of the next few years the Chung's reached the conclusion that, if they remained in Vietnam, they would spend the remainder of their lives in poverty. They made meticulous plans to escape, and departed their community of Soc Trang a few at a time, so as not to attract attention. They went to Ca Mau, where they boarded a boat that the Chung's had bought -- a boat large enough for their extended family, and 16 other families -- a total of 290. They left in June, 1979, just as the typhoon season was beginning, intent on crossing the pirate-infested South China Sea, with food and fuel for only a few days.On the second day at sea, pirates boarded their ship. After robbing them the pirates rammed their ship, hoping to sink it and drown them all.On the third day they reached Malaysia. They beached their boat and scuttled it in hopes of not being turned away. When they jumped from the ship into the sea on the Malaysian coast they left behind almost everything, including their shoes. Malay military took them into custody, and marched them for five days from one sandy beach to another. Vinh describes how his nine-year-old sister Yen's tender feet were scorched by the hot sand. During this march their mother (her eight children ranged in age from 12 to twin boys 18 months old) had a miscarriage and was hospitalized for nine days. The family did not know where she was, and she did not know where her family was. She was almost shipped off to France without her family; her family was almost shipped "to an island refugee camp" without her. She was reunited with her family less than an hour before they were removed from Malaysia.The way they were removed from Malaysia is one of the most awful parts of their experience. The 290 of them were divided and put in four small boats, and were told that they would be towed to a refugee island, a couple hours away. Instead, they were towed out to the middle of the South China Sea -- 20 hours -- and cut loose; abandoned to die. Within hours each boat had drifted out of sight of the others.On the fourth day of being adrift, they had their second encounter with pirates. This time the pirates didn't try to rob them -- perhaps the pirates knew that they had already been totally stripped of anything of value. The pirates simply tried to overturn the boat and drown them. Two boats were working in tandem, with a rope stretched between them. The rope broke, and the engine on one of

the boats stalled. That is all that saved them.They drifted in the South China Sea for six days, under an unrelenting sun, without food or water, and had essentially given up and were waiting to die, when they were rescued by the Seasweep, a ship sponsored by World Vision.After 100 days in a refugee camp in Singapore, they at last learned that they had a sponsor -- a small Lutheran Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas.Without knowing a word of English, and facing ethnic hostility, they began to make a new life in Fort Smith, with the help of local churches and government programs designed to assist impoverished families. For a while four of the brothers had no assigned place to sleep -- it was first come, first served. After the laundry was done, pants went into one hopper, shirts into another, and again it was first come, first served, as the eight sons looked not for what was theirs, but for what fit. Vinh, the author, tells us that none of them ever said, "That belongs to me." When their father, Thanh, decided that they should open a restaurant, the older children dropped out of college for five years and all of the family worked in the restaurant without pay.This family, working together, was able to achieve "the American dream." The children hold 21 degrees, including five master degrees and five doctorates. Vinh, the author of Where the Wind Leads, is a dermatologist. Yen, the nine-year old girl who had a knife held to her throat by a pirate in the South China Sea, is an ultrasonographer. Another is in science management; another a senior systems engineer; the twin boys, who at 18 months old had been dropped, kicking and screaming, into pillow cases so they could be hoisted aboard the Seasweep, are both optometrists; another is a family physician; another a dentist.As other reviewers had said, this is a compelling read. Vinh has a great sense of humor, the book is very well written, and while the family’s faith is evident, there is no attempt to impose it on others.

I loved this book.Where the Wind Leads is the story of a family forced out of Vietnam in the aftermath of the Vietnam war. The first part of the book chronicles the life they abandoned when they fled and their harrowing journey as unwanted "boat people" in desperate search of a place to land.Then the story shifts. They are welcomed to a small town in Arkansas, and face the challenge of learning an entirely new culture. This is an especially strong section, as the author does a great job of detailing small cultural differences and how they add up to make communication and integration unexpectedly difficult.Then my favorite part is where he shares about being a nerdy high school kid trying to connect with a girl he’s attracted to. These scenes are just so sweet and hapless, and they had me cheering for him and laughing at the same time. Also, they provide a nice balance to the intensity of the first part of the book. It was nice to see a child who almost didn’t survive wrestling with everyday questions about what to say to a girl.The back cover of this book

calls it "a story of personal sacrifice, redemption, endurance against almost insurmountable odds, and what it truly means to be American." Often, cover copy is hyperbole, but in this case the book more than delivers. I'm still thinking about this story days after turning the last page. Highly recommend.Disclosure: I received this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

This is a strong and moving book. It is well written and has earned its 5 stars. It is the story of family---more so than any book I have ever read. Vinh has 10 siblings and Is blessed with a mom and dad who always put the children first. After the Americans pulled out of South Vietnam the communist from the North occupied. 95 members of one family fled the brutality of their enemy. They endured inhumane conditions as they searched for a country that would allow them to enter. This is a vivid account of what can happen to refugees who try to escape to safety. They were picked up and saved from the South China Sea ---when all were near death from lack of water and food. Even in America the family suffered from Ill treatment, discrimination, poverty and lack of language skills, but they made it. America did not make it easy for them but only here could they have accomplish the same degree of success. This book is a tribute to hard work, family and American freedom. The author remembers little of the brutal escape to freedom because he was only three years old. However, as an adult I am compelled to point out his life achievements. Vinh Chung graduated Harvard magna cum lauds and graduated from HarvardMedical School, He studied at University of Sydney as a Fulbright Scholar and completed a master of pharmaceutical science. He also holds a master of theology from the University of Edinburg. Wow. Give a guy a little freedom and see him fly!!!

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