



Y's Men International
Y Service Clubs International

YMI WORLD

“To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right”

Only for private distribution to members



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Editor's Page

Dear readers,

Yet another International Convention – the 73rd in the 96-year history of our Movement – has been successfully held, in Yeosu, Korea. It was attended by a record number of Y's Men and Women – 3,000 was the figure we heard last. Several of us were there to enjoy the carnival-like atmosphere for four days. Memories linger about the meticulous planning and impeccable execution backed by technology and supported by an army of volunteers. The hospitality extended to the visitors by Y's Men of Korea hosts is unparalleled in my experience.



This issue of *YMI World* attempts to capture some of those moments through the lens of members who were there. Apart from those images, we carry several bits and pieces of information that were presented either at the International Council Meeting or at the International Convention. Jennifer Cameron's paper on Y's Menettes, presented at the Forum meeting during the Convention, leads this issue.

Silvy de Croci responded to our request to pen a special essay on "International Peace Day, United Nations and YMI Membership" to bring into focus our responsibility and duty as an international organisation, being a part of the UN network through our Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC.

"Towards 2022" has been a constant theme for discussion over these years. And, now, as we approach the centenary year in 2022, it is time to take a realistic look at the goal and plan that we had envisaged in 2010 in Yokohama. To help us in that direction, we asked Past International President Isaac Palathinkal to introspect on what hampers our growth. He has done a candid piece, which, we hope, will motivate the leadership to take appropriate action.

Cover picture: The unveiling of the 'Big Y' at the Municipal Park in central Yeosu, Korea to commemorate the 73rd International Convention. The Big-Y has eight parts, each representing an Area of YMI and it stands for the first letters in YMI, Yeosu and the theme, "Yes, we can change."

Y's Men International
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YMI's historical ties with YMCA was reinforced through a series of actions recently – one is the selection of a career YMCA man as our next International Secretary General. The other is the presence of several YMI members at the YMCA's World Council in Chiang Mai and, in reciprocity, the presence of nearly 30 YMCA secretaries led by their new Secretary General Carlos Sanvee at IC 2018. We think that these will further strengthen our ties and help us build the Movement, especially in those parts of the world where we do not have a presence and the YMCA does.

Just in case you are wondering why we have Nelson Mandela's autobiography featured in this issue's book section, let me hasten to add that I am one of his fans. Some have termed him the "Mahatma Gandhi of the latter twentieth century." That he has been a beacon of hope for many in the human rights movement the world over, there is little doubt. The world celebrated his 100th birth anniversary on 18 July this year and we join the many millions to pay respects to this *mahatma* (great soul).

All these have made this issue of *YMI World* a thicker one than the usual. We hope you enjoy reading it as much we enjoyed putting it together.

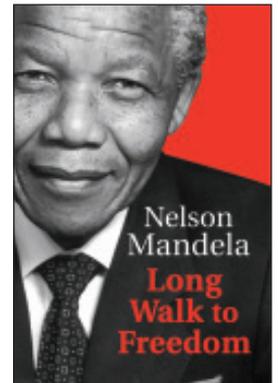
Y'sly yours,

Koshy Mathew

FROM MY BOOKSHELF

Long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela; published by Macdonald Purnell (PTY) Ltd, Randburg, South Africa.

Nelson Mandela is one of the great moral and political leaders of our time: an international hero whose lifelong dedication to the fight against racial oppression in South Africa won him the Nobel Peace Prize and the presidency of his country. Since his triumphant release in 1990 from more than a quarter-century of imprisonment, Mandela has been at the centre of the most compelling and inspiring political drama in the world. As president of the African National Congress and head of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement, he was instrumental in moving the nation toward multiracial government and majority rule. He is revered everywhere as a vital force in the fight for human rights and racial equality.



Long Walk To Freedom is his moving and exhilarating autobiography, destined to take its place among the finest memoirs of history's greatest figures. Here for the first time, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela tells the extraordinary story of his life - an epic of struggle, setback, renewed hope, and ultimate triumph.

(A Goodreads review).



Y's Men International

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Theme: *Yes, We Can Change!*
Slogan: *Courage to Challenge!*



We Are the Ones That Change the World!

Dear YMI members,

It is a beautiful thing to be able to live in life, meet various people and work together for a common, universal purpose of mankind.

The way to live as Y 's Men is more beautiful and rewarding, though it is different in every way, just as a person lives in the world. We are a family of Y 's Men who warmly embrace people who are in trouble and shed warm tears. Our activities to promote change and growth in our communities and to create a better world are excellent. It is our history today that no one can deny that the Y'sdom has expanded and grown.

Today's change is the day of creation that begins the new history of Y's Men.

A better world that we have sought can be achieved through faithful practicing of the Y's Men's mission. To this end, all our members must be leaders of true service and fellowship who are guided by universal principles and shared values that are expressed as the noble traits of human nature as teachings of Jesus Christ.

Our activity is not to reflect on personal or political interests, but to create a better world with greater concern for humanity, regardless of race, religion, or any other area of life. We must have a comprehensive leadership that respects the inherent value of everyone.

I want to make our activities more valuable with more changes and make our activities more enjoyable with more participation. So, I decided on the theme during my term as '**Yes, We Can Change!**'. I also set my slogan as "**Courage to Challenge**" It is my hope that every one of you to make a sincere effort to change your club culture towards growth and development with courage to change.

I believe that the servant leadership we seek will play a pivotal role in transforming global ethics in the future. I am also convinced that not only can we change the clubs we belong to, but we can also change communities, countries, and the world with sustainable solutions.

Today, you are true Y's Men who serve without light, without a name. May God bless you and your club.

Yours sincerely,

Moon Sang Bong
International President 2018/19

Service Club in partnership with the YMCA
NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations



New International Secretary General for YMI

Jose Varghese from India has been selected as the incoming International Secretary General (ISG) of Y's Men International after the International Council unanimously approved the recommendation by the Personnel Committee to appoint him to this important position in our Movement.

Jose will assume this position from 1 October 2018, replacing Takao Nishimura (Nishi) who will retire at the end of February 2019 after completion of transition work with Jose.

Born in January 1973, Jose did all his schooling and college studies in Kerala, India. He graduated in Sciences with Mathematics as his major from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, and articulated briefly for his Chartered Accountancy training before doing his post-graduate diploma in Ecumenical Youth Work from the National Council of YMCAs of India, Training and Leadership Department, Bangalore, as part of the Professional YMCA Secretaries Certification in 1996-97.

Jose is a career YMCA man having started at the Aluva Camp Centre near his hometown, and then working his way through the Regional YMCA to the National Council of YMCAs of India as its Secretary for Movement Strengthening and Resource Mobilisation. He later joined the Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs as Executive Secretary for Programmes and was based out of Hong Kong, while concurrently holding the position of Advisor to the Secretary General of World Alliance of YMCAs for Global Citizenship and Programmes.

When Jose was selected to the post of ISG, he was Executive Secretary, Leadership Development and Resource Mobilisation at the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva. He is a very committed and skilled person with very long

experience working with YMCA both at local and international levels and also with extensive experience with Y's Men International as a member of international committees.

As he leads the Movement into the milestone year of 2022, Jose believes that the next four years is the time for the final push in preparing for the

great centenary celebrations and building the Movement for the next 100 years. In his acceptance speech at Yeosu, Korea, he said that it will be a unique period for all of us to prepare and motivate members to celebrate our service to the community around the world while rededicating the Movement to its founding mission and bringing organisational and management innovations for increased **relevance, growth, visibility, resources** and **impact**. "These are words that you will hear a lot of times from me. These are our keys to unlocking our future," he concluded.

Jose is married to Manju, a teacher by profession, and they have a 16-year old son reading for his school finals in Cochin, Kerala.

Jose will be based in Chiang Mai, Thailand with oversight of the IHQ in Geneva and is expected to travel widely for the growth of the Movement.



Koshy Mathew

New International Director for Y's Menettes

It was a moving occasion at the recent Annual Australian Regional Meeting for Y Service Club - Women held at the Peter Krenz Leisure Centre in Eaglehawk, when three past International Directors for Y's Menettes installed Jennifer Cameron as the incoming International Director for Y's Menettes.

Past International Directors Pam Crammond (1983-84), Shirley Unmack (1991-93) and Brenda Berry (2000-02) - all from Bendigo Y Service Club - Women were on hand to install Jennifer Cameron (pic on left) as the new International Director 2018-20.



This is the second time Jennifer has taken on this important role as she was International Director in 2003-05. Jennifer's mother, Beryl Jones (Deceased) was also a Past International Director (1979-81).

Jennifer's first duty as ID was to attend the Y's Men's International Council Meeting in Yeosu, South Korea in early August where she represented Y's Menettes from around the world on the Council. This was followed by the Y's Men's International Convention also held in Yeosu.

The Bendigo district has always had a strong Y Service Club history and it is fitting as such that over the past 40 years five members of local clubs have held International Director positions on six separate occasions.



The 2018 Ballantyne Award Winner - Hirotooshi Fujii

PIP Hirotooshi Fujii has been a member of our Movement for more than forty years, joining the Y's Men's Club of Tokyo



Koto in the Japan East Region in March 1976. Consistently involved in the club's activities, PIP Fujii has also been a willing and skilled leader at the various levels of our organisation from club to international.

He was Club President in 1981; Regional Service Director for Community Service in 1987 and District Governor of the Tobu District in 1992. He was the 8th

Regional Director of Japan East in 2004, winning the Best Regional Director Award for his outstanding service. He held the position of Area President of then Area Asia in 2008.

In 2009, PIP Fujii's commitment was fully recognised and cumulated in his election as International President 2010/11. In the year of his presidency, the International Convention was held in Yokohama. PIP Fujii was very involved in the planning of this convention as Host Committee Chair, and with the help of the other dedicated convention workers on his team, the meeting was distinguished as the "Best International Convention of the Year" by the Japanese

Tourist Board.

PIP Fujii chaired the International Convention Committee for 2016. Last year he was a member of both the IC Committee 2018 and the Towards 2022 & Beyond team. We are sure he will continue his service to Y's Men this year with characteristic dedication, thoughtfulness and reliability as part of the IC 2020 and UN Projects Committees.

On a personal and professional level, PIP Fujii's leadership skills have also been evident, starting with his role as Cheer Squad Captain at the Kaisei Junior & Senior High School. In high school, he was also a member of the ice hockey team. After high school, he attended the Keio University in Tokyo. Professionally, he has been responsible for the management of several family businesses, and he is now President of Chuo Systems in Tokyo.

He is married to Shoko with whom he has two daughters (Aya and Yuki) and one son (Yusuke). He is also proud grandfather to three.

When he is not involved at his company, with Y's Men work or with his family, PIP Fujii enjoys golf and tennis with friends.

PIP Fujii deserves recognition for his long and unparalleled devotion to Y's Men International to which he remains a selfless and tireless contributor.

Adapted from the Citation read at the Award-giving ceremony

Profile of a Tireless Community Service Volunteer

Below we reproduce a story, courtesy of the Midland Mirror of 5 May 2018, by Gisele Winton Sarvis, which is a great honour for the Movement. Tim is the only member in the 93-year history of Midland Y's Men's Club to be voted as president twice.

Everybody knows Tim Dunlop in Midland town, Ontario, Canada. This Midland resident has freely donated his personal time through the Midland Y's Men's Club for the better part of 20 years with no signs of slowing down.

Dunlop, 66, served for many years as the chair of the Midland Y's Men's Music Festival and he's helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for the YMCA and other community organizations.

"Both my wife and I are community minded people. It's a good way to give back to the community and we have a lot of fun," said Dunlop.

The club supports the Midland YMCA, Georgian Bay General Hospital, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Wendat Community Programs, Huronia Transition Home, Habitat for Humanity, Community Living Huronia, Camp Kitchikewana and many other causes through a wide variety of fundraising events.

"There's not much we haven't got involved in." Dunlop said he's most proud of the club's work with the music festival,



Tim Dunlop, Midland Y's Men's Club, proves to Bachus, his 12-year-old Jack Russell terrier, that the club formed on 3 December 1925 is as active as ever

now in its 74th year. "I'm not musical but to be witness to the talent we have in our community is very inspiring."

The festival has helped shape the lives of local children who've gone on to become professional musicians. One of the most famous graduates is the late pianist John Arpin, dubbed the Chopin of ragtime. Up to 600 children a year

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Towards Improved Diversity of Y's Menettes' Activity

PAPER PRESENTED AT THE Y'S MENETTES FORUM, IC 2018, YEOSU KOREA

by **Jennifer Cameron, International Director, Y's Menettes**

As we discuss 'Improved diversity of Y's Menettes' activity' we need first to look at who exactly are Y's Menettes and where they fit into Y's Men International today and into the future.



Y's Menettes are the members of Y's Menettes Clubs. Y's Menettes may be wives of Y's Men OR any women who wish to enjoy the fellowship of Y's Menettes Clubs and assist in the projects of Y's Men, the YMCA and the community.

The first Y's Menettes Club was formed in 1924 in Vancouver, Canada. At this time only wives of Y's Men could be a Y's Menette. In the 1970s there was much discussion on the 'Status of Women' and what alternatives existed for women who were not married to Y's Men. For example, if a man left Y's Men or died, did the woman need to leave Y's Menettes? Could a single woman join Y's Menettes?

In 1973 a new Y's Men's Constitution was adopted and it stated: *The membership of each local (Y's Men's) Club may consist of men or women or both. There may be Y's Menettes Clubs consisting of women, to serve as an auxiliary to the local Y's Men's Club.*

The Constitution was positive – women were clearly to be given a choice. A woman could become a Y's Man or a Y's Menette. The wife of a Y's Man was no longer automatically a Y's Menette – she could become a Y's Man herself. Now that membership was not restricted to Y's Men's wives, Y's Menettes Clubs benefitted from the many women who joined.

Today there are Y's Menettes all around the world in a much more structured

organisation. But there are still challenges ahead to make sure all clubs are chartered and aware of their financial obligations. In 1987/88, Y's Men International offered to recognise the Y's Menettes movement as full partners in the Movement. Y's Menettes accepted the offer and voted to contribute each year to a fund to cover Y's Menettes International costs. (In 1987 this was USD 1.00 per member, today it has been raised to just CHF 2.00 per member.) Not a lot to belong to such a great organisation.

On a local front, each Y's Menettes Club will have their own community projects. It may be in conjunction with their Y's Men's Club, the YMCA or their own community project funded and run just by Y's Menettes. This gives the club a feeling of self-worth – that they are doing something worthwhile in their community. It gives an opportunity for members to work together to achieve a positive outcome.

Independent Projects

Did you know that there is a Y's Menettes International Project? This is a two-year project and is funded by Y's Menettes around the world. All clubs are able and urged to donate to this worthwhile cause. The projects usually support women and/or youth and children in many parts of the world. The projects are generally selected from Time of Fast project applications and three choices are given to clubs to vote on.

The 2016-18 project in Siderno, Italy, (see box story on next page) has now been successfully completed and the new project in Tirana, Albania will commence shortly. To vote for this project, a club needed to be chartered and financial – that is having paid their International Dues. With many hundreds of clubs eligible to vote it was very disappointing to hear that only 17

clubs took the opportunity to vote. We need to make sure that this information is getting to the clubs so they can have a say in which projects Y's Menettes will fund.

This comes down to ASDs and RSDs taking their roles seriously and making sure all newsletters and information gets to the clubs. Email has been a great way to contact clubs and, while not all Y's Menettes have email or access to email, it is important that someone in the club with email is responsible for passing information to the club and club members. I realise language can be a barrier in many countries so ASDs and RSDs need to have support to translate information into local languages. If we can get information to all clubs we can grow stronger as an organisation.

Sister Club Programme

Another programme Y's Menettes have is a 'Sister Club Programme' and it is another way of communicating and learning about other clubs. With two clubs corresponding with each other a great connection between clubs can be forged. A Sister Club could be from two different parts of the same region, area or another part of the world. My own club in Australia has four Sister Clubs – two in Canada, one in Japan and one in India. We can exchange bulletins and letters and our club members look forward to hearing what other clubs are doing – their programmes, projects and social events.

It is great to attend an International Convention and meet up with someone from your Sister Club. Again, email is a great way to communicate. Our International Sister Club Co-ordinator, Anne Munro from Canada would love to hear from you so she can pair you up with another Y's Menettes club to the



benefit of both clubs.

Benefits

What can I give to Y's Menettes?

To start with, be involved;

- ◆ attend meetings;
- ◆ be involved in a project;
- ◆ support other members in times of celebration or in sadness;
- ◆ take on a role within your club.

As you grow in Y's Menettes you gain confidence, maybe you can take on a Regional role.

As a wife, mother, woman you take many skills to your Club – use them! Are you a good organiser, a good cook, enjoy corresponding with others? Whatever your skills there is a place for you in a Y's Menettes club.

What do I get out of being a Y's Menette?

Firstly, the fun and fellowship of belonging to a Club...

- ◆ the wonderful friendships forged within the club as well as from other local, regional and international club members;
- ◆ give each other support in times of great gladness as well as times of deep sadness;
- ◆ learn from our guest speakers, our own members and from joining together for a project;
- ◆ satisfaction – we can gain great

The Y's Menettes Project in Siderno, Italy

While not officially a Y's Men TOF project, we would like to take a moment to recognise the YMCA Siderno (Italy) for its project, 'Learn Fast be Smart, Empowering Refugees,' – adopted last year by our Y's Menettes.

This is a great initiative, helping to integrate refugees and foreigners into the local community. Let's appreciate them for taking the first steps, for breaching comfort zones on both sides to offer practical education to immigrants.

In its first few months, this YMCA programme has offered Italian language and cooking classes to approximately 30 people.

Thanks to YMCA Siderno and Y's Menettes!



Source: Facebook page YMI TOF, February 2017

satisfaction from successfully completing a project or raising money for a worthwhile cause;

- ◆ personal growth – as we continue to enjoy our clubs, we gain confidence in our own ability to be part of a vital organisation. We are able to take on roles within our club that a few short years ago we thought we would never be able to do;
- ◆ meeting other Y's Menettes. It may be in your local area or at a Regional, Area or International Convention.

You are here today because you are a

Y's Menette and while you may have come here not knowing many people – after a few days you will go away having made many new friends and will look forward to meeting up with them again in the future. Enjoy being a Y's Menette and encourage others to join you and your club.

The motto of Y's Men International is 'To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right'. If we acknowledge our duties to our own club and to Y's Menettes Internationally we will have a bright and successful organisation that will go on well into the future.

Continued from page 5: Profile of a Tireless Community Service Volunteer

perform in the adjudicated festival and the Y's Men's also offer music scholarships. "We are the envy of the province," said Dunlop.

After its signature event, the No. 2 project for the club is its support for the YMCA. Projects have included funds for the swimming pool. "We want to get the presence back in the YMCA," said Dunlop. To that end, the Y's Men's recently donated \$7,500 for the Youth Night program held on Friday nights, free of charge. "At first we got 20 to 30 kids each week. Now they are close to 300."

Dunlop said he hopes to get more club members present during youth nights in order to show youth how the club provides service to the community.

The annual Bryson McQuirter Golf Tournament raises funds for community projects. One of the club's big projects was a \$50,000 donation over five years to the hospital to buy new beds.

The significant funds raised and donated back to the community is an accomplishment considering the small size

of the service club. At one time the club boasted a membership of 90. It's currently 12.

"We're like every service club, struggling for members," Dunlop said. Anyone is welcome to come out for a Tuesday night casual dinner meeting at the Boathouse Eatery from 6 to 8 p.m., to see if the club is of interest to them. That's how Dunlop got started with the Y's Men's Club. He moved to Midland 20 years ago and became the co-owner/operator of the Investment Planning Council with his wife Marie and was invited to a meeting.

He recently retired and will now devote even more time to his community work.

Dunlop is also a deacon for St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church and a Grand Knight with the Knights of Columbus.

Fellow longtime Y's Men's Club member Alan Condren said Dunlop is an extremely dedicated member of the club and the community. "When the duty roster gets passed around, his name is always on the list. He's not afraid of work. That's for sure."



Y'S YOUTH

International Youth Convocation, 6-12 August

The 17th International Youth Convocation (IYC) was convened at the Chonnam National University, South Korea, not far from Yeosu where the 73rd International Convention (IC2018) of YMI was being held concurrently. There were 75 participants from 28 countries from all Areas of the Movement. The Convocation focussed on the theme "Strong Community – A Better World".

International Youth Representative (IYR) Ricardo Cardenas declared IYC 2018 open. Programme orientation and inputs on YMI were handled by Stephanie Spencer and Sherin Wilson, while Ricardo led the ice-breaking session, Y'slympics.

Fairy tale book project was one of the best sessions at the IYC. Participants discussed fairy tale books in groups and the best story was enacted which helped us improve our communication skills. These books were later collected for donation to kids in Laos through the new YMCA there and Asia Pacific Alliance of YMCAs (APAY).

One session of Y'slympics involved a sports competition with children from a local orphanage. The children were eager to play with us and, at the end, it was hard for some of us to let them go.

There was a special guest lecture by Mr. Nam Boo-Won, General Secretary of APAY, on the relationship that exists between YMCA and YMI.

Our UN Project, 'Say No to Violence' was guided by a staff person from the Handong University, South Korea. We discussed issues and problems faced by young people in each country and they were presented in a report form.

A field trip to Yeosu Tower and Yeosu Museum was enriching. We got to know about the history of Yeosu and enjoyed the famous Yeosu cable car ride. We also visited the Yeosu Expo venue where we participated in the opening ceremony of the International Convention of YMI as flag bearers.

Members of the International Council visited the IYC venue on the second day and shared their experiences and felicitated us.

During the session on 'Area Youth Planning', which helped us plan projects and activities for the next year, Sherin Wilson from Area India was elected as the IYR for 2018-2020 in the presence of James Olle, Past IYR, who now works for YMI in the headquarters in Geneva. On the last day, Stephanie Spencer presented a report of the IYC to IC 2018.

While all mornings started with devotion or meditation by different Area teams, cultural performances in the evening lent a lot of fun to the programme. And, as always, the most difficult part was to say goodbyes on the last day!

Diya Vijayan, AYR (India)



IP Moon, ISG Nishi and others at the IYC



ISD-LTOD Edward gives a little pep talk



AYR (India), the flag bearer



Just before bidding goodbye ... a picture to carry home

Peace, the United Nations and YMI Membership

by **Silvyta Reyes de Croci**

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). As an NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC, YMI upholds a fundamental commitment to the principles enunciated therein. Linking three events that fall in the latter months of 2018 – Peace Day on 21 September, UN Day on 24 October and the milestone 70th anniversary of UDHR on 10 December – we asked our former editor to pen this special essay for us.

24 October is observed as UN Day for it was on this day in 1945 did its Charter come into force. The UN has probably received more criticism than praise in these 73 intervening years.

Has it come short on expectations? Has the UN achieved its proclaimed purpose of maintaining peace and security plus taking effective collective measures prevent and remove threats to peace and acts of aggression? Has it been able to channel the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and according to the principles of justice and international law, a way of acting to which the Organisation and the member-states committed themselves?

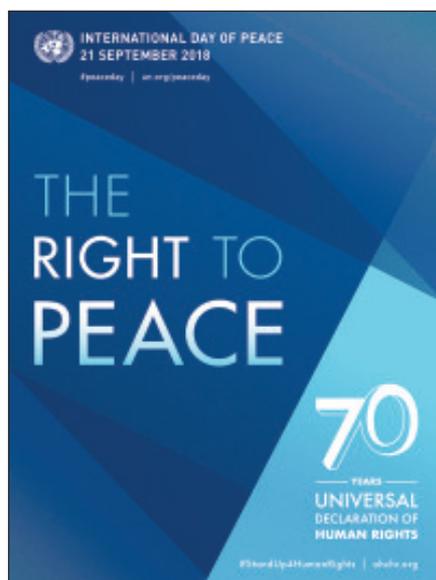
Living with contradictions

Every day we hear about the global tensions prevailing in the world and we are, once again, unwilling spectators of the results of applying force in so many armed conflicts: destruction, hunger, death, the sorrow of mothers, the suffering of innocent children, the destruction not only of homes, of whole cities, but of the environment itself, in kaleidoscopic images passing before our eyes that refuse to believe so much evil.

And yet, on 21 September, the world commemorated, once more, the International Peace Day.

As captives of incredible amounts of unrequested information, we tend to forget the very fact that conflicts feed news and, as such, they “sell” better than

peace. We may even forget that, although the shores of the river of history appear to run red with blood, the silent majorities are the ones that have toiled and continue their daily toil to construct a world in which we all live and will, hopefully, keep doing it for centuries to come.



The UN Charter was never truly intended, then, to reflect the sovereign equality of its membership that it proclaimed. The “veto” was the consequence of historical circumstances, a compromise between the Allied powers in a dominant role at the end of the World War II, on one side and, on the other, 53 small or medium sized powers who made sure that their voices at the General Assembly would never be completely muted in the realm of international peace and security. Without this compromise, the UN would not have come to be.

Changing scenario

In these 73 years and now well into the twenty-first century, the world has

changed, Member-states are now 193 (even the permanent members are not the same) but no major amendment of the Charter has been successfully attempted because of the absence of political will. As the global scenario has, and will continue to, change so too must the UN. New threats face the international system, including transnational organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism. The actions of its Secretaries General have somewhat contributed to clearer diagnosis and greater efficiency. In 2014, the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon requested that the UN set up high-level panels to deliberate on the future of peace operations, the peace building architecture, and the relationships between women, peace and security. The three panels concluded that a credible, legitimate and well-resourced UN is part of the solution. Some of their recommendations include:

1. Preventing war from breaking out is the way to save lives and bring down costs: UN should adopt a culture of prevention across the organisation, with more burden-sharing by member states. Focus should shift from “building” peace to making peace “sustainable”. Post-conflict settings come too late. The same is the spirit in Sustainable Development Goal 16, calling for promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies.
2. The form and function of peacekeeping should be shaped by the local situation, not by political interests at the UN headquarters;

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Silvyta Reyes de Croci holds a Doctorate at Law and Social Sciences, has worked as a lawyer and as an UDELAR (Uruguay) Law College professor. Since 1982 she has served in many different positions in YMI, including those of ID for Y's Menettes, Area Latin America ICM/AP and Y's Men's World Editor, receiving the Harry Ballantyne Award in 2001. She currently chairs the YMI Constitution Review Committee.



PICTURESPEAK

International Council Meet, 4-8 August



ONE FOR THE ALBUM: Members of the International Council pose for the cameras after being formally inducted into the Council.



NEW ROLES: (L to R) Outgoing IP Henry transfers his official IP lapel pin to the new IP Moon Sang-bong; Outgoing IPE Moon to the new IPE Jennifer Jones, while International Treasurer Philips Cheria starts a second term with IPE Jennifer adorning him the official pin



Y's Menettes get a new International Director (ID): Outgoing ID Carole Dunbar of Canada hands over charge to Jennifer Cameron of Australia. Pic in right: The Council in session



BREAKOUT GROUPS: Members of the Council met in small working groups for focused discussion on various aspect that govern the Movement.

IC 2018, Yeosu Korea, 9-12 August



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: The new officers and their spouses at the opening ceremony



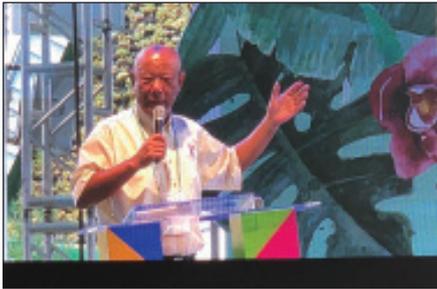
Keynote speaker Prof. Yong-ok-Kim



The venue



Inaugural address by IP Moon



ISG Nishi presenting his report



IP Moon with the transitioning ISGs



An attentive audience in a packed hall



FORUM DISCUSSIONS: On various themes in different locations of the venue

Editor's note: Pictures on this page and on the back cover page are courtesy of PRD Aleksey Vasilyev (Russia), sourced from his Facebook page.



SPECIAL ESSAY: from page 9

peace support missions should be more flexibly determined by the Security Council regarding when troops should enter, how long to stay, and when to exit.

3. Strategic partnerships are essential. UN agencies must reach out to regional bodies, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups that have a stake in peace. UN-resourced activities need to be people-oriented and field-focused.
4. National ownership of “peace”, while difficult, is fundamental. It must not be limited to national governments, but extended to political parties, labour unions, chambers of commerce, women’s organizations, veteran’s associations, minority groups, etc. When key players are excluded from peace processes, wars are much more likely to restart.
5. There must be a much more proactive engagement with women’s participation in peace at all stages of the peace-making, peacekeeping and peace building process.

What can we, in YMI, do?

Apart from our action focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (among them Goal 16), through which we keep our Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC and from our stake in peace as an international group, as individual Y’s Men and Y’s Women we know that the peace the world so desperately needs should come from within, from our inner conviction that our truth is no better –or “truer” – than our neighbour’s, which deserves the same respect until proved wrong. Resorting to violence to outshine the merits of any religious, political or economic belief demerits and diminishes any so defended belief to its very denial and extinction.

YMI should be proud of having lived its almost centenary life of service under a most effective tool for peace: our motto, due to the great soul and founder – Paul William Alexander – **to acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right**. And we, members of its clubs in almost 70 countries spread

around the globe, should do more than just live by this exceptional motto. We should loudly proclaim it for all to hear and to perceive that, by acknowledging our duties and placing them before our rights, we are indeed protecting the rights of all, much more effectively than through any campaign or slogan shouted in defence of peace and human rights. Human duties are our concern: our own duties to our fellow beings, to our environment, to our world. Acknowledging them is our tool for peace. To us, in YMI, conflict is pathological, peace is inherent.

And so it should be.

With 21 September at heart, let’s commemorate the International Peace Day by calling others, as publicly as possible, to come, hear and understand our motto and help us to widely spread it, till it reaches all confines and make all sorts of people, wherever they are, whatever their circumstances to develop, encourage and provide leadership to build a better world for all mankind.

I, PERSONALLY...

An Observer Shares His Thoughts

I was fortunate to attend the International Council Meeting (ICM) in Yeosu, Korea, as an observer and later participate in the Convention. I returned to India with a totally new perspective of how business meetings are / should be conducted. The meticulous planning and precise execution in accordance with accepted parliamentary procedures and decorum even while dissenting and objecting to proposals was something that added a new page to my memoirs, if I ever write one!

The International Convention was a big event bordering on a festive mode with nearly 3,000 participants in attendance even while ceremonial and business sessions were conducted in an orderly manner. The participants were treated to a slew of cultural expressions ranging from the ancient to the hip-hop modern dances on all evenings. This alone was something worth travelling to Korea, as far as I was concerned.

Yeosu is a small city of just 300,000 people and one of the most picturesque parts of the Korean peninsula with misty mountains and beaches. Our long drives to attend various receptions allowed us to have a glimpse of all this.

But the best part was the Korean cuisine and the hospitality of the people of Korea. I personally enjoyed the various dishes of meat, seafood, shellfish, tofu and vegetables that came in the form of bulgogi,

bibimbap, kimchi and many tongue-twisting names. What was fascinating for me was the use of chopsticks. I must say that I managed to learn to use chopsticks, although somewhat clumsily at times.

The visit to Yeosu YMCA was an eye-opener. The YMCA there has about 5,000 members who participate in all its programmes. We were treated to an exposure of some of their work among the youth, especially with regard to livelihood enhancement and reskilling. The YMI and YMCA members have a mutually beneficial and supportive relationship. The visit revealed how much more can be done for the community when these two organisations join hands!

Looking back, it was time well spent. All kudos to Korean Y’s Men for the efficient planning and execution and the warm hospitality that was extended to us.

I, personally, gained quite a bit from this visit. Thank you Korea, thank you YMI ... *gamsahamnida!*



George Thomas, Bangalore (India)



What Hinders our Growth?

PIP Isaac Palathinkal

Benchmarks to measure the growth of an organisation could be many. It could be growth in assets/profits, growth in service, growth in numbers, etc. For a non-profit organisation like Y's Men International (YMI), growth in membership and growth in service are the real signs of growth.



Before we begin an analysis, let us introspect on our lofty “**Vision**” and “**Towards 2022**” (see box) plan adopted in 2010 at the International Council Meeting in Yokohama, Japan.

Eight years down the line, where are we? In all honesty, we must admit that we have not moved an inch forward; on the contrary, we have fallen back from where we were five years ago. After a peak in 2012-13, our membership has gone down every year in almost all the Areas. We now find it difficult to strengthen our Movement globally by the means proposed in the plan.

Why this Downturn?

There are several factors for this state of affairs. Intense discussions at the International, Area and Regional levels of the Movement have identified a number of stumbling blocks, some of which are:

- ♦ Many clubs and officers are still unaware of our Vision and Towards 2022 plan.
- ♦ Extension appears to be just a game of leaders.
- ♦ Ageing membership and reluctance of the younger generation in joining us.

Vision

“To be a recognised, globally oriented, voluntary service organisation with a strong and committed membership that strives to enhance human values, with special focus on youth development, while upholding our motto “To Acknowledge the Duty that Accompanies every Right” and working in active service and close partnership with the YMCA, the United Nations and other worthy organisations to build a better world in which to live.”

Towards 2022 (Reformatted goals*)

1. To extend Y's Men to at least 50,000 based in 100 countries.
2. To strengthen Y's Men at the global level by
 - ♦ Offering relevant service to the YMCA and community;
 - ♦ Enhancing our public image; and
 - ♦ Improving our members' perception of YMI and its mission.

**Discussed and adopted at the ICM in Yeosu, Korea, 2018..*

- ♦ Meetings are too long and boring.
- ♦ Absence of genuine fellowship among members.
- ♦ No proper orientation and training of new members and officers.
- ♦ Unable to leverage the historical relationship with YMCA.
- ♦ Unfavourable image of the Movement among the public.
- ♦ Decisions taken at International level with good intentions leading to negative results at Area and Regional levels.

If these are the stumbling blocks, how do we overcome them and strengthen our Movement at the global level and grow in membership? What we need is a three-pronged approach and actions at the:

- ♦ Area and Regional levels for **retention** of membership;
- ♦ Area and Regional levels for **extension** of membership, and
- ♦ International level for both **retention and extension**.

Retention – Area and Regional Level Actions

The Vision and Towards 2022 plan are yet to be deployed down the line. Training of leaders and primary members must be organised with special emphasis on the Towards 2022 plan to strengthen our Movement by retaining the members.

Actions could be to::

- ♦ Make club meetings more interesting by avoiding long formalities and/or speeches;
- ♦ Evolve strategies to involve Y's Men, Y's Menettes, Y's Youth and Y's Lings actively, and
- ♦ develop the club into a family of families.

Establishing good relationship between YMI and YMCA at local levels and working **with** the YMCA rather than **for** the YMCA would be mutually beneficial to both organisations.

Identifying flagship / uniform signature projects at Area levels might create a better impact. If the project is a multi-year campaign like the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) effort at the global level, members would find a ready-made action plan to rally for a common cause. This could be turned into a unique selling proposition too when scouting for new members. Coupled with this must be the effort to make our service projects more visible to the public, through better Public Relations, which, in some locations, mean cultivating the media, while, in other contexts it could be public rallies, ‘runs for a cause’, walkathons, street plays, town hall type community meetings, etc..



It is also a fact that most of our leaders do not use the various training modules, from 'Welcome to Y's Men International' to 'Duties and Responsibilities of Area Presidents' available on our website and use them for training at corresponding levels. They could be downloaded and used with other literature developed locally to keep the interest and passion of members alive.

Extension – Area and Regional Efforts Needed

Extension should not be a game for recognition and awards for leaders. We should not sacrifice quality for quantity. Very often new members find themselves at sea with the real reason for joining a club. This happens because effective orientation was not given to them on the nature and objectives of our Movement and on the financial commitment. Be honest with them and you may win a new member for life!

It is also important to form a result-oriented team in each club aiming at extension through young members within the club to counter the problem of ageing membership.

One must be careful to choose who we want to bring into our fellowship. Quality is one criterion that is often given a short shrift when scouting for new members. A quality member is expected to be unselfish of character, vows to live by the constitution of the Movement and act ethically at all times.

IDGF – An Indian Experiment

The Inter District General Forum (IDGF) is a new concept or experiment developed by India Area President K.C. Samuel for extension of the Movement in India. It has kicked off to a wonderful start recently with the objective of reaching out to at least 2,000 new persons – “freshers” – in the year through forums conducted at various locations.

The modus operandi involves the efforts of 40-50 clubs in a given geography, steered by a lead club, for each of the 10 forums envisaged. Each of these clubs are motivated to reach out to 4 or 5 freshers and accompany them to a seminar that will give them an overview of the Movement, its objectives and services, criteria for membership, etc. using audio visual aids. A booklet that details the above is also given to potential members as reference.

What is most important is the follow-up. Sponsoring clubs are required to show consistent interest in retaining new members by drawing them into the fellowship through regular meetings, preferably *en famille*, and getting them involved in activities.

Other Areas may evaluate the usefulness of such an exercise and try out this experiment.

Complemented by International

The Area and Regional efforts have to be complemented by actions at the International level for both retention and extension of membership. Many a time, decisions with good intentions taken at International level turn out to be preventing growth in membership. Large Areas and large clubs seem to have been demotivated for further growth as they feel they have already reached the peak in membership and there is nothing more to gain or lose, while the small Areas and small clubs seem to be equally demotivated as they feel they have everything now and there is no need to grow further. Both situations beget stagnation or negative results.



Extension = member get member

Issues have to be sensitively handled and consciously combatted if we are to make a mark in the community / society.

In Conclusion

A unified strategy involving all three leaderships – International, Area, Regional – will have to be evolved and support the efforts of the clubs at the local level if extension and retention have to have a bearing on real growth.


Y's Men International
Y Service Clubs International

YMI WORLD

invites

Club leaders to send stories of activities undertaken with one or more high-resolution pictures and appropriate captions. Write-ups must not exceed 150 words.

Readers are also requested to send their views and notes on matters of concern for the Movement, globally.

Submit your stories and pictures at:
www.ysmen.org/yimiworld

Last date for submission for next issue:
30 November 2018



New Leadership at the Apex Level

The 19th YMCA World Council held recently at Chiang Mai saw the beginning of a new era with a woman heading it as its International President and a new Secretary General in the person of Carlos Sanvee, who will take over in January 2019. Our International President Elect Jennifer Jones was there at the World Council to witness the landmark events.

YMI is happy to be associated with YMCA and look forward to a mutually rewarding partnership in the years to come.

The green northern Thai city of Chiang Mai has been home to 1200 delegates attending the 19th World Council of YMCAs from 7-14 July this year. ISG Johan Eltvik spoke at the opening ceremony in his own unique manner reporting on "what we did together". *YE4Good* (Youth Empowerment for Good) the theme for the assembly, has been the main thrust for the YMCA over the past eight years. Johan borrowed a pair of George William's glasses, so that he could get a better understanding of what the founder of YMCA had in mind 174 years ago. Information from the *One Million Voices* survey is being incorporated into current practice and the second OMV survey is almost completed as well, raising issues around health, work, discrimination, the environment, justice and immigration. YMI was acknowledged for its major support of this second survey.

Many inspiring speakers included now Past President Peter Posner, Dorina Lluka Davies from Kosovo YMCA, Peter Burns from Australia and Howard Smith - CEO of the Harlem Globetrotters. The Brighter Smiles programme supported by Chiang Mai YMCA and the Lanna Chiang Mai Y Service Club



The two Presidents – Patricia and Jennifer

was one of the excursion choices on Saturday afternoon. PRD Dr. Patcharawan (Pat) Srisilapanan and her staff and supporters presented a very interesting and informative programme showing how almost 1000 children have been helped with generous support.

Ms. Patricia Pelton from Canada was elected as the new President of World YMCA. She is the first woman to hold this position. Mr. Carlos Sanvee will be the SG and takes over this role at the beginning of 2019. We wish them both the best in their new roles and look forward to working together for the betterment of both YMI and the YMCA. I am thankful for the opportunity of attending this wonderful event with several of our YMI leaders and many YMI members too.

IPE Jennifer Jones

The New Secretary General

Carlos Sanvee has been appointed as the next Secretary General of World YMCA after the recruitment process developed by the Search Committee of the World YMCA Executive Committee.



Since 2007, Carlos has served as Secretary General of the African Alliance of YMCAs and he had previously worked as Executive Secretary of Finance and Administration at the World Alliance in Geneva, Switzerland. He started his YMCA commitment as a volunteer in his country, Togo, and then became his role as staff in 1987 as Leadership Development Secretary of the Togo YMCA.

The President of the World YMCA, Peter Posner, announced the appointment on behalf of the Executive Committee and expressed: "Congratulations Carlos, our next Secretary General! May God support you in your work for the World YMCA in the years to come".

Congratulations and blessings also from Y's Men International!

Three Things I Learnt at World Council

We have unpacked many of the complex layers of the youth injustices that exist around our world. Unequal access to opportunity, education, healthcare and the dark cloud of mental illness continues to surface and dominate conversation. And so, as I challenge my brain to function even writing in this very moment, here's three things I've learnt in the last 24 hours:

Hugs are mandatory at the Y!

Even when you anticipate a polite, yet reserved handshake, you can bet the next second you'll be wrapped in a warm (and very sweaty) embrace with someone you have just met. Often a kiss on the cheek can follow and if you're lucky the double cheek kiss is the YMCA jackpot of affection! (It happens more often than you'd expect) If you make it to this level of friendliness – it is truly not worth resisting.

Diversity is absolutely, our greatest strength

From all walks of life we come together and are reminded of the power we hold to accept each other and ourselves. Despite some resistance from a minority,

we can be confident in knowing that YMCA people truly *get this* and we will continue to inch ourselves forward in this space. Whether it's gender, race, religion or sexual orientation, courage has become contagious and many continue to tell their story of belonging with the YMCA.

Lastly, kindness costs us nothing

Coffee consumption during the breaks truly must of doubled in the last day or so. The afternoon comes with thanking our past leaders for a triumphant four years we welcome new leaders, fresh faces, and can sense the enormity of energy required for a prosperous future full of possibility. Challenge accepted.



From a blog by Georgie Nichol, a 26-year-old YMCA Change Agent from YMCA Australia
Courtesy: World YMCA website



NEWS FROM AREAS

Hong Kong: Insightful Intervention

The CUHK Jockey Club Children’s Eye Care Programme was first a joint project organised by the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Y’s Men’s Club of North West and Yuen Long Town Hall in 2015 which provided free comprehensive screening to 4,000 children aged between 6 and 8. With the generous support of the Jockey Club, the programme has now entered into a new phase with the aim of serving 30,000 families in three years covering all 18 districts of Hong Kong.

The screening comprises a series of tests which includes, but not limited to, ocular biometry, intraocular pressure,



An eye examination in progress



From Project to Programme – the team that made it possible

cycloplegic refraction, and visual acuity measurements. The programme’s working group hosts regular meetings and involves volunteers from the community such as NGOs and local schools. A focus of the working group is to ensure that volunteers are well equipped, well-trained and well-informed. To achieve this, training sessions and information talks are hosted at schools and the Hong Kong Eye Hospital. Upon completion of training, volunteers are assigned to conduct family visits and assist in screening for the programme. The programme is most welcomed by schools in Hong Kong and has received positive comments from the community.

Andy Fu, ASD-PR, Asia Pacific

Russia: Hundreds of smiles, dozens of happy faces

How to make parents with special children happy and beautiful for some time at least?

This goal was achieved recently in the village of Volosovo (Leningrad Region). The Y’s Men’s Club of Vesna, together with the local social care centre and supported by other St. Petersburg Y’s Men and volunteers started a new project to offer a little bit of happiness and to lift the spirits of parents of special children. They invited the first dozen families in the

local house of culture and while one group of volunteers was playing with children the other group distributed clothes and made hair-do and make up for mothers. The final idea was to make professional family photos to be printed and given to the families.

What have we got? Hundreds of smiles, dozens of happy faces. Of both – families and volunteers!

Marina Makarova





Kerala, India: Daring the Deluge

Never has this tiny state of Kerala, tucked away in the southwestern tip of peninsular India, seen such rains in three generations. It rained and rained continuously for about a fortnight inundating vast parts of the state. The last time the state faced such a situation was almost a century ago, in 1924.

Thirteen out of the 14 revenue districts were declared affected. Considering that Kerala is just 1.18 per cent of the total land mass of India, the losses are gargantuan. Two-storied houses, thought to be built on *terra firma*, were washed away in some locations. More than 1.5 million people had to be shifted to temporary shelters in safe locations. Cattle and other livestock were lost to the fury of the flood waters (see box for some numbers). The pregnant, the sick and the infirm had to be airlifted out of danger. All in all, it was an emergency situation that the people bore with courage and determination.

and club leaders in South India Region alone indicate shipment of about 70 truckloads of relief materials to various centres worth about INR 5 million (USD 70,000 approx.) plus an equivalent amount sent to approved relief funds, including that of the State Chief Minister's Flood Relief Fund. Y's Men International President Moon Sang-bong also released USD 5,000 from his Discretionary Fund for clubs to continue relief work.

Y's Youth and Y's Lings also swung into action during the crisis period. More than 30 Y's Youth from Mid West, South West, West and South India Regions volunteered for over a week in relief camps distributing water, food and clothes. Later, when the waters receded, they were engaged in cleaning the houses and bringing food and basic essentials to those in need of them.

Prompt Response

Kerala is also the State that has three of the largest Regions of Y's Men International, with almost 80 percent of the total membership of Area India resident there. Many Y's families too were affected. Those who were not, led the relief operations right after the first signal of disaster was issued by the authorities.

Y's Men's Clubs in South India Region, particularly those close to the Kerala border, led by DG Palaniappan, were the first to respond with truckloads of materials needed. Almost all the 90 clubs in South India Region responded with materials and volunteers. Reports from DGs

SOME NUMBERS

- Lives Lost **400**
- Roads Damaged **80,000 km**
- Houses Destroyed **26,000**
- Livestock Lost **246,000**
- Crops Ruined **40,000 ha**

Y's Lings Club of Attingal supported the Snehadheepam (Lamp of love) initiative of their District in South West India Region by starting an exclusive unit for the manufacture of cleaning lotion to be distributed among the flood victims to reclaim their homes.

Now that the fury of the flood waters has abated the state is engaged in an exercise of estimating the losses and the focus has shifted clearly to **rebuilding the state**. A first estimate says that about INR 360 billion (roughly 5 billion USD) is required to recreate basic infrastructure and restore lost agrarian land and livelihood of many.

Seegla Louis (Asst. Editor, YMI World) with inputs from Diya Vijayan (AYR) and Aravind Chandran (Y's Ling)



Above: Y's Lings engaged in packing and labelling the cleaning lotion (L) and Y's Youth being briefed before embarking on a clean-up drive
Below: Some of the many truckloads of materials that were sent by Y's Men's clubs to the flood victims in the camps





Planet or Plastic?



It's a simple question: "Planet or plastic?" Since it was unveiled in May 2018, *National Geographic's* new magazine cover [of June issue] of a plastic bag-as-iceberg has stopped many people in their tracks by conveying the size, scope, and severity of the issue surrounding plastics pollution with jarring clarity. The provocative cover story is the start of a multi-year campaign to raise awareness for reducing the prevalence of single-use plastics and the damage they cause to the environment.

YMI is committed to the protection of the environment and endorses this worldwide campaign to rise above plastic.

What is that we can do, as ordinary citizens and members of a socially relevant and responsible organisation? Our small actions will go a long way in reducing our plastic footprint. Here are some ways that will help us reduce our plastic consumption to help create a more hopeful future for our planet.

1. Say NO to plastic straws...

...and say YES to reusable ones. We use more than 500 million plastic straws every single day. Think about it: when you order coffee at a restaurant or cafe, you don't use a straw to drink it. So why do you need a straw for your water or soda? Saying NO to single-use straws is easier than you think. Restaurants and bars have the tendency to give you a plastic straw even before you have the chance to let them know you'd rather not have one, so make sure upon ordering drinks that you let your waiter or bartender know you are okay with no straw. If you would prefer to use a straw, there are great alternatives such as steel, bamboo, and glass straws that you can carry with you and can use them time and time again.

2. Bring a reusable shopping bag with you

More than 1 million bags are used across the globe every day and annually, about 500 billion plastic bags are produced. Whether you are going grocery shopping at the supermarket or going on a shopping spree at the mall, bring your own bag with you.

3. Get rid of the plastic water bottle

Most stores and many companies make a variety of reusable water bottles. Made in all sizes, shapes, and materials, there is no reason to continue to use plastic water bottles. A single person using a reusable, refillable water bottle instead of single-use plastic water bottles can save as much as 170 bottles from being produced each year. If a family of 5 all hopped on board with this greener practice, that means as a family they would stop about 850 water bottles from having to be produced.

4. Pack your lunch in glass containers instead of plastic

Ditch the plastic Ziplock baggie and use something more eco-friendly than single-use plastic. There are many brands that make glass containers with lids for all of your packed-food needs. Mason jars are also another creative and hip way to pack your foods for lunch.

5. Avoid snacks/food with excess packaging

We're all guilty of this. You buy a huge plastic bag filled with even smaller plastic bags of snack-size chips. Think of all the unnecessary packing that goes into the food on the shelf. Also, some supermarkets will wrap each fruit or vegetable individually in plastic wrap. Instead of throwing it away, leave the plastic wrap with your grocer so that they can reuse it for other products.

6. Stop using plastic cutlery

When you get a take-out order, you will automatically be given a set of plastic cutlery. Before you take your food, make sure to ask for no plastic fork, spoon, or knife. Chances are if you are taking the food home, you have silverware readily available and do not need to waste the plastic cutlery. If you are taking your food to-go and bringing it back to work, keep a cheaper set of silverware at work that you can wash off and use over and over again. This also guarantees that you will never be utensil-less for another lunch again!

7. Choose cardboard over plastic when you can

Cardboard can be more easily recycled and unlike plastic, will biodegrade over time. While plastics can be recycled as well, buying products when you can that are in cardboard boxes such as laundry detergent will help to reduce the plastic that needs to be produced.

Finally, If it's plastic, think twice.

While this last point is not a specific item, we realize that there are many other ways to help reduce our plastic intake than those listed above. Everything from the toys that kids are playing with to the many plastic supplies used for a birthday party, plastic items are all around us. While we understand that avoiding plastic at all costs is near impossible, we encourage you to avoid it when possible and to think twice before purchasing a plastic item that can easily be replaced.

Courtesy: 4ocean.com/blogs/blog





MANTRA FOR THE SOUL

Max Ediger*

In the Eyes of a Flower

“In the eyes of a thorn, the world looks like a thorn.

In the eyes of a flower, the world looks like a flower.” (From Phoolko Ankaama)

These simple but provocative words were penned by Tibetan Buddhist nun Ani Choying Dorlma. Ani Choying was born in 1971 in Kathmandu, Nepal to Tibetan exiles. When she was 13 years old, she joined a Buddhist monastery to escape a physically abusive father. In the monastery she learned Buddhist chants and discovered that she has a skill and deep love for music. Phoolko Ankaama is one of the many songs she has written and sung. A recording of the song, along with a translation of the words is online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLggOXZwfOA>.

As a nun in a Buddhist monastery, Ani Choying soon discovered that women do not have many opportunities to play leadership roles in a very patriarchal society, even in the monasteries. She resolved to devote her life to working for transformation of the traditional patriarchal society of Nepal and to help women achieve their full potential. It has not been an easy struggle, but Ani Choying is a flower and thus sees the world around her as a flower, filled with beauty and potential. She works tirelessly for a more just society and she challenges us to do the same.

The question the song asks us is an important one: Are we a thorn or a rose? Do we see the world as violent, heading for total destruction and filled with dreadful terrors? Or do we, despite all of the dangers erupting around us, see signs of hope and beauty? The way we see the world reflects what is in our heart according to Ani Choying.

It is not difficult to become a thorn in our world today. We are daily assailed by news reports of wars and rumors of wars. Any act of terrorism, or perceived terrorism, gets major coverage from the mass media. We get limitless detail of the act itself, the damaging results, and the person or persons who allegedly perpetrated the act. We are constantly warned of what might happen, what “they” are planning against us, and even how our own country is heading toward destruction. The pressure to become a thorn and to see the world around us as a thorn is a heavy weight to carry around all day.

Living in Asia for more than 40 years now, I have had

the privilege of meeting a great number of people who live amidst much violence, yet see the world as a rose. Muslim friends in Indonesia have stood up against the fundamentalists of their faith to defend and protect Christians because they believe that Christians and



Muslims can become true sisters and brothers. Buddhist friends in Thailand have linked arms to stand between political factions in conflict to call for peace and calm, knowing that nonviolence is much more powerful than the threat from guns and clubs. A Christian friend in Indonesia has joined action with Muslims and people of other faiths to work tirelessly for an end to serious conflict in his area because he believes that the Community of God is truly possible. These friends do these courageous act because they see in everyone, even the “enemy,” a person loved by God and therefore part of their own family.

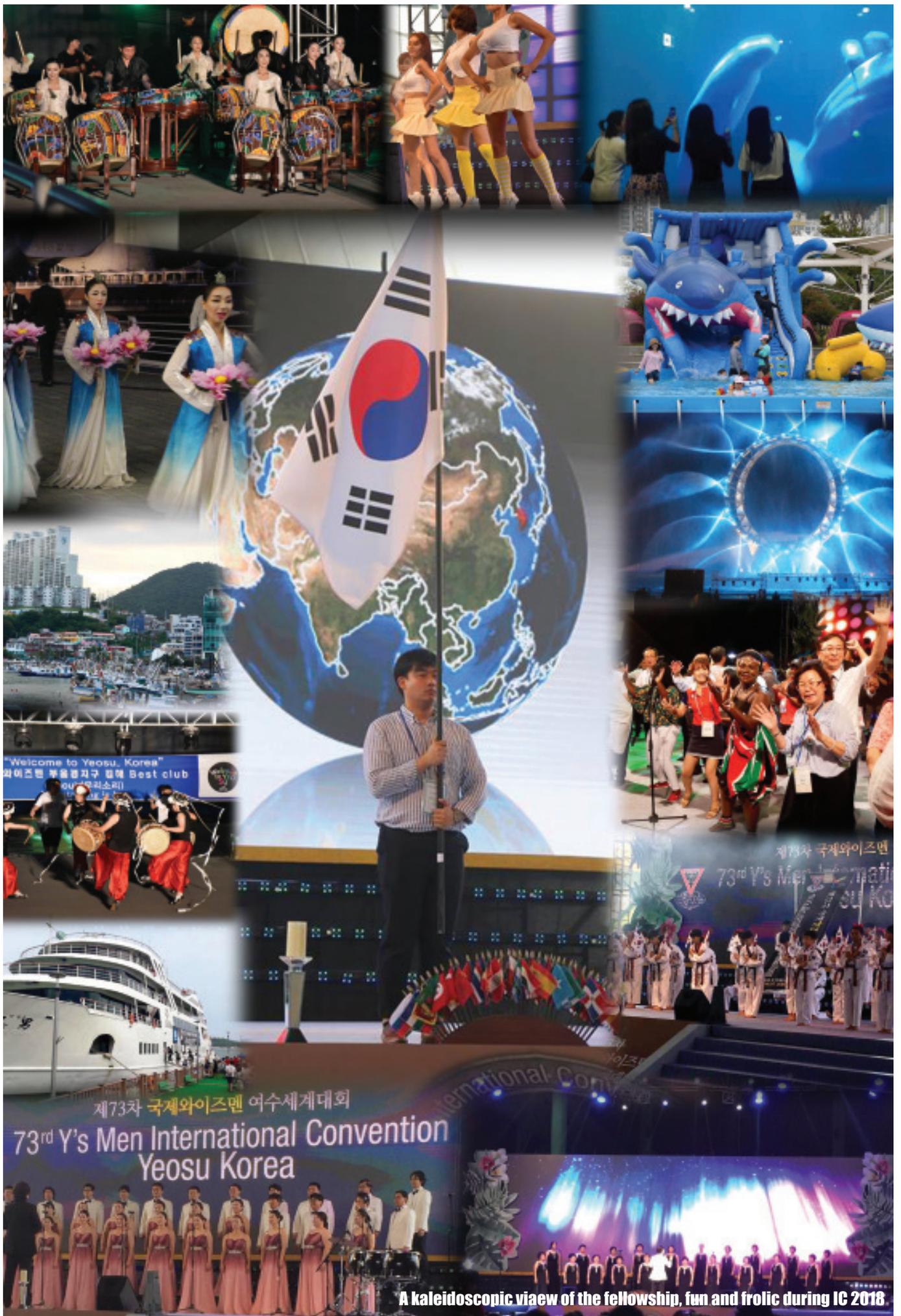
I am always encouraged by these friends to see the world as a rose. They help me set aside my fears and my assumptions of others. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to meet them and to work with them. They also challenge me not to be overwhelmed by all the negative news coming from the mass media, but rather to go to the people and see the hope for a beautiful world through their eyes.

In our country guns seem to have become the symbol of safety. This need for more and more guns suggests a deep fear of the other, a fear that results in our seeing the “other” as a thorn, a danger to our security and our wellbeing. It is this thorn inside us which results in the world looking as a thorn. Eradicate the fear and the world will slowly begin to look like a rose.

The world we live in was created by a God of love. After completing creation, “God looked over everything God had made;...it was so good, so very good!” (Genesis 1: 31) God created the world as a rose and God has given us responsibility to care for that rose in order to preserve its beauty and its reflection of God’s Kingdom. Do we see that world as a rose or as a thorn?

*Max Ediger directs the School of Peace from Cambodia.

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제73차 국제와이즈먼 여수세계대회
73rd Y's Men International Convention
Yeosu Korea

A kaleidoscopic view of the fellowship, fun and frolic during IC 2018.