Wave of Life, Wind of Peace, New Creation!

– Toward the New Century of National Council of YMCAs of Korea

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the National Council of YMCAs of Korea (NCY Korea), we give thanks to God for walking with us throughout the past century of our turbulent history, and today declare our new dreams and vision for the upcoming century, before the Korean people, the world, and the church.

NCY Korea was founded against the backdrop of apocalyptic crisis, at the time when Korea was under Japanese colonial domination. The Christian message was received as a gospel of hope for a new civilization. NCY Korea adopted Christianity as the source of new spirit for the Korean people, and took on the role of cradle for the independence movement, contributing to modernization through the rural enlightenment movement, the local product promotion movement, the youth labor movement, and the physical education movement. NCY Korea dedicated itself to establishing democracy and civic society, as it planted seeds of hope on the ashes of division and war. The 100 years of NCY Korea reveal God’s act of grace: the Word fell on the pain-stricken soil of the Korean peninsula, where it bore the fruits of independence, the modern state, and autonomous and cooperative civic society.

Approaching and welcoming our new century, again we sense an eschatological crisis. Contrary to anticipation, the 21st century is proving to be not an era of hope, but an era of war and violence, economic injustice and bi-polarization, climatic and ecological destruction, religious conflicts and clashes, cultural and generational gaps, spiritual and mental chaos – at a level of crisis never before experienced in the history of humanity. It is an era in which human greed is hastening the fall of civilization, possibly even the end of the universe, an era when “the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” (Romans 8:22) Korea has successfully overcome colonial rule, and achieved remarkable economic growth as well as democratization; but we are still overwhelmed by the agony of division. Democracy and social justice have lost their place; socially marginalized people are stripped of their dreams and even their will to live; and Northeast Asia is at the brink of another war. The goal of independence was not just to escape colonial rule, but to establish authentic nationhood. Therefore the same dream still remains as our historical vocation. As we face this crisis of civilization and history, we acknowledge it as the opportune moment for a stance of faith, a kairos of grace, and declare our vision and tasks as follows:
Our Vision

YMCA is a movement organization working to establish God's kingdom on earth, following Jesus' movement. We will devote ourselves to supporting all people and all living beings in this land to become one and whole in God,(John 17:21) so that they may enjoy justice, peace, and life. We will form solidarity with our poor neighbors and social minorities to bring about a just world where there are no tears, sorrow, poverty, hunger, discrimination or isolation. We will denounce all wars and violence, while healing the wounds of violent conflict and confrontation, so that all living beings will be at peace in a relationship of love and respect. And as we take time for fundamental self-reflection on this civilization made by humans, whose greed for unlimited profits is brutally destroying God's creation, we will work hard to create a world where all may share and enjoy the abundant life that Christ gives us.(John 10:10)

Our Tasks

1. We will break away from the current unsustainable civilization of self-destruction, will prioritize cooperation and co-existence in our local communities, and will pronounce and establish a new order of life, by forming a just, ecological, grassroots community of life that brings God's kingdom on earth through local, bottom-up movements.

2. Democracy and social justice are at risk when those holding power in politics, economy, society and culture promote only their own selfish interests. To counter this situation, we will block the vested interests by fostering public participation to achieve democracy and social justice led by the people; and we will engage in civic movement to strengthen the people's self-reliance, responsibility and participation in public affairs.

3. In order to improve the people's welfare, we will carry out an independent, self-reliant, social and economic movement to care for socially marginalized people who have been robbed of their dreams. At the same time, we will nurture social spirituality for the formation of solidarity and cooperation in partnership, to struggle against the destruction of communities.

4. We are determined to liberate the Korean peninsula, which is still held captive by the Cold War and division, and to build a permanent peace zone in East Asia upholding eternal co-existence and public order. We will work to bring peace to all conflict-ridden regions including Palestine. And we will wage an active global citizenship movement by forming solidarity with the more than 50 million members of YMCAs in about 110 countries around the world, in order to achieve true peace in a world that is free from the threat of nuclear weapons and nuclear power generation.
5. We will expel the consumerist culture that is based on greed and pleasure, the culture of violence that beautifies and instigates war and conflict, the culture of exclusion that discriminates against and oppresses people who are "different," the obsessive culture that indulges in temporary pleasures and ends up destroying the healthy self along with the family, and the culture of death that disrespects other creatures’ right to live. In their place, we will cultivate a land of life — of true, kind, beautiful culture and peace on earth — for all living beings in God’s promised garden of life in abundance.

6. As the Korean church celebrates its second century of mission, we will work to help the churches restore the power of the Gospel for transformation, and be renewed to fulfill their social responsibilities. As the first social mission institution in Korea, as an ecumenical lay movement organization, and as an open church, we will strengthen our spiritual training through Bible studies and continuous learning, so that we may follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

7. We will reconfirm our identity as a member movement organization, and pay special attention to nurturing leadership among youth, students, teenagers and women, helping young people to understand the era through the eyes of faith and to grow into leaders who take on responsibility as Christians before history and before God.

The Bible’s vision of new heavens and a new earth has been the source of faith and power enabling YMCA to take the initiative for historical revitalization and transformation during the past century. Today, in the new century, we look forward to new heavens and a new earth where life flows and peace prevails. We look forward to the promise that God will wipe away every tear, that there will be no more death or mourning, crying or pain. (Revelation 21:4) And we listen to God’s declaration of the vision, “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.” (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:5) With the above promises and vision in our hearts, we look forward to a united Korea where brothers and sisters in South and North come together, where all lives celebrate peace, and where the people of all continents are invited to this Lord’s feast to join hands and dance with joy for life. Now we set off on a journey of faith to the new century with these dreams and vision. Just as Jesus Christ stepped down from the heavenly throne, came to the earth as a humble man, and prevailed against all the powers of the earth, we, too, will humbly serve God and continue on our pilgrimage with no remorse before history and before God.

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The National Council of YMCAs of Korea