



To acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right.

# Youth World

Official youth magazine of Y's Men International

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## The Days at UMOJA 2000

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Edited by Tony Rajan Mathew,  
Youth Intern at the International Head Quarters in Geneva.

A story is told of a young boy who went in search of God. The little boy walked into the nearby open field facing the mountain next to his village, sat and looked up into the skies and whispered, "God, speak to me." And a morning bird sang, but the child did not hear. So the child yelled, "God, speak to me!" And thunder rolled across the sky, but the child did not listen. The child looked around and said, "God, let me see you." And a morning star shone brightly, but the child did not notice. And the child shouted, "God, show me a miracle!" And a shoot came to life beside him, but the child was not aware. So the child cried out in despair,



Friendship made: Joseph from Ghana on my right and Steve from Zambia on my left.

"Touch me God and let me know you are here!" Whereupon God reached down and touched the child, but the child brushed off the butterfly and walked away unknowingly.

Late last year, several young people across Africa had been crying out, "Let our voices be heard" and the YMCA replied in one word, "UMOJA." UMOJA is the Swahili word for "Unity" but on the 28 October 2000 it became much more. As this day dawned, over 60 young people from across Africa gathered in Togo, a  
*(Continued on page 4)*

## Discovering Northern Europe

On landing at Stockholm airport on 26 June 2000, I was accorded a Y'sly welcome by RD Kurt Eriksson and Christina. The next two days saw us visiting the major attractions including the National Assembly building, the oldest field museum - Skansen and the TV tower (155 mts) from where one has a magnificent view of Stockholm and the surrounding islands. The next phase



Me and my STEP family!

of our STEP programme was a week with Y's Youth Anna Wargren. We started with visits to a candy factory and the Andreas museum where we saw his dream of touring the world in an airship. In an interview with a *Jönköping Post* journalist we had the opportunity to reflect upon the way of life in Korea.  
*(Continued on page 3)*

## Personal Reflections on a Bleeding Continent

## Life's Weaving

Two factors underlie Africa's never-ending political violence and civil wars. One is the absence of mechanisms for peaceful transfer of political power. Second, there has been a near-total absence of mechanisms for peaceful resolution of conflicts, internally and continentally. Disputes can arise in all societies. Two people may claim the same plot of land. Five political parties may claim presidency of a country. But a society having no means or structures for resolving disputes simply self-destructs. In pre-historic times some communities resolved disputes with clubs. Naturally, the one wielding the biggest club always won. The modern equivalent of this barbaric form of dispute resolution is resorting to the bazooka. The one with largest arsenal of course wins the dispute, with the country in question being thoroughly destroyed in the process.

There are civilised ways of resolving social, economic, and political disputes. Society needs to establish structures, forums, mechanisms or institutions to settle them. These mechanisms are face-to-face dialogue or negotiation, which may be formal or informal. The informal type occurs, for example, when a disputant invites the other to his home for dinner to talk over their disagreement. No third parties are involved in this case and the deliberations are strictly private. However, when two parties enter into formal dialogue, third parties or the press may be present. If impartial and formal mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes do not exist or are not supported by the government, then the people with grievances will seek alternatives, such as protest marches (sometimes becoming violent), civil disobedience, strikes, or sabotage of government machinery. None of these is palatable. Each can be disruptive, costly, and destructive.

The founding fathers of Africa had a vision - the vision of a rapidly developing continent with peace and unity prevailing amongst all nations. Yet this vision has been defiled with turmoil and tumult due to the current sporadic conflicts in the continent. The future of Africa lies in the hands of her sons and daughters and we, the young people, must do everything in our power to save the continent. The time is now or never!

*Osborne Wanyama  
Young Professional, YMCA*

My life is but a weaving  
Between my God and me;  
I may not choose the colours,  
He knows what they should be;  
For he can view the pattern  
Upon the upper side  
While I can see it only  
On this, the under side.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow,  
Which seemeth strange to me;  
But I will trust His judgement,  
And work on faithfully;  
'Tis He who fills the shuttle,  
He knows just what is best;  
So I shall weave in earnest  
And leave with Him the rest.

At last, when life is ended,  
With Him I shall abide;  
Then I may view the pattern  
Upon the upper side;  
Then I shall know the reason  
Why pain with joy entwined  
Was woven in the fabric  
Of life that God designed.

*Red Raiders Revue, October 2000  
Fullerton Saturday Y's Men's Club, USA*

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- At least fifteen people in this world love you in some way.
- At least five people in this world love you so much that they would die for you.
- Every night at least someone thinks about you before they go to sleep.
- The only reason anyone would ever hate you is because they want to be just like you.
- A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone even if they don't like you.
- If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are indeed great.
- When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look, you most likely turned your back on the world.
- When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you believe in yourself, you probably sooner or later will get it.

*Denise on e-mail from the Caribbean*

## Discovering Northern Europe

(Continued from page 1)

The evening was rounded off with a barbecue with traditional Swedish dishes. I was happy to see the printed version of our interview in the next day's *Jönköping Post*.

We set foot in Denmark during the



*'Share a pint, reveal the mind'!  
An evening at the local pub with Laura.*

third week of our programme. We visited the modern art museum of Louisiana in the beautiful countryside north of Copenhagen. Here we met Anne who was adopted from Korea in her early childhood by a Swedish family. She had got our details from the *Jönköping Post* and was interested in meeting us. It was great to talk about Korea to someone who was born there but brought up in Sweden.

Despite the chill Anna and her family, along with RD Kurt Eriksson and Christina, were there to see us off on our bus ride from Sweden to Finland on the early morning of 10 July. Another Y's Men family accompanied us on our boat ride to Åland Island, where we met Kristina Rothe, RD for Finland Region. My Finnish activities were focused in and around Tampere, the second largest city after Helsinki. I saw the whole of Tampere from the famous Nasinaur Tower. Laura - RD Kristina's daughter was

great company and we did lots of things together. The one I relished most was the Festival of Tampere City where Laura took me along with her friends. There were crowds of people and the atmosphere was electric. Another day I cooked some traditional Korean rice and curry for Laura. Guess she liked it.

The last day of our STEP programme was spent shopping for our family and friends back home. We said goodbye to Helsinki in the early morning of 18 July and set off for Korea via Amsterdam.

19<sup>th</sup> morning saw us landing (at Kimpo airport) in Korea. It felt great to be back home after being away for almost a month.

No words can express our deep sense of gratitude to all those wonderful Y's members who hosted us, took us around and provided us with the opportunity to experience a new culture by being part of their own family.

*Oh Hyun-Jung*

*Ansan Evergreen Y's Men's Club,  
Korea*

## Something to Ponder.....

### If you:

..woke up this morning with more health than illness .....you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

..have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation .....you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

..can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death .....you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

..have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep ..... you are richer than 75% of this world.

..have money in the bank, in your wallet and spare change in a dish someplace .....you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

..hold your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful .....you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

*Live Y'er December 2000,  
Palomar Y's Men's Club.*

## Congratulations Nanami



The Mid Year Meeting held at Chennai, India, from 21 - 24 January 2001 selected Ms Nanami Inada from Japan to be the Youth Intern for 2001 - 2002. A confident and energetic young person, Nanami brings with her considerable international experience gained through travel and her extensive involvement with Y'sdom. Her hobbies include writing letters, playing the Piano and cooking. Hopefully she will add more colour to the world of Y's Youth. Let us congratulate her and wish her all the very best during her time of internship.

## The days at UMOJA 2000

(Continued from page 1)

West African country, for the first African YMCA Youth Festival dubbed "UMOJA 2000". Its theme was "Youth on the Frontline" because that was the promise it held and a challenge to the young people to take up leadership roles in the Y M C A .

The Africa Alliance of YMCAs under the able leadership of the Executive Secretary, James Gomez and with the keen support and co-

ordination of Africa Alliance Youth Intern, Rose Mukuria, initiated for the first time a training programme aimed at bringing together and mobilizing YMCA youth

in Africa to take up leadership roles, through youth-led capacity building processes and training forums. This two-week event encompassed three core themes i.e.

- YMCA Leadership and Mission
- Gender
- Fundraising

*".....often times the things we seek are well within our grasp and what a shame it would be to miss an opportunity simply because it is not packaged the way we want or expect it to be".*

Everybody had the chance to receive hands-on training and then choose any of the other four electives to specialize on, namely: Peace

and Justice Issues, Youth Employment, HIV/AIDS and ARH (Adolescent Reproductive Health) or Youth and Community Work Skills, depending on which one was

more of an issue in our respective YMCA localities. This, combined with evenings full of song and dance, a strong show of national movements, interesting and interactive workshops and field trips to UN and other local humanitarian organisations brought new meaning to "UMOJA".

So, like the young boy in search of God, this reminded us that often the things we seek are well within our grasp and what a shame it would be to miss an opportunity simply because it is not packaged the way we want or expect it to be. Today we are all back in our respective home countries but the valuable lessons we gained and the experience we shared are going a long way in making us realize our true role in the "Y" and take up more responsibility. After the goodbyes were said and promises made, I got the chance to go down to Nigeria and see the good work the Y's Men are doing and was kindly hosted by our AP, Sunny Jegede and good friend, Kola Adesunloye. I got to spend a lot of time with the Lagos Y's Men, several young people including AYR Funmi Oduntan and even attended some club meetings where I received a warm welcome and it all proved to be a wonderful learning experience for me,..... almost a "short STEP."

All said and done, our faith in our YMCAs was renewed and the spark within us rekindled as we began our long trip back home, promising to make a difference.



## The New Start at Abeokuta

The Abeokuta Y's Link Club was formally inaugurated on 9 December 2000 at a colourful ceremony at the Abeokuta Club in Ogun State, Nigeria. The club has thirteen dedicated youngsters, some of whom are children of members of the sponsoring club, Y's Men's Club of Abeokuta. Members of the new club are mostly students in higher institutions and universities, studying various disciplines ranging from Law, Medicine, Accountancy and the Arts. They meet every first Monday of the month, on the same day as the adult Y's Men's Club. The gifted members have formed themselves into a choral/dance drama group and even entertained guests on their inauguration day. Even before their formal induction, members of the club have been very active and, among other things, organised a programme between 17 and 18 December 1999 tagged "BAKE DAY" where various sizes and designs of cakes and confectioneries were displayed. The club is co-ordinated by Bimbola Saula (now a Y's Man) and the pioneer president is Taiwo Olaleye who can be reached at (mails@tiara.skannet.com).



Tunji Makinde

## Randomised Radical Thoughts on IYC

Among the many programmes which Y's Men International has for youth, the most exciting and the most looked forward to is the International Youth Convocation (IYC), which happens every two years. Those of us who have had the privilege of attending an IYC very well know the spirit behind it. Right from the welcome hug on the first day to the heartbreaking 'see you again' kiss on the last, it is the spirit of togetherness and friendliness which rules roost.

Having had the privilege of attending IYC both as a participant and as part of officialdom, I have come across quite a few instances where the noble ends aimed unfortunately appear to have been on a collision route with the informal fun loving way of youth. I witnessed the unfortunate flaring of tempers where both the accused and the accuser were perfectly right in their standpoints. With all due respect to the sincere efforts of the organisers of the past IYCs let me attempt to put into shape a few of my randomised radical thoughts.

Ground Facts: (*Facts which need to be understood and accepted*).

The basic idea in participating in an IYC from a youth point of view is meeting old friends and making new ones. It would be a good idea to have programmes that ensure participation rather than talks where all one does is listen. Many of us will be first time visitors to the IYC host country and as such we would like to go out and see places and do our own little shopping. It would be frustrating if we were to spend 6 or 7 days

in a new country and do nothing but discuss issues, many of which we have little control on.

Coming from 68 different countries we youth abound in differences rather than similarities. Efforts should be in place to cater to this diversity by way of programmes and topics discussed so that none of the various groups feel left out or disadvantaged. The aim should be to gain from the differing perspectives and build a new outlook towards the relevance of Y'sdom in each of our communities. It goes without saying that technology should be put to use in overcoming linguistic barriers. The bottom line is: Diversity is our asset, not our handicap.

A pre-convention brainstorming should be arranged for the youth who are supposed to take the lead in the conduct of the IYC. A better option would be to ensure the consideration of youthful ideas right at the planning stage. The agenda for this brainstorming should include the formulation of a methodology for the Youth Report to the IC. This report should be more of a serious paper on current problems facing Y's youth/Youth programmes, rather than an imaginative write-up on past achievements and the detailing of a rosy future.

The IYCs offer a big opportunity to strengthen the foundations of Y'sdom amidst youth. Let history not judge Y's Men as an organisation which had the chance to empower its youth but lost its way in the process of getting it done.

*Tony Rajan Mathew*

## Hello to my Y's youth friends around the world



Early nineties  
were kind of ...

Hi there,

My name is Hao Han Chen. It actually rhymes, isn't that cool! But you can call me Allan.

I belong to Taiwan and was born on 14 March 1985.

I am ambitious, adventurous, cool, calm, considerate, teachable, friendly and peaceful.

Yes, all in one.

My dream is to be the first ever NBA Basketball player from Taiwan.

I like music, especially Rap, R&B, Soft Rock, Alternatives.

I can play violin, drums and related stuff.

What am I? I am a basketball player, boy scout, Y's youth leader and still a Kid.

How to get in touch? You can talk to me through MSN messenger and write me mails.

My e-mail address is [tricky\\_4@hotmail.com](mailto:tricky_4@hotmail.com)

If you want to know more about me, make sure you visit my personal site at [haohanchen.freesevers.com](http://haohanchen.freesevers.com)

My job in Y's Men International is Asia Area Youth Representative for the Y's years 1999 - 2001.

I am really looking forward to get e-mails and letters from you. I am excited to know more about the Y's youth movements in your country, so please write to me and I will write to you.



2000 and beyond-  
Happy go lucky!

*Allan Chen*

# An Australian Success Story

## The history behind.....

The Y Service club of Adelaide has been considering the formation of a club with young members for some time. We were indeed fortunate to have a ready-made source of young people in the YMCA camping leaders fraternity. Two informal get-togethers to discuss the opportunities available and the modus operandi for a new club in Y'sdom left us with a group of approximately 40 young people aged 14 - 25 years. These first meetings gained us a Liaison Officer, a prospective member herself.

The efforts came to fruition at the overnight 'working bee camp'. Here the young prospective member group met with the Y's Men to commit themselves to forming a Y's Men's Club. 30 names of regular members were recorded and the office bearers were selected. At the first official meeting of the group the job descriptions for the office bearers were accepted and the objectives of the club were put to words. The group had regular meetings each fortnight since

this first meeting and at least two of the Y Service Adelaide members were involved as 'mentors'.



## A spark, a start!

Saturday, 25 November 2000 was the all-important Dday when the Youth Y Service Club of Adelaide SA was being presented with its charter. The function was held in Adelaide and was attended by about 84 people from all walks of Australian Y'sdom including the International President Dale Fotheringham. The CEO of Adelaide YMCA, Rob Dowling and the National President of YMCA, Caz Bosch were among the dignitaries present. The dinner was fantastic and there were speeches throughout the evening between the courses. There were lots of gifts for the new Youth Y Service Club from the neighbouring Y's Men's clubs. Now it

was time for the new Y's Youth President Fiona Thomas to reply to the felicitations and say thanks for the gifts and blessings which kept pouring in. Fiona spoke about where the club had come from and where hopefully the club would be going. After the final speech and the last bit of food was eaten nearly everyone present joined in the Karaoke. It was indeed great fun and there was no second opinion that the charter night celebration of Youth Y Service Club of Adelaide SA was a resounding success. We do hope that we will be able to keep up to our obligations and be a strong link in the Y's chain across the world.

*This article is a combination of emails received at the IHQ. Sincere thanks to AYR Connie Giorgi for having responded to the YISOS. Thanks are also due to Andrew Strachan, Rossana Croci Reyes, Don McGill and Ted Biggs, the combination of whose e-messages made this possible.*  
Editor.



Dear Y's youth friends

Hello again. Guess you are all doing fine and the New Year is going alright. Back here Geneva is slowly coming out of the dark and cold winter days.

As per the Y's Calendar February 26 is the Youth Time of Fast (TOF) day. TOF is one of the distinct programmes of Y's Men International where funds are collected to assist the needy and the unfortunate. February is the month of emphasis on TOF because it falls during the Lenten period associated with fasting. The beauty of the programme lies in the fact that Y's Men around the world get to know hunger by giving up a meal or two. The money saved thus is pooled together and donated to TOF through the respective regions. Make sure to visit [www.ysmen.org](http://www.ysmen.org) to have details of the various TOF projects around the world.

February 26 has been identified as the day for us, youth to take part in this wonderful programme and thereby express our solidarity with the ideals which Y's Men International stands for. Let us demonstrate our strength of purpose by giving up one meal on this day so that the ones who are in need can be given the tools to make life a little better for themselves and to those whom they support. Youth groups around the world use different ways to raise money for TOF: Peru - Selling craft works; Canada - 24 hours of fasting; Korea - Sale of stickers; Car washes, dance-a-thons and flea markets are just a few of the many ideas to raise funds. The question is are we ready to contribute our might to this noble venture. Let the answer be a resounding "Yes".

Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue by way of positive responses, ideas and articles. The deadline for the next issue is 20 April 2001. Send in your contributions to me at Y's Men International, 9 Avenue Sainte-Clotilde, CH-1205, Geneva or email [tony@ysmen.org](mailto:tony@ysmen.org)

Cheers, Tony

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*International Youth Representative*  
Mr Danny Lee  
No. 27, May-Chuang West Rd.,  
Taichung City 403, Taiwan  
[danny.lee@txg.panmail.com](mailto:danny.lee@txg.panmail.com)

*International Service Director YIA*  
Ms Rossana Croci Reyes  
Charrua 2421, C.P 11300,  
Montevideo, Uruguay  
[dcroci@montevideo.com.uy](mailto:dcroci@montevideo.com.uy)

*International Service Director STEP*  
Mrs Ginny Gulyas  
27 Euclid Rd., Sault Ste Marie,  
Ontario, P6B 1A1, Canada  
[katergin@sympatico.ca](mailto:katergin@sympatico.ca)

*International Service Director YEEP*  
Mrs Clara Grundman  
211 N. Citrus, Sp. 47,  
Escondido, CA 92027, USA  
[leoclark@aol.com](mailto:leoclark@aol.com)