



### Comments and commitments from participants:

*“The stories shared were very powerful and very important.”*

*“It is my first time to be part of APYC and to be engaged in IofC core ideas. I found the conference very meaningful and helpful in everyday life.”*

*“It made me realize that I need to re-examine my attitudes towards my mother and find out about my false pride.”*

*“I am committed to practice 4 moral values in my life.”*

*“I commit to dedicate one hour per week to work on the reconciliation among races in Malaysia.”*

*“I will write a letter to one colleague from whom I am divided in my heart.”*

*“I am committed to bringing to the public awareness the issue of North and South Korea unification.”*

The 14<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Youth Conference was held in South Korea. It was jointly organized by Initiatives of Change and First Step of Change, with 77 participants from 13 countries. The opening and closing happened in Seoul, while the main conference was held in the beautiful mountainous region of Cheongpyung, one and half hours from Seoul.

The conference was a meeting place for the delegates to build relationships and understanding by learning from each other's life experiences. We learnt that an appreciation of each other's faiths, heritage and cultural diversity were needed in order to understand and address the root causes of social issues and conflicts.

The participants were met at the airport and directed to the Seoul International Youth Hostel by the Korean team. The opening began with an energetic and vibrant Korean traditional percussion quartet (*Samulnori*). Speakers that evening shared some of their experiences in



After Opening Ceremony

applying change to their lives and expressed a wish that all attending would also apply the IofC approach of Global change through personal change. It was stated by the Keynote Speaker, Mr Rob Wood, -"As I am, so is my country and the world". On the way to the Hanbada Center at Cheongpyung we visited the Unification Observatory in Paju. Our guide there gave us a detailed explanation of the different attempts over the years to develop a basis for reconciliation between North and South Koreans. We had a chance to view North Korea through binoculars there. The whole experience gave us some understanding of the longing in many

Korean hearts for a bridge of trust to be built.

included singing, dance and traditional games.

The plenary sessions covered topics like, The Heart of Transformation, Healing the past Forging the future, and World Changing through Life Changing. During these sessions the IofC philosophy of change starting with ourselves was introduced. This was through the application of the four absolute values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love and the practice of quiet time. The session about healing was very powerful with people sharing their own stories of finding the freedom to forgive. A session on social issues and responsibilities explored issues as diverse as global warming and national corruption and how these can be addressed.

Each day started with a time of "Reflection" to introduce the concept of "Listening to the Inner Voice". The first day, for example, we were asked to think of what we were grateful for, what apologies and changes we might need to make, who we might care for and what we should do with each day and the rest of our lives.

The small family group times provided an opportunity for people to open up to each other. Powerful stories of overcoming difficult situations and finding ways of dealing with personal pain were shared. Some from dysfunctional families decided to take a step to rebuild trust and repair relationships with other family members.

The presence of 13 countries in the conference added much color to the 3 social events. The Cultural nights were a wonderful combination of various cultures coming together. Performances



Samulnori



Unification Observatory



Group Discussion



Cultural Night



Water Sports

Water sports one afternoon, on the beautiful Bookhan River, offered a chance to cool off and develop a stronger team spirit. The different boat loads competed with each other over a challenging water course!

Workshops including dance, art, drama, music and origami expressed their creativity and discoveries at a special time of presentation. Some evenings concluded with a Night Market where delegates could find out more about the different IofC programmes that are happening around the world.

At the closing ceremony three people spoke of their decisions of change and intended steps of healing. One was a Japanese who said he wanted to take responsibility for his country's past mistakes and apologized in the Korean language to all the Koreans present. A Korean 'I Care' campaign was also launched by First Step of Change with the aim of encouraging local people to actively think for others and their Nation instead of themselves. At the conclusion overseas delegates were picked up by their host families who invited them to stay for the final couple of days. This generous display of hospitality by IofC Korea and their friends was much appreciated.

The next APYC will be held in Taiwan in 2009 and the actual date will be announced later.

See you in Taiwan!

**APYC Committee**

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