



***With this letter I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas  
and a prosperous New Year.***



1 December 2023

Dear IEOs, ICMs, ISDs, and other YMI leaders,

This year 2023 has been a year full of surprises.

As early as January, some problems appeared and I had to take over the job of International President (IP). I planned to do my best to work for YMI as a true servant.

We are based on the teaching of Jesus Christ as servants for all people. My theme is “**Let Your Light Shine**”, which encourages not just me, but all Y’s Men leaders, to ignite passion and inspiration in their fellow Y’s Men.

From February to the present, we've engaged in numerous virtual meetings and a few in-person gatherings. I went to India in February where I enjoyed the fellowship among Y’s Men before finishing my tour visiting close friends in Nagpur and attending a wedding. I have also been invited to another wedding in Nagpur this December.

In 2018 I went to the local YMCA in Nagpur. Half a year later I was happy that they started a Y’s Men’s Club in Nagpur. During my upcoming visit in December, I'm excited to reconnect with the local club and meet more members of the Y's Men community.



Visit to Yeosu, South Korea



Official opening Thika Community Hall (TOF project)



Visit to New Delhi, India



Visiting Long Island, New York and meeting the local bishop

In March, I attended the YMI 100 centennial celebration in Taiwan. A wonderful event and so well organised! At the same time we held the RDE Summit in the Taipei YMCA building. We are so fortunate to have this close partnership and enjoy the excellent facilities and hospitality of YMCAs around the world.

In June I went to New York to attend the joint Canada/Caribbean & US Area Convention which was held on a cruise ship. This was an exciting Convention with interesting meetings and warm fellowship.

I stayed with Past Area President Mr Shaju Sam and his family on Long Island. I also had a plan to visit the 9/11 Memorial. It was a moving and sombre experience, standing on the same place where I had been in 1971 just as the towers were nearing completion.

We also visited Shaju's church and met the bishop.

In July, IEOs and ICMs were in Kenya for the International Council Meeting, my first physical meeting as IP. The meeting presented me with some challenges, which we continue to work through.

In Kenya, I had the honour to inaugurate a new YMCA community building in Thika, partly financed by the Time of Fast fund. I was pleased to be invited to plant a tree, in line with my goals to improve the environment. Through tree-planting initiatives and programmes like Week 4 Waste, we create better tomorrow for the Earth and for YMI.



The joint CAC/US Area Convention was held aboard a cruise ship



The 9/11 Memorial, New York

In August, I traveled to Bergen to attend the Regional Convention in Norway. The experience was enriching, marked by wonderful fellowship and strong support.

In September, Area Korea invited me to their Area Convention. The experience was filled with warm fellowship and engaging interactions. I had the opportunity to tour the area and was delighted to meet PIP Mr Moon Sang-bong and various club members in the south of the country. It was particularly impressive to see that a former YMCA building there is now a proud asset of the Y's Men.



At the end of October I had the great honour to inaugurate the new office in Geneva (above and left). We were joined by former club members from the Y Service Club of Geneva, including Past ISG Ingvar Wallin.

Now I'm planning my India tour for December, returning home on 25 December. Four days later, I will go to Los Angeles following an invitation from the local Y's Men to attend the Rose Parade on 1 January. I will stay in California for 11 days and I'm looking forward to the programme that has been planned.



In my hometown of Vejle, I actively participate in the meetings of my local club. Additionally, I travel across Denmark to attend various meetings and celebrations.



Together with the three clubs in Vejle, we are planning an extraordinary ICM at Vingsted Hotel and Conference Center in March 2024.

On a special day during our programme, we will embark on a journey 1,000 years into the past, visiting the historic foundation stone of Christianity in Denmark. Following this enriching experience, a dinner sponsored by the three clubs will be held in a church meeting room. This event, an integral part of the day's activities, will welcome all members from the three clubs to engage in fellowship, celebrate diverse cultures, and draw inspiration from varied perspectives. Delegates will be able to immerse themselves in a quintessential Danish club tradition, which involves singing during meetings.

This year has been busy, and sometimes my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild express: *“Don't forget us - but we know you are working for a good cause and we accept that your care for YMI”*. I'm grateful that they are very understanding and have all had very positive experiences with YMI during their childhood. They keep me alive and I'm still motivated to fight for YMI.

I hope my theme **“LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE”** for my year as IP will inspire and motivate all members of YMI.

**This year I will celebrate Christmas Eve on the flight going back to Denmark. I hope to see the star shining over Bethlehem. May this same star that adorns our emblem shine and give peace where it is needed.**



Visit to Nagpur in 2010 meeting Bishop Agnelo Gracias on Christmas Eve



My four kids



**Ulrik Lauridsen**  
**International President 2023/24**  
**Y's Men's Club of Vejle 2**

