

The Statement of Intent for Pohang Statement

The 2021 16th KWMMF Missionary Conference Pohang Statement (the Statement) was published in reference to other evangelical documents such as the 1974 Lausanne Covenant and the 2010 Cape Town Commitment. In particular, the Statement is divided into three major structures; the preamble, declaration, and manifesto, drafted in a new composition differentiated from the previous declarations. This is in line with the theme of the convocation, which aims to move beyond the ‘inflection point’ of Korea missions and move towards hope for mission through ‘Insight’ and ‘Reflection’.

In addition, examining each sections of the Statement closely, it is found that each clauses and articles contain deep and great meaning. The Statement is not a mere ceremonial or perfunctory document, but a confirmation and recognition of duty and responsibilities as missionaries not only to uphold the missional calling to spread the whole gospel to the whole world, but also the call for the release of detained missionaries in North Korea, and recognition of the great importance of responsibilities owed to the families.

Finally, the Pohang Statement will have great significance for the missional work of Korean missionaries spread across the world since it will be translated into English, Spanish and Chinese for the records.

First, the ‘Preamble’.

The preamble states who the KWMMF is, why it has gathered, and what the meaning of the ‘Pohang Statement’ is. KWMMF global missionary convocation was inaugurated in 1977 and has been held in the United States including Whitten College for the last 44 years or so. It is significant to note that it was being held in the native land of Korea for the first time in history, and organized by the field missionaries. In addition, it adds special meaning in that KWMMF has recognized the need to unite even in the changing conditions of missions in the mist of the ongoing Covid-19 era to seek progression of the gospel, and sought after achieving missional convergence with global Christian higher education institutions, such as Handong Global University, working closely together as co-hosts towards one mark of spreading the gospel.

Second, the ‘Missional Declaration’.

Structured in five major clauses. States lists of missionary declaration of intent to **First**, uphold to the utmost professional ethics, as missionaries carrying out the holy missional calling, the Great Commission; **Second**, to refine the existing mission models from the past, and advance the God-given attributes through a re-generated model for mission that is made possible for the Korean missionaries; **Third**, to carry out missions with flexibility and strategy, opening the door for lay missionaries to engage in spreading the gospel not limited to physical in response to the inevitable changes and advancements (e.g. post-Corona and cyber space etc.) in the transitioning times; **Fourth**, to foster next-generation missionaries in our nation and hosting country, going further to join hands with the mission workers in hosting country as partners in Jesus Christ to establish field-focused ministries respecting their cultures, history and people; **Fifth**, to call for reconciliation and evangelization in the Korean Peninsula, including the closest but also the farthest land of North Korea. Overall, it is a declaration of missional intent by Korean missionaries living in the current times with a hopeful vision of future missions based on what they have saw, felt and experienced at the mission fields as Korean missionaries.

In particular, the Fifth clause declares special duty and calling to bring revival and salvation in the Korean Peninsula, including North Korea. The clause reaffirms that true peace and unity can only be achieved through the gospel of Christ alone. It also reflects KWMMF’s prayer and longing for the revival in Pyongyang, once known as the Jerusalem of the East, to become the mission based channel of blessing to Asia and other nations. To this end, it also contains KWMMF’s strong will and efforts for the release of six South Korean mission workers (3 South Korean missionaries, 3 North Korean refugee / missionary supporters) who are unduly detained in North Korea.

Last, the ‘Missional Manifesto’.

The missional Manifesto is an extension of vision and Declaration, and emphasizes the duty, responsibilities, and conduct of Korean missionaries. It is not a simple reaction to the trend of today’s world which presses on taking up responsibilities, but a recognition and obedience to the Great Commission that our Lord God has commanded his disciples. It is significant that the enlisted duties and responsibilities are held to the professional standards aligned with the requirements for the so-called professionals, such as doctors and lawyers.

Article 1, states the need for the accurate and concrete recognition the God-given fundamental rights endowed to them to be claim their rights wisely when carrying out their missions in the mission fields. The Great Commission, to spread the gospel to the ends of the world reaffirms that it is duty and responsibility for missionaries to uphold such calling, and that these fundamental, inalienable rights are given to them as perfectly applicable guards in carrying out their missions across the world.

Article 2, reveals the strong commitment of the missionaries to their families and home, which used to be overlooked while serving at the mission fields. Specifically emphasizing that family is the natural and fundamental group unit gifted by God, this Article recognizes the importance of family, and declares the duty and responsibilities owed to the spouses, children, parents, the family and the home which often had been neglected at the expense of the zeal for mission.

Article 3, reminds the missionaries that the people, culture and history of the hosting nation is to be respected and served as everyone is made in the image of God. It also reinstates that the mission workers in the hosting nations are to be treated equal in dignity and right, as partners in Jesus Christ, and loved as one body in the Lord. This article shows the missionaries have acknowledged and is moved to penitence for having had the view which partly existed in the past for treating the ‘locals’ with ignorance and inferior. Based on the sincerely repentance, the Article emphasizes that future missions should be carried out strictly in accordance with the God’s commands.

Article 4, states the duty and responsibility to spread the whole gospel to the whole world. The ‘world’ signifies the Heaven and Earth, including all spheres and institutions in this world. Based on the belief in the Creator God, the Article declares the missionary’s duty and responsibility owed to every corners of the whole universe. It also refers to recovery through the power of the gospel. By the ways of the unsustainable and destructive world, the Created world is redeemed by the gospel so that a jubilee can be proclaimed in all the nations. Emphasizing that every sphere and institution is also under God’s sovereignty and presence, including what is considered the ‘secular’ arena, the Article recognizes that missionaries have the duty and responsibility owed to all spheres and institutions by means of stewardship. The Article confirms the duty to ‘practice’ the to spread the good news of salvation to all the nations as the saved ones.

Article 5, the last article reminds the filed missionaries of the fact that this competition was held in Korea for the first time. Despite being dispatched to other nations, Korean missionaries recognize that they are inseparable from the native land of Korea and the Korean Church, which supports their missions in prayer and other means despite being scattered throughout the nations. In the wake of the Corona-19 crisis, which reminded the missionaries the meaning of their country in mind, this Article emphasizes that even if they have left their native land for serving in their mission fields, they should not tire to pray for Korea and the Korean Church. Just as Daniel prayed for Jerusalem three times a day when taken to Babylon, although the situation is different for us today, but this Article emphasizes they have the biblical duty to remember and cherish their native land of Korea at all times.