

## Strategic Planning Sessions Lead to a Clear Vision

By DAVE McNEILL, Managing Editor

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Imagine the year is 2001. Imagine the SGI-USA has grown into an organization with 100,000 active members and some 1 million friends who support our ideals. Imagine, too, that we've successfully neutralized in the United States the negative influence of Nikken and his distorted ideas.

The May 3, 2001, issue of *Time* magazine has a cover story on the SGI-USA. What would the cover say? What would the article say? What would this successful organization look and feel like? What would members and society be saying about our organization?

This visionary exercise is exactly what General Director Zaitzu and a group of about 20 national leaders and Headquarters staff went through for two full days before the latest Central Executive Committee meeting in Florida. This strategic planning session, as it was called, had four main points: to create a shared vision; to identify long-range and short-range objectives; to pinpoint those strengths that can help us get there and those weaknesses that could stop us dead in the water; and to develop a concrete plan of action and follow-up.

Each person brought to the table his or her ideas, and from them 10 common visions (see accompanying box) emerged. Naturally, under each vision were listed many subthemes, and many of the visions overlap. But the general feeling was that these 10 are the keys to creating an ideal organization.

Mr. Zaitzu emphasized that all 10 are important, and that we need to progress on all 10 fronts. "However, year by year, we want to place particular emphasis on just a few," he said. "This does not mean the others are left out or forgotten. Rather, to make clear progress, I feel we need to focus on a few at a time, putting most of our thought and energy in them, while still advancing in all areas."

(The three focal points this year — supporting people in their quests for happiness, nurturing youth and strengthening families — are detailed in the article on p. 1.)

Despite all the strategizing, however, Mr. Zaitzu made clear that everything comes down to our determined prayer and action. "We should not merely use this as a slogan, but rather think about how can we absorb these guidelines in our lives and share them with our members," he told the regional leaders. "Now we must go back and discuss how to implement these goals. As Nichiren Daishonin says, 'What matters is one's heart.' As national leaders, our heart is so crucial in making these goals a reality. This is most important.

"The best way to materialize these guidelines is our practice for oneself and for others," he continued. "Our spirit for propagation is essential, and I am sure that if we, as leaders, have a strong determination, it will permeate throughout the membership. As SGI President Ikeda has said many times, the SGI is the organization of *shakubuku*. And we must also take action by promoting our publications and finding ways to make our district meetings successful. Leaders should always think about these points. These are ways not only to help others, but also to change our karma and do human revolution, overcoming problems in our lives."

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