

**Three Goals Outlined at Teleconference**  
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**Vice General Director**

*At a Sept. 13 region leaders teleconference, Greg Martin talked about the three goals the Central Executive Committee decided upon in June and shared some points of guidance from a recent trip to Japan. The following is based on his speech.*

**1) PROPAGATION: To ensure that each member knows about, understands the importance of and is inspired to propagate Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.**

I was very encouraged to read in the Sept. 11 *World Tribune* about two districts in St. Louis that had more than 240 guests combined this year. Also, recently I participated in a series of introductory seminars in Texas and Oklahoma Region where nearly 200 guests were introduced in five days in six cities. I could see the members' great joy in sharing this Buddhism.

Propagation efforts are definitely happening in the SGI-USA. People are bringing guests to all kinds of meetings. Still, not many guests are actually joining the organization. Only about 750 members have joined this year so far, on pace for about one new member per district by year's end.

This indicates, to me, the need to pay more attention to follow-up. And if it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes a group or district — a joint effort of people, not just leaving it up to the sponsor — to raise a new member. Creating ways to support sponsors in teaching interested guests how to practice will help each district reach this goal, I believe.

During my recent trip to Japan I talked to a Soka Gakkai vice president about propagation activities in his organization. He talked about how young people and new members work together with experienced men's and women's division members when sharing this Buddhism with friends. "Propagation requires conviction in faith," he said. "Senior members have the confidence based on years of experience, while young people and new members, can often bring guests. Doing propagation activities together with young people will help them to gain confidence."

General Director Zaitu has made his personal determination to have an active membership of 100,000 by the year 2001, which all region leaders likewise agreed to as their goal. Mr. Zaitu has said that this goal could be attained if each district gained just two new members each year.

**2) DISTRICTS: To ensure that each member knows what district he or she is in, understands the district's role in nurturing members and promoting kosen-rufu, and participates in district activities.**

Next month we will be holding our traditional Nov. 18 commemorative meetings (usually held by district). In June, the Central Executive Committee agreed to the overall target of 50,000 participants for these.

Success will be guaranteed, I feel, if all leaders take an active role in supporting the districts and if many members, particularly youth division members, have the opportunity to display their talents in the planning and execution of these meetings.

On a practical level, when counting attendance for these meetings let's be sure to count everyone who contributed to the success of the meeting whether they actually attended or not. For example, if members attend a chanting session for the meeting's success or help make gifts

or fliers, let's count them. Let's give everyone the feeling that his or her efforts count.

While in Japan, I asked several leaders about the importance of leaders being involved on the front lines. "The battle ground for all leaders is the discussion meeting," SGI General Director Eiichi Wada said. "This applies to every leader of the organization. When we go to the front lines, although we may only connect with two or three members, the influence of that effort will expand throughout the organization. Leaders must be committed to making this effort. Squeeze home visits or discussion meetings into your schedule. Without going to the districts, leaders cannot see the impact of their leadership; they are blind and cannot lead effectively. You just have to do it."

For myself, I've been seriously trying to be more involved in the front lines in my local district, not so much for the district's sake as for my sake. Three months ago I decided to devote 10 percent of my time (three days out of 30) for activities within the district. I schedule these days ahead of time and protect them from other meetings. The leaders seem thankful for my participation and district attendance is up. I believe that if all leaders set aside some portion of their time specifically to support one district, the commemorative meetings in November will be a success.

### **3) PUBLICATION PROMOTION: To ensure that each member knows about, understands the importance of and has the opportunity to subscribe to the *World Tribune*.**

With the *World Tribune* so important to the advancement of our movement in America, I asked many questions about promoting it while in Japan. I can summarize the guidance and my understanding of it into three main points:

1) Promotion: SGI President Ikeda said: "Your prayer as a leader and the person responsible to increase readership is most important. The newspaper is close to my heart—please promote its readership based on your strong determination."

2) Timeliness: SGI Deputy President Akiya said: "The newspaper is a letter of encouragement from President Ikeda. The organizational newspaper is the vein that allows this blood to flow. When President Ikeda's encouragement is quickly communicated, cell growth will occur at the front line of the organization." We should look forward to reading and absorbing President Ikeda's guidance it as soon as possible.

3) Textbook of faith: President Akiya also said that we should focus on the group and district. "Make the *World Tribune* the basic material used at every meeting, a textbook of faith." The *World Tribune* is full of articles that can be easily used at discussion meetings, and the staff is working to provide even more. The more we use the *World Tribune* at meetings, the more interest in the paper will be generated.

I feel goals are most meaningful when they are personal and self-motivated. So I've decided to accomplish the following three things before the end of the year:

- Help one person join the organization or help one sponsor encourage their guest to join.
- Commit time to one district in support of their November commemorative meeting.
- Encourage one person to subscribe to the *World Tribune*.

I hope everyone who's read this article will make their own personal goals for the rest of the year. Our collective efforts will advance kosen-rufu dramatically this year.

**WT**

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