

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Honest Dialogue is Key

Although I am not a member of the SGI, I am a regular reader of the *World Tribune*. In particular, I am edified and motivated by Daisaku Ikeda's guidance that appears in your pages. It was for this reason that I was drawn to the title of Jason Hart's article, "Standing Up For Justice" (Dec. 29, 2000, p. 5).

Jason's courage and commitment is a strong statement about how one person can make a difference in the Middle East conflict. His example is admirable. Most newspaper headlines focus on negotiations between governments. By contrast, the *World Tribune* focuses on dialogues among the peoples of the region, perhaps in the end the only genuinely human approach to ending ancient hatreds and mindless anger.

Dialogue, however, must be based on truth, even when it is painful. Jason's statement that "the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes in 1948, in order to create a Jewish state," I feel, is an expression drawn from the Middle East propaganda war rather than from historic truth. In 1948, leaders of the new Jewish state pleaded with the Arab population of Israel not to flee their homes. It was Arab leaders, notably the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who urged Palestinians to flee, promising them a quick return once the Jews were driven into the sea.

There are more than enough acts of injustice on all sides to go around in the Middle East. As a consequence, there is nothing more important than "Standing Up For Justice" by bringing together the peoples of the region through honest and earnest dialogue. Such dialogue, in my opinion, must put people first and politics second, a prerequisite of which is to discuss differences openly, with special effort to identify the human factors that bind rather than separate Jews and Palestinians. Such a dialogue is impossible if people on either side base their participation on propaganda, an assault on the truth that stimulates intolerance, hate, anger and the desire for advantage—fuel for the ongoing conflict.

— ALFRED BALITZER
Claremont, Calif.

A Pioneer's Inspiration

I try to read the *World Tribune* as often as possible and am constantly amazed at the sheer number of good articles.

In particular, I would like to commend whoever wrote the article about [*World Tribune* Staff Photographer] Gregory Nakasuji (Nov. 3, 2000, p. 3). Thirty years ago, as a member of the youth division, I had the great opportunity to meet him. Even then I could feel his passion for photography and kosen-rufu.

Please extend to him my best regards.

— STEVE JO, MD
Sacramento, Calif.