

NEWSBRIEFS

Phoenix 'Voices of Faith' Build Harmony

More than 400 representatives from nine religions — Buddhist, Baha'i, Catholic, Mormon, Protestant, Christian Science, Hindu, Jewish and Sikh — raised their voices in song, chants and meditations at "Voices of Faith," Aug. 20 at the Phoenix Civic Plaza.

The program was organized by the InterFaith Action Coalition of Arizona to explore how music affects various faiths, and also to foster understanding, respect and support of common spiritual values. The groups ranged in size from a single Jewish cantor to the Mormon choir of 100 voices. The 75-member SGI-USA chorus, directed by Linda Caldwell, sang "We Are One," originally recorded for SGI President Ikeda.

"The SGI folks did a beautiful job," Priscilla Sharp, Coalition secretary, said. "Hearing everyone chanting at the same time...was one of the highlights."

— *DIANA DECKER, Correspondent*

Ikeda School Opens in India

The Dr. Ikeda School, named after SGI President Ikeda, opened on Aug. 11 in the city of Chennai (formerly Madras) in southern India. The school, founded by Dr. Sethu Kumanan, an Indian poet and educator, provides children who are orphans with free education along with room and board. Teachers and students were joined at the opening by a number of distinguished guests, including World Poetry Society President Krishna Srinivas and Vice President S. Mohan, and Central Social Welfare Board Assistant Director A. K. Rohini Devi.

At the ceremony, Dr. Srinivas lauded the SGI president for forging a network of hope for the new century, which he characterized as an achievement possible only by a person of genuine religious faith.

Bharat (India) Soka Gakkai Vice Secretary Akash Ouchi read a message from President Ikeda. The SGI leader wholeheartedly praised Dr. Kumanan for his efforts to make education accessible to all children. He also gave the students three guidelines: 1) Be a person who overcomes all hardships and never loses hope; 2) Be a person who treasures friendship; and 3) Be a person who strives to work for humankind and the world.

— *Courtesy of SGI NEWSLETTER*

French Publisher Applauds SGI Leader

On July 29, the leading French publishing company Éditions du Rocher bestowed a Peace and Humanism Award upon SGI President Ikeda in recognition of "his efforts to defend justice and create a new age of humanism through the power of the pen." SGI Vice President Hiromasa Ikeda received the award on the SGI leader's behalf from company president Jean-Paul Bertrand in Paris.

Founded in 1943, Éditions du Rocher has published a wide variety of books, including a number of French-language editions of President Ikeda's works.

Remarking that people who work for justice and make outstanding achievements are not always appreciated in their own country, Mr. Bertrand stressed that it is for that reason that such people must never cease their efforts, but continue to bring forth new thoughts and ideas through the written word. To be recognized on a global scale is of utmost importance, he declared. Regarding the French edition of President Ikeda's dialogue with former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev scheduled for publication by his company next year, Mr. Bertrand stated that this exchange between two great philosophers representing East and West has profound significance as we prepare to face the new century.

— *SGI NEWSLETTER*

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