

**EDITORIAL**  
**A MOST IMPORTANT TIME FOR YOUTH (AND ALL OF US!)**  
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**Youth-sponsored introductory meetings this month will allow many young people to take on more responsibility in the SGI-USA.**

We sometimes forget how fast times are changing. I was reminded of this reading former U.S. president Jimmy Carter's new memoir, *An Hour Before Daylight*: He describes growing up in an America that probably—*hopefully*—seems alien to most young people today. There was still no end in sight to the Great Depression. And racial segregation was a largely unquestioned norm.

When you think about it, isn't it amazing that this world Carter describes was the reality only 70 or so years ago? In the grand scheme of things, that was not long ago. Huge changes have rapidly occurred in our country—we Americans seem to be forever speeding ahead.

Which makes me wonder what our country will be like 70 or 100 years from now. My imagination can go either way, to be honest: things getting better and better or, conversely, going completely downhill.

But I am certain that if our organization keeps moving ahead at this most important time of change, every aspect of American life will come to see unending improvement.

Speaking about the second Seven Bells—the SGI's activities in the first half of the 21st century—SGI President Ikeda recently emphasized that “the first seven years of the 21st century will be extremely important in determining the direction of the far distant future. In particular, 2001 will be a decisive year for the Soka Gakkai” (Feb. 2 *World Tribune*, p. 6).

This year must be decisive, then, for the SGI-USA youth, who have started work on a series of large-scale Family Youth Festivals to be held this summer. Through these festivals and their activities in neighborhood districts, the youth are solidifying their practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism and learning how best to introduce it to their friends.

Every March, in commemoration of March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, the SGI-USA holds special events that allow young people to make profound causes for the future. March 16, 1958, was the day that second Soka Gakkai president Josei Toda passed on the responsibility for establishing Buddhist ideals in world society to the youth of the day, including his young disciple, Daisaku Ikeda. The SGI-USA's youth activities every March continue to carry the same meaning.

SGI-USA General Director Danny Nagashima shared with me that this month's youth-sponsored introductory meetings at the district level are a chance for “everyone to get involved with the youth. The district is the happiest kind of family, one where everybody accepts one another and helps one another grow. Ultimately, the district is the place where each of us, no matter our age, grows the most. In helping the youth put these meetings together—and especially in bringing our guests—we in the men's and women's divisions can join the youth in becoming the real creators of the future.”

We often say that the SGI-USA youth *will be* the leaders of the future, as we try to help them store up leadership qualities for later use. At the same time, though, they *already are* leaders of the future. As the Daishonin quotes from the Contemplation of the Mind-Ground Sutra, “If you want to understand what results will be manifested in the future,

look at the causes that exist in the present” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 279). If you want to see America’s future, look at the causes that the SGI-USA youth are making right now — this month and this year. And the causes that all of us are making as the SGI-USA family.

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