

**SGI PRESIDENT IKEDA'S MESSAGE TO THE NORTHEASTERN ZONE
FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVAL
A CLEAR VICTORY FOR THE YOUTH**

‘Our youth in America have grown splendidly, serving as the core of every aspect of our movement,’ says SGI President Ikeda. ‘You have scored a clear victory! I send my hearty respect and applause to all the members of SGI-USA’s youth division, who have now created a great history.’

My sincere congratulations on the Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival and other Victory Over Violence activities that signal the rising of the sun of hope over America in the new century!

It is a great honor for my wife and I to receive the title of honorary citizens from the Borough of Manhattan in New York City. This proves that my dear friends in New York and all of the Northeastern Zone have gained great trust from your communities through your devotion to their prosperity. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Virginia Fields, president of the Borough of Manhattan, and all of its citizens.

You youth have now stood up with a determination to build a republic of humanity in your society free from violence. Our fellow SGI members in 165 countries are sending you their heartfelt praise and congratulatory words.

Our youth in America have grown splendidly, serving as the core of every aspect of our movement! You have scored a clear victory! I send my hearty respect and applause to all the members of SGI-USA’s youth division, who have now created a great history.

Also, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the men’s and women’s division members who have been supporting the youth, sharing their work and struggle behind the scenes.

I also want to thank from the bottom of my heart all the organizations, friends and guests who have extended their support to us and our shared philosophy of nonviolence.

Our movement of nonviolence starts with one individual’s courageous self-reformation and action. Ours is a challenge against distortions in humanity and society that produce discrimination and violence, a grass-roots movement to expand a network of culture, education and peace.

I am convinced that VOV is a great movement, led by world citizens, that will help spread a solidarity of courage, a crucial factor to win over violence both globally and locally. It is an embodiment of the Buddhist principle that expounds the absolute sanctity of human life.

What can save us from the suffering that arises from violence? Neither politics nor economics alone is sufficient to bring an ultimate solution to this most difficult problem. The answer must be found through an inner challenge to reform the fundamental darkness in one’s heart, the origin of the impulse toward violence. What is needed today is a philosophy that propels us to care deeply about others and enables us to establish lasting happiness for ourselves and others.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the poem “To My Young American Friends,” which I wrote in New York. Blessed with a wonderful mission in this lifetime, young Bodhisattvas of the Earth have emerged one after another in the lands of New York and Boston! I believe that your unshakable belief and united efforts for peace will surely toll the bell of triumph and jubilation for the future of America and all humanity.

I wholeheartedly love and trust my fellow members in the Northeastern Zone. I ceaselessly pray that you will take initiative in becoming a driving force to newly build a Century of Life, a Century of Humanism and a Century of Soka Renaissance. I am eagerly awaiting your victory.

With all my prayers for your good health and happiness,

Daisaku Ikeda

July 14, 2001