

Q&A

with PRID Mark Daniel Maloney
by RI Director Ashok Mahajan

What is the health of Rotary worldwide?

The health of Rotary worldwide is excellent. I measure Rotary's health by the good that Rotary is doing in the world. There is no doubt in my mind that Rotary is accomplishing great things. From PolioPlus to local humanitarian projects, Rotarians are giving of themselves and their resources generously to improve the condition of those less fortunate than ourselves.

I have had the good fortune to be in India twice already in 2007. The magnitude, quantity and quality of the humanitarian projects conducted by Rotarians in India and South Asia are so impressive. The tsunami relief efforts stand at the forefront, but the water, agricultural, educational, and vocational projects undertaken by so many clubs and districts are extremely worthwhile and effective in their own right.

What are the major challenges Rotarians will have to face in the coming year?

The most significant challenge facing Rotary, for this year and the next few years, is the eradication of polio. First and foremost, we must accomplish eradication for the benefit of the children of the world. In addition, the reputation of our organisation as an effective partner in humanitarian efforts depends upon our success in achieving this goal. Unfortunately, the key to success at this critical juncture is held by the political leaders in the endemic areas. They must have the will to see this through for the eradication effort to succeed.

Will we conquer Polio in the next 3 years?

I do not know if anyone is qualified to answer this question. I certainly am not. Nevertheless, I am committed to do everything possible to achieve this goal.

What can Rotary do to stop membership attrition? Why have we stopped growing?

Of course, Rotary is growing, just not in every part of the world. Recently, we have seen impressive growth in membership in Asia and membership continues to increase in parts of Europe. Even in my area of North America, membership continues to grow slowly, but steadily.

I believe that we can enhance growth in membership by effectively communicating our success to Rotarians and prospective Rotarians. The Rotary movement is a significant

force for humanitarian good in the world. As more business and professional men and women realise that, they will want to be associated with such a successful organisation.

Energy and water may be our next target areas. Has Rotary armed itself with a weapon to combat these problems?

Rotary International is increasingly becoming a significant force for promoting the effective and equitable use of water resources. The emphasis on continuity exhibited by the most recent Presidents of RI has reinforced our ability to undertake significant projects related to water management. The continuity of leadership of the Water Resource Group over several years means that RI has a cadre of volunteer leaders who are knowledgeable in this area. The continuing emphasis on water resources from year to year also better equips clubs to commit to longer term projects that are more sustainable.



Youth is our major hope for the future. Do you envisage any major thrust by Rotary to spread Rotary ideals among the youth?

I do not see a “major thrust . . . to spread Rotary ideals among the youth.” Rotarians will continue to share their ideals through contact with youth and younger people just as we always have through Interact, Rotaract, RYLA, Youth Exchange and Group Study Exchange.

Does Rotary need any special emphasis on Membership retention? Have we failed in stopping the leakage of Rotarians who leave Rotary for avoidable reasons?

For the foreseeable future, Rotary must continue its emphasis on membership retention. For this reason, I applaud RI President Wilfrid Wilkinson’s efforts to focus attention on membership growth in North America during the initial months of 2007–08. In this technological age, the default lifestyle is to participate in life as an individual, not as a member of organized clubs or groups. To challenge this lifestyle, we must have a special emphasis on membership growth and retention.

Will the Rotary Foundation evolve new strategies to promote peace?

I do not know if there will be “new” strategies, but I am confident that the Foundation’s strategies to promote peace will evolve over the next several years. The Global Peace

Symposium recently conducted immediately preceding the Salt Lake City Convention convinced many Rotary leaders of the worth of the Rotary Centres for Peace and Conflict Resolution. In the next few years, I predict that the Trustees will attempt to build upon its potential by expanding the programme in either Africa, Moslem countries, or both.

Will Rotary remain “relevant” two decades from now? Will we be active and strong at the end of our second century?

I strongly believe that Rotary will remain relevant twenty years from now. As governments face increasing demands upon their resources, the importance of private sector civic and humanitarian service will only continue to grow. That is what Rotary offers, and that is what the world will continue to demand for the foreseeable future. I see no reason why Rotary will not be more active and stronger in 2105 than it was in 2005.

Is Rotary geared to promote ethics? In today’s world of dwindling values can Rotary overcome the stiff challenge posed?

Rotary is geared to promote ethics. As one of the four avenues of service, vocational service is a vital part of Rotary. Nevertheless, we must always make conscious efforts to promote the Rotary ideals of professional ethics and vocational service. With only 1.2 million Rotarians in a world of six billion people, it would be presumptuous to say that Rotary will overcome the challenge of dwindling values. But we will certainly do our part to promote this important aspect of business and professional life.

Does Rotary have any plans to make “Rotary families” stronger and more effective?

Since the formal recognition by Past RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe of the Family of Rotary as an important Rotary concept, Rotarians around the world have emphasised the significance of family involvement in Rotary fellowship and service. My own Rotary Club in Alabama has certainly increased its attention to the involvement of family members because of the enunciation of the concept of the Family of Rotary. This will only grow as the years progress.

If more women are to join Rotary, does RI have any plans to relax classification rules for the housewives?

As you know, classification rules are part of the constitutional documents of Rotary International. Accordingly, those rules can only be changed by the Council on Legislation. Whether future Councils will see fit to relax any particular classification rule cannot be predicted with any assurance. Therefore, planning for such a change is difficult.

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