



Learning to Live Together

Tolerance and Solidarity

"How to promote interreligious dialogue within the Scout Movement"

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The World Scout Interreligious Symposium took place in Valencia, Spain from 29 November to 2 December 2003 with the participation of 115 Scout Leaders from 33 countries and 12 religions or denominations, attendance which far exceeded the expectations of the planning committee and the organisers.

The main theme of the Symposium was summarised in its title "Learning to Live Together; Tolerance and Solidarity". On the one hand this subject is integrated into the "Strategy for Scouting" adopted by the World Scout Conference held in Thessaloniki in 2002 and its main strategic priorities. On the other hand, it expresses the concern of our worldwide movement for the most disturbing trends the world is witnessing at the dawn of the 21st century: the mounting wave of violence, intolerance and extremism; the increasing tensions on the international scene, the theories which present a "clash of civilisations" as possible or even inevitable, the threat of war or war itself in several countries, religious indifference in many societies...

Faithful to the message of its founder, Robert Baden Powell - one of the greatest educationalists of the 20th century - Scouting shares with the major religions of the world the convictions which are essential for the development and survival of the human race: the desire to build a world of *fellowship* and *love* by banishing all temptations to dominate and hate from collective life; the *respect for differences* which are not seen as barriers but as sources of enrichment; a *spirit of service* towards our neighbours; and the *respect for nature* which the founder himself described as "a laboratory, a club and a temple".

The different religions urge their followers to become artisans of peace and justice in the world. Scouting's educational method - whose extraordinary force in promoting and enriching the spiritual dimension in young people has proven its efficiency for almost a century - prepares young hearts to undertake this process.

The participants consider as important:

- The World Organization of the Scout Movement should promote periodical initiatives on interreligious dialogue, such as this Symposium.
- The World Scout Committee should continue to produce appropriate tools to further develop the spiritual dimension in Scouting.
- The World Scout Committee should encourage National Scout Organisations to engage in interreligious dialogue through concrete activities.

- National Scout Organisations should encourage (as much as possible) the knowledge and practice of the Scout Method (Promise and Law, self development, contact with nature, community development...) which promotes the educational dimension of interreligious dialogue and spiritual development.
- National Scout Organisations should include aspects of interreligious education and dialogue in the training of adult leaders.

Participants considered:

- to what extent the organisational structures of their respective National Scout Organisations are fully adapted to the task of integrating members from different religions.
- the activities currently practised in their National Scout Organisations and examine whether they favour the free expression of the religions represented by their members.

In both cases, they suggest that National Scout Organisations should examine the situations and introduce the necessary improvements, when and where appropriate.

Participants expressed their deepest appreciation to the spiritual leaders present during the Symposium, to the host Association, the "Movimiento Scout Católico" and particularly to the "Federacio d'Escoltisme Valenciá" and to all institutions, foundations and organisations for their valuable support and for having made the Symposium possible. Namely INJUVE (the Youth Institute in Spain), the Ousseimi Foundation, the European Council, the presidency of Generalitat Valenciana, the Jaume II Foundation, the Community of the Municipalities of Valldigna, the Youth Institute in Valencia. The participants express their thanks for the active presence and support of the representatives of UNESCO, of the Sant Jordi Foundation for Scouting in Valencia, and of the Royal Society of Agriculture (Real Sociedad Valenciana de Agricultura y Deportes - RSA).

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