

SCOUTING AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT



World Organization
of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale
du Mouvement Scout

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**World Scout Bureau
P.O. Box 241
1211 Geneva 4, Switzerland**

**worldbureau@world.scout.org
http://www.scout.org**

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"Buddha has said: 'There is only one way of driving out Hate in the world, and that is by bringing in Love'. The opportunity lies before us where in place of selfishness and hostility we can infuse goodwill and peace as the spirit in the coming generation."[1]

"God is not some narrow-minded personage, as some people would seem to imagine, but a vast Spirit of Love that overlooks the minor differences of form and creed and denomination and which blesses every man who really tries to do his best, according to his lights, in His service."[2]

"As in nationalism so it is in religion. Support of one's own form of belief is a right and proper thing, but it becomes narrow sectarianism when it does not recognise and appreciate the good points in other denominations; if it fails to look with broadened and sympathetic view on the efforts of others to serve God, it fails to help in bringing about God's Kingdom upon earth."[3]

"In recent Western history an aberrational tendency has arisen to imagine that human life is fundamentally or naturally 'secular', and that religion has been an added extra, tacked on here and there to the standardly human. This view now appears to be false. Rather, the various religious systems have expressed varying ways of being human. The unbiased historian cannot but report that it has been characteristic of man to find that life has meaning and to formulate that meaning in symbolic ways, whether grotesque or sublime."[4]

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

Within the framework of the World Scout Bureau's series of reference documents, we are now examining the question of "Scouting and Spiritual Development". This vast and complex subject can be treated from several different standpoints, each with its own historical, ideological and educational justifications. All the more reason, therefore, to specify the aims and method of approach so that the reader may be aware of the document's intentions from the outset.

We began our research with a number of questions:

- What is the religious/spiritual "world" of today's youth? How do they perceive it? Is it an essential or a peripheral element in their lives?
- What was the role of spiritual development in Baden-Powell's thinking? What place did it have?
- What role has spiritual development played in the history of Scouting? What are the World Conference resolutions on the subject, the salient facts, the difficulties?
- What are the implications of these on institutional issues? How has the Movement been organized to meet its educational aims and obligations?
- What are the future trends, for religions as such and their impact on the world, and for the Scout Movement?

Throughout the document we shall endeavour to show the extraordinary strength of the Scout method in promoting and enriching the spiritual dimension in young people. Along the way, we shall also endeavour to answer a pertinent question that has been asked many times: does WOSM have, in actual fact, "a religious policy" as such?

Two boxes, one on the relations between Scouting, nature and religious experience, the other on the role of religions and spiritual families in today's world, will serve to complement the text.

This document, while primarily intended solely for National Scout Associations and their leaders, is also addressed to all who cooperate with Scouting, whether nationally or internationally, whatever their religious or spiritual allegiance. The prerequisites of fruitful dialogue are sincerity and transparency. It is our hope that the readers of this document will find a clear expression of the Movement's thinking so that the dialogue and cooperation that WOSM presently enjoys with different religions and streams of spiritual thinking may be strengthened and enriched.

One further point: by its very nature, this document is not an encyclopaedia, and the reader should not look in its pages for the 1001 episodes that have blazed the trail of debate on spiritual dimension, the cliquish squabbles and the names of the protagonists of this or that period. Rather, it is an historical overview, which attempts to highlight certain benchmarks and thereby the crux of our theme: the permanence of the Movement's fundamental principles as B-P originally conceived them, and as successive World Scout Conferences have confirmed and enriched them, for more than 90 years.

1.2 A FEW EXPLANATIONS ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this document we have used four words to designate two closely related "pairs". On the one hand, we have *education* and *development*, and on the other, *religion* and *spirituality*.

1.2.1 Education and development

As far as the word *"development"* is concerned, it has not been used here to mean economic development but to convey the psychological meaning, i.e. "the unfolding of personality".

With regard to *education*, after carefully consulting a number of dictionaries, both general and specialized (e.g. philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc.), we have found a certain concordance of views plus two slants, according to the aspect being emphasized.

The first slant stresses the need for *"social reproduction"*. For example: "Education has always been a social process by means of which a community, society or nation has sought to transmit to the emerging generation those traditional aspects of its culture which it considered fundamental and vital for its own stability and survival".[5]

A second slant is to be found in *personal development*. Without going into great detail, development (a concept borrowed from biology) may be defined as "the whole of the successive processes which, in a given order, lead an organism to its maturity".[6] This approach emphasizes the concept of "personal flowering" and its followers tend to align themselves more with the psychology of development, believing education to be the process of *educere:* "to bring out the latent potential of the child", in other words, to foster "… the flowering of all the qualities germinating in children".[7]

It is important to note that this approach is in harmony with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophy in "Emile" (1762). "Rousseau's theories were given practical application in a number of experimental schools … by Basedow and Froebel in Germany, Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Horace Mann in the USA, A.S.N. Summerhill in the UK, Maria Montessori in Italy, O. Decroly in Belgium and many more".[8] "The progressive educational ideas and practices developed in the United States, especially by John Dewey, were joined with the European tradition after 1900. In 1896 Dewey founded the Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago to test the validity of his pedagogical theories".[9]

For Dewey, the main objective was " …to educate the 'whole child' – that is, to attend to physical and emotional, as well as intellectual, growth". The school was conceived as a laboratory in which the child was to take an active part… "performing tasks associated with learning…". The classroom was to be… "a democracy in microcosm".[10]

It should be noted (a) that these two "aspects" of emphasis, i.e. social reproduction and personal development are not necessarily in total contradiction, even though, in certain specific circumstances, they may be, and (b) that they form a continuum, a "grey" range, with some areas darker than others, between two extremes of black and white.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that several compromises have been drawn up from these two schools of thought. Here is one of the shortest and clearest: "Education: action which aims to develop an individual's potentialities which are appreciated by the social group to which he belongs".[11] Another example taken from the "Dictionnaire de la Philosophie" reads: "The aim of education is to develop first instruction, then social adaptation, and lastly free and personal judgement".[12]

In Section 3, we shall see how B-P's ideas on the meaning of personal development could not be more clear.

1.2.2 Religion

With regard to the "religion/spirituality" pair, the relationship is infinitely more complex.

Let us begin with the etymology. According to the "Dictionnaire de Sociologie", the word "religion" derives "from the Latin *religio*, whose etymology has been a matter of controversy since Antiquity; *religio* comes from the verb *religare* 'to link together' or from *legere* 'to gather' or from *relegere* 'to collect'".[13]

After giving several definitions showing the historical evolution of the word, Le Robert Dictionary defines religion as a "system of beliefs and practices, implying relations with a higher principle that is specific to a social group…".[14]

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary provides among several others two relevant definitions: "1. The service and worship of God or the supernatural" and "2. A personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs and practices".[15]

The "Diccionario Ilustrado de la Lengua Española" defines religion as "A set of beliefs and dogma concerning the divinity, feelings of veneration and

fear towards it, of moral standards of behaviour, and ritual practices to venerate the divinity".[16*]

The "Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology" gives this definition: "Religion is a set of beliefs, symbols and practices (for example rituals), which is based on the idea of the sacred, and which unites believers into a socio-religious community. The sacred is contrasted with the profane because it involves feelings of awe".[17]

The "Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie" states: "Religion: A. Social institution characterized by the existence of a community of individuals, united (1) by the accomplishment of certain regular rites and by the adoption of certain formulas; (2) by the belief in an absolute value that cannot be compared with, a belief which it is the community's purpose to maintain; (3) by putting the individual in touch with a spiritual power that is superior to Man, a power conceived as diffused or multiple or unique: God".[18]

All of these definitions have one key factor in common, be it "the supernatural", "relations with a superior principle", a "superior spiritual power" or "the divinity". This is what Rudolf Otto, one of the masters of religious thinking at the beginning of the 20th century called the ***sacred*** "which is linked with all that is beyond Man and which arouses, even more than his respect or his admiration, a particular fervour". According to Rudolf Otto, the sacred awakens in Man the "feeling of being a creature", the feeling of "numineux" (from the Latin *"numen"*), which evokes the "divine majesty"). "This feeling includes an element of 'fear' before an absolute power, an element of 'mystery' before the unknowable … the subject of the sacred enjoys a power of 'fascination' that is quite distinctive".[19]

After these different explanations taken from very different sources, we can only agree with Jean-Pierre Jossua who exclaimed in the preamble to an article: "Christianity is ***so*** complicated!" and extend his sentiment to other religions. However, with the greatest respect and intellectual discipline, we can try to approach "… a reality that is both so complex that no embodying and systematic vision can master it and still so vital that no one can escape a certain degree of involvement".[20]

(N.B.: From the historical point of view, the notion of "religion" is associated with the notions of "Church" and "Sect". This aspect is not dealt with here because it would require clarification of concepts that are even more tricky and difficult to resolve!)

1.2.3 Spirituality

The difference between "spiritual" and "material" is immediately obvious in colloquial speech. Even very ordinary people do not need a dictionary to understand that the "material" world is the world that is visible and tangible, that can be appreciated or grasped with their own hands. In contrast, the "non-material" or "immaterial" world is the world of the "spirits", one that cannot be touched or understood by the senses alone.

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[*] The "Diccionario Ilustrado de la Lengua Española" gives: "Conjunto de creencias o dogmas acerca de la divinidad, de sentimientos de veneración y temor hacia ella, de normas morales de conducta y de prácticas para darle culto".

For once, the erudite meaning endorses popular usage. For example, the Robert Dictionary says "spiritual" comes from the Latin *"spirit(u)alis"* and gives as definitions:

"1. Philos. that which is spirit, of the order of the spirit considered as an independent principle which refers to 'immaterial, incorporeal'. For example: the soul conceived as spiritual reality. 2. Of or concerning the soul, as emanation and reflection of a superior principle, divine. 3. that which belongs to moral order, is not measurable by the senses and does not belong to the physical world. Spiritual power (Church) and temporal power (State). Noun: The spiritual and the temporal. The spiritual values of a civilization".[21]

The "Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie" defines spirituality as follows: "A. Character of that which is spiritual (and non-material, or relative to biological instincts). For example: The spirituality of the soul. B. Life of the spirit (in general, in the religious meaning of this expression)".[22]

The "Vocabulaire..." also makes a cross-reference to *spiritualism*, which it defines from the ontological point of view as "B. Doctrine according to which there are two radically distinct substances, one, the spirit, whose essential characteristics are thought and freedom; the other, the material, whose essential characteristics are the range and complete mechanical communication of movement (or energy)".[23]

The same dictionary gives another definition of *spiritualism* as "A. Doctrine which maintains: (1) From the psychological point of view, that representations, intellectual operations and acts of will are not entirely explicable by physiological phenomena; (2) from the ethical and sociological points of view, that, in Man and societies, there are two types of purpose that are different and even partly in conflict: one represents interests of an animal nature, the other interests of strictly human life".[24] And to conclude, there is a quotation from E. Bersot: "Man is both body and soul, the soul being superior to the body by the faculties and by destiny, such is the fundamental belief of spiritualism...".[25]

Without going into all the details, this is why people speak of the *spiritual world* versus the *material world*, of *spirituality* versus *materiality*, and *spiritualism* as opposed to *materialism*.

"Webster's Collegiate Dictionary" gives several definitions of spirituality: "something that in ecclesiastical law belongs to the church or to a cleric as such; sensitivity or attachment to religious values; the quality or state of being spiritual". "Spiritual" is defined, *inter alia,* as: "relating to, consisting of, or affecting the spirit; …relating to sacred matters; …ecclesiastical rather than lay or temporal …; concerned with religious values…; relating to supernatural beings or phenomena…".[26]

* * *

These, then, are a few definitions to help us see where we stand vis-à-vis the terminology used by the specialists in this field. However, it must be acknowledged that, in everyday usage, the word *"spirituality"* is mostly used in the second meaning given in "Le Robert": "Spirituality…

a set of beliefs and practices concerning spiritual life; the particular pattern of such beliefs and practices; for example, Franciscan spirituality".[27]

This is also the meaning given by Raymond Darricau and Bernard Peyrous in their book "Histoire de la Spiritualité", which describes Christian spirituality from its beginnings through to the Middle Ages and up to modern, contemporary times.[28] These two authors have joined a long tradition that has filled entire libraries…

In similar fashion, it is also the point of view adopted by I. V. Cully in his article "Spirituality and Spiritual Growth": "Spirituality may be described but is not readily defined, for the boundaries are broad. It is a sense of relatedness to that which is beyond the self yet approachable. For some, the spiritual is around or within the self. This may be personal or non-personal, named God, power or presence". The author continues: "Many people seek a quality beyond the mundane that is referred to as 'spiritual'." He then concludes: "The spiritual dimension has been recognized in all religions, from the major world religions to those described today as animistic".[29]

Referring to the Biblical Psalms in the Old Testament and the raw emotions they express, the psalmist's struggle with God, the strong language used, and the culmination in an expression of trust and hope, I V. Cully concludes: "Here is *a secure faith that is the very essence of the spiritual*".[30]

* * *

Another perception of "spirituality" is presented in an article by G. Cashmore & J. Puls entitled "Spirituality in the Ecumenical Movement". The authors start by observing that the ecumenical movement is "…also a meeting place of different forms of spirituality". They then examine the different influences that have led to a reformulation of the concept of spirituality. These include:

- "a more holistic approach to theology",
- "new emphases in biblical studies",
- "a greater awareness of the need for meditation disciplines",
- "the interface of many religious traditions and cultures",
- "a sense of the needs of separate identities together with a realization of global interconnection", and
- "the impetus of many renewal movements …".

The authors believe that the new concept (in the ecumenical movement) should be seen as "…a more integrated and integrative dimension of the life of faith… spirituality as a whole way of life. Dogma and theology are seen as rational and intellectual; spirituality is often taken to refer to their experiential counterparts". However, they then go further by proposing an all-embracing definition: "Spirituality… is the way people take to be Christian, to fulfil their Christian vocation. It embraces ministry and service, relationships, life-style, prayer and response to the political and social environment…".[31]

* * *

Thus far, we have been talking of spirituality in direct connection with religion. However, is it possible to have a "non-religious" spirituality without an explicit connection with any particular religion? In the present context, especially in the Western world, marked as it is by secularization

and the breakdown and/or recomposition of the religious panorama (see Section 2, particularly 2.3 and 2.4), the question could be rephrased as follows: What is the meaning of life? or What, apart from God, gives meaning to life?

A variety of answers have been given:

- having fulfilling relationships (care and love) with people gives meaning to life
- altruism: sacrificing yourself for others gives meaning to life
- caring for the entire environment, for the complete web of life
- having a sense of one's roots, to know where you belong
- beauty can also be an intrinsic value (and intrinsically valued)
- being self-directed, to know where you are going (and not do as others tell you, etc.)
- knowing how to find your place in the universe
- having values; having hope to achieve, to aim for, gives purpose to life.[32]

Two remarks in conclusion:

(1) This meaning of life (whatever it may be) is culturally conditioned. In other words, it will not be the same for people in a culture characterized by self-denial and ascetic renunciation as it will in a culture characterized by ego-assertion and individualistic tendencies.

(2) Doubtless, there are many who will find the above answers extremely unsatisfactory. The aim in giving them at all is to show the complexity of the terminological problems we have encountered and to present the range of the interpretations given by the experts who have pondered the question. The problem is complicated and will be dealt with in different ways throughout the present document. For the moment, it will suffice to say:
   - that Scouting has its own way of introducing and developing the spiritual dimension among young people (see Section 4), and
   - that, from the point of view of the WOSM Constitution, the phrase used in Chapter 1 to define "Duty to God" could not be more explicit: "adherence to spiritual principles, loyalty to the religion that expresses them and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom".

It should also be emphasized that, for the purpose of this document, it will be less important to establish a *theoretical* distinction between spirituality and religion than to show exactly where the impact of Scouting lies. As will be seen later in Sections 4 and 6.2, this impact is closer to *spirituality* as "practised, lived and felt" rather than to the systematic, rational and structured teaching of *religion*.

1.2.4 A few additional remarks

Thus, for the needs of this document, when we wish to convey that the *"religious/spiritual"* dimension is non-reducible and different from another dimension (such as cognitive, affective or social, etc.) there will be a "slash" between the two words. In other instances, the words will be differentiated to reflect two realities which may sometimes coincide but not necessarily overlap.

Needless to say we are very much aware that such nuances may lose something of their specificity when the original French terms are translated into other languages. Moreover, because language is by definition an instrument of communication, when it is used by several countries (as is Spanish or Portuguese, for example) it can happen that something which is current usage in one country may seem strange or badly expressed elsewhere. Nevertheless, should we abstain from using these words when in actual fact they are the most appropriate terms available?

It should also be said that, in addition to the word “religion” we shall sometimes use expressions such as “streams of thought”, “families of thought”, “spiritual family”, “community of believers”, and so on. None of these terms is used in a pejorative or derogatory sense, but it may be that the meaning is not exactly the same as the one that a religious group uses to define itself.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY AND THE RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

2.1 A FEW PRELIMINARY NOTES

The "World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond" estimates the number of young people between 15 and 24 years at approximately 1.3 billion or 18% of the total world population.[33]

It is impossible to draw a line between the social and cultural world in which young people now find themselves and the religious/spiritual world, because the latter is part of the former. In actual fact, the way in which a young person grasps the religious/spiritual dimension in his life cannot be perceived in isolation because it is influenced by the way he sees his entire life.

What does the panorama of youth in today's world look like? A first response could be that it is a panorama that is complex, pluralistic, extremely varied, and divided.

After all, what does a young jobless Indian or Pakistani university graduate, faced with a choice of unemployment (which prevents him from starting his career) or badly-paid under-employment without prospects, have in common with his European, American or Canadian counterpart whose horizon offers multiple choices, who feels that everything is possible, needing only to decide which is the best career to ensure his professional success?

And even within a country, is there anything in common with the brilliant graduate from São Paulo and his poor young compatriot in the north-east who has not even been able to finish secondary school?

It goes without saying that, between these two extremes, there is a whole range of intermediary situations.

Nevertheless, do these young people not have something in common? Of course, they do! All of them have been born into a historical period of great social, political, economic and technological change, and they are by turn the agents, the beneficiaries and the victims of this change. They live in a globalized environment with its positive and negative effects, they experiment with the take-off of communication technology, and they bathe in an atmosphere stamped with consumerism, pragmatism and, very often, materialism. They all hope to play an active role in society, they all hope for a better life and, last but not least, they all yearn, deep down in their hearts, for happiness.

In trying to describe the spiritual/religious world of young people today, we shall proceed via successive approximations. First, we will make a quick survey around the continents (i.e., the major geographical-cultural zones of our planet), followed by a closer look in the form of questions about some of the main trends of that spiritual/religious world. Lastly, we will present some of the salient features of the spiritual/religious world of young people today with the help of the research undertaken by experts on the subject.

We should also add a word about the spirit in which this section has been written. As far as possible, we have avoided making judgement on the merits of the religions themselves and on their followers or believers. We note the importance of religion as a social fact, a cultural phenomenon, and we cannot ignore – even if it is far from the main purpose of this document – that "in future the sacred will be an essential component of the world geopolitical scene".[34]

2.2 A RAPID SURVEY AROUND THE CONTINENTS (I.E. THE MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL-CULTURAL ZONES OF THE PLANET)

The fact that one is born here or there does, to some extent, *condition* (but does not, please note, *determine!)* the religious affiliation of a child or a young person. Someone born in Poland or Colombia is likely to be, sociologically speaking, "Catholic" just as someone born in Greece is likely to be "Orthodox", while someone born in Saudi Arabia will almost certainly be Muslim. Obviously, this observation is valid only at the outset, for in a world that is changing, pluralist and crossed by all sorts of migratory movements, no one can say with any certainty what he is going to do with or about "his" religion for the rest of his life! Sociologists believe that "…if the growing situation of pluralism which marks our society is confirmed…" membership of a Church will become "…more and more a matter of personal choice and less and less an accident of birth…".[35]

Nevertheless, conditioning does exist and to identify it as best we can, we felt it would be interesting and helpful to begin with a very rapid but, alas, very simplified survey of the implantation of the main religious groups throughout the world, as follows below:

• ***Africa.*** Three main spiritual streams share the continent: the Muslims, who dominate the north, the Christians, who dominate the centre and the south, and the animists, whose name varies according to the ethnic group and the country. The latter are "followers of traditional religions who practise the veneration of several gods or spirits and ancestor-worship with the use of magic as a means to control the world with the help of the inhabitants of the hereafter".[36]

It should be noted that *religious syncretism* – which combines miscellaneous elements of various religions – is very widespread in Africa, so that the beliefs and practices of the Muslim and animist religions on the one hand and those of the Christians and animists on the other are often closely interspersed in some populations.

• ***Asia.*** An impressive mosaic of peoples, religions and cultures, Asia is – more than any other continent – the very image of diversity, with Sunni Muslims in the west, followed by Shiite Muslims in Iran, then Sunni Muslims in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia and a sizeable minority in India. India and Nepal are dominated by Hinduism, while Buddhism is very much in the majority in Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Thailand and Japan, and a little less in Laos, Vietnam and Taiwan. In China, although the official statistics declare that three-quarters of the population are "non-religious or atheist", some studies show that 20% of the population are connected to the "Chinese religion" or the "people's religion", a mixture of Confucianism, ancestor-worship, Taoism, a few Buddhist rites, and practices linked to divination, magic and witchcraft.[37] This religion also has followers among a good half of the population of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Australia and New Zealand are very largely Christian with three main groups: Catholics, Reformed Protestants, and Anglicans. This is also the case in the small Pacific islands with the exception of Fiji, which is divided between Christians and Hindus.

• ***The Arab World.*** Beginning with Mauritania in the west and moving northwards to the countries of the Maghreb, Libya and Egypt, all the countries in the Middle East (with the exception of Israel) have "one feature in common that decisively marks the reality of religion in that vast geographical area: the dominant weight of Islam".[38] It should not be forgotten

that the "Arab world" and the "Muslim world" are not two overlapping entities, because the latter is very much more extensive than the former. In actual fact, the Muslim world includes not only Turkey, but also (as reported under Asia above) a large number of countries stretching eastwards as far as Indonesia, the most heavily populated of all the Muslim states.

• ***North America.*** Christians are very much in the majority, representing more than 87% of the population; 36% are Protestant and 33% are Catholic. In the USA, the number of Christians is approximately 200 million or 88% of the population. Of this figure, 40% are Reformed Protestants, 30% Catholics, 2.4% Anglicans and 2.2% Orthodox. However, the influx of immigrants from Latin America is likely to have an impact on these figures with a swing in favour of Catholicism.[39] Mention should also be made of the fact that the "world's highest concentration of Jews is to be found in the USA, being double the number in Israel. Even if they constitute only 3% of the population, the Jews are a major force in American life".[40] Another feature is the fact that "the Islamic community has grown considerably with the conversion of African Americans".[41]

• ***Latin America.*** One figure alone serves to indicate the spiritual "colour" of this continent. The 400 million or so Latin-American Christians represent 93% of the population and are 88% Catholic.[42] The Christianity imported by the Iberian settlers "has profoundly marked a population that is naturally attracted to transcendent values and community life. The expressions of that faith – joyful festivities, processions, cult of saints and the dead, small altars in homes and public places – are those of a popular religiosity marked by traces of ancient beliefs and myths".[43] The role of the laity is very important, both as catechists or organizers of liturgical celebrations and grass-root community organizations, where they quite often find themselves in the front row. Religious syncretism – which is common in Brazil and the Andean countries with a large Indian population – is the result of the constant intermingling over the centuries between the indigenous Indians and blacks and the white settlers. In a great many cases, populations that are formally Catholic have preserved animist practices of pre-Colombian origin.[44] Mention must also be made of the growing presence of sects, mostly from the USA, which sometimes enjoy considerable material resources.

Although geographically part of the American continent, the Caribbean has retained a character of its own. The most important feature is the "preservation of non-western religious traditions, particularly those of African and Caribbean Indian origin", alongside the religions brought by the Conquistadores.[45]

• ***Western Europe.*** Europe also presents a landscape of great diversity. In the Nordic countries – Denmark (including Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – more than 90% of the population are nominally members of the Lutheran Church.[46] In the Benelux countries, Belgium and Luxembourg, 90% are Catholic, while the Catholic Church and the Reformed Church share almost equally 85% of the population in the Netherlands.[47] In Germany, around 35% of the population are Protestant and 35% Catholic, with roughly 4% Muslim and a few thousand Jews.[48] In the Republic of Ireland there is an overwhelming majority of Catholics, but Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) is very much more

complicated with Catholics and Protestants in approximately equal numbers. "Although England and Scotland have established 'state-like' churches, both countries, and Wales, are now largely secular" (as is the case in most Western European countries).[49] There is a much simpler picture in "Latin" Europe – that is Spain, France, Italy, Malta and Portugal, plus the small states of Andorra, San Marino, Monaco and the Vatican – where Catholics are in the majority, between 75% and 99%. Nevertheless, it should be noted that "the Muslim civilization is part of Spain's heritage" and that "with the arrival of the immigrant workers, Islam has become the second biggest religious group, numerically speaking, in France".[50]

Switzerland, which has a long history of interdenominational strife, now has more Catholics (54%) than Protestants (43%). Austria is 88% Catholic with a very small Protestant minority.[51]

Greece – an historical reminder: In 1054, the Byzantine Empire broke away from the West. Over and above the theological questions *per se*, this rupture was dictated by political pressures which had been brewing since the coronation of Charlemagne.[52] Over the centuries, Greece has maintained a sense of continuity with the Byzantine tradition. There was a spiritual awakening between the 13th and 15th centuries, and another awakening, this time national as well as spiritual, during the 17th century. "From 1833 onwards, the bishops all proclaimed the independence of the Greek Church vis-à-vis the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which was accorded in 1850. In 1864, Orthodoxy was declared the State religion". "The Greek Orthodox Church is aware of its responsibilities and the continuity of its Orthodox faith since the beginning of Christianity", but "Greek Christendom in general now seems to be disconcerted by the challenges of modernity with which it is confronted".[53]

Turkey "is the only Muslim country in the world that has officially declared itself to be a secular state". Turkey's history since the 1920s has been full of confrontations and compromises between the authorities, who wish to promote "a republican Islam in keeping with the ideals of progress and westernization", and the pressure of the social corps which "tries, day by day, to encroach upon the secularity proclaimed by the State". Today, observers speak openly of the "re-Islamization of Turkey", but the process is far from univocal.[54]

Cyprus – The island is divided into two zones: in the north, the Muslim Turkish Cypriots (circa 18%), and in the south, Greek Orthodox Cypriots (circa 78%).

• ***Central and Eastern Europe***. The situation in countries formerly dominated by Marxist regimes fully justifies their being included in a section of their own. Let us start with a few of the characteristics that they do have in common:

- In most of these countries there is an ideological vacuum and a lack of points of reference. Some Churches have been severely criticized for their compromising behaviour vis-à-vis the former communist regimes and the officially endorsed indoctrination of atheism has left major repercussions.
- On the other hand, we must not overlook "the sense of national identification and cultural and moral fulfilment" provided by religion

and the Churches in central and eastern Europe during the time of the Communist domination.[55] In fact, beyond the population's hopes for a minimum of well-being (that the regimes were unable to satisfy), there was also a strong desire for liberty that the churches endeavoured to promote. A good example is Poland, that bastion *par excellence* of Catholicism, with more than 90% adherents and a social and political influence that enabled the Church to stand up to the Marxist regime for half a century. Needless to say, that influence has continued to grow with the election of a Polish Pope in 1978.

With regard to the former Czechoslovakia, Slovakia is a traditionally Catholic nation, while the Czech Republic has been marked by Protestant influence, especially in Bohemia and Moravia.[56]

The figures for Hungary are 54% Catholics and 22% Protestants, largely Calvinists.[57]

Bulgaria, which is predominantly Slav, is Orthodox, as is Romania which has preserved its Latin roots over the centuries. Originally christianized in the Byzantine-Slav tradition, "Romanian became the official liturgical language in 1862, and the autocephaly proclaimed in 1865 was recognized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople 20 years later".[58]

Among the States born of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia and Croatia are mainly Catholic, Bosnia-Herzegovina groups Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) "the majority religion is Serbian Orthodox, with significant Muslim and a small Roman Catholic minorities.[59] Moreover, Kosovo with a Muslim majority has nurtured kosovar irredentism vis-à-vis Serbia. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, "Macedonian Orthodox Christianity is the majority religion, with a Muslim minority".[60]

Albania. During the Marxist period, atheist propaganda was vigorously conducted and officially almost 75% of the population were atheist or non-religious. More recent data indicate " … Muslim 70%, Greek Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%".[61]

In Estonia, "the majority religion is Lutheran, with Russian Orthodox and Baptist minorities";[62] in Latvia, "the main religions are Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox";[63] while in Lithuania, "the majority are Roman Catholic, with Russian Orthodox and Lutheran minorities".[64]

• ***Eurasia.*** By the 17th century Moscovy had already "… reached the shores of the Pacific and the buttresses of the Caucasus". That vast space embodied such diverse populations that it resembled a "… Babel with a cohabitation of the great revealed religions (Orthodox, Islam, Judaism) as well as Buddhism and Shamanism".[65]

The Russian Orthodox Church – which is by far the largest in Russia – is represented by the Patriarchate of Moscow and in 1997 had an estimated 24 million adherents in more than 14,000 parishes. It also maintains jurisdiction over 119 eparchies, of which 59 are in Russia and the rest in Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, the Baltic States and many far away places including New York and Japan. In Russia, there are also around 14 million Muslims, more than 1 million Protestants and some 600,000 Jews.[66]

In Ukraine, the majority faith is the Orthodox Church which was split into three factions in 1996: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which owes obedience to the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Kyiv Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Catholicism is strong in the western half of the country.[67] The Uniat Church with eastern liturgy, although historically subordinate to the Vatican, was forcibly made part of the Orthodox Church during the Soviet era.[68] The problem was finally resolved in 1991 "…by the Pope's confirmation of 10 bishops".[69]

In Belarus, the Orthodox Church is the majority faith, with around 31% Belarussian adherents. Roman Catholics total 18%.[70]

The countries in central Asia that are members of the CIS are all largely Sunni Muslims, with 70% in Kyrgystan, approximately 90% in Turkmenistan, 80% in Tajikistan and similar percentages in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.[71] It should be noted that, before the collapse of the USSR, much of the institutional network of mosques in these countries had been dismantled[72] and was reconstituted after 1990 – witness Kazakhstan, which had only 63 mosques in 1990 but some 4,000 by 1996.[73]

In the Transcaucasus, each country is a different case. In Georgia, the Georgian Orthodox Church has its own organization under Catholicos [Patriarch] Ilya II, who is resident in Tbilissi.[74] Azerbaijan is 92% Muslim (mostly Shiah), the balance being made up of mainly Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic.[75] Armenia adopted Christianity in 301 AD, thus becoming the first Christian nation in the world. The Armenian Apostolic Church is headed by its Catholicos (Karekin II), who is the spiritual leader of all the Armenian communities throughout the world with 7 million adherents, of whom 4 million are in diaspora. 70% of the population belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church.[76]

In Moldova, "most of the population are adherents of the Moldovan Orthodox Church".[77]

* * *

Two observations in conclusion:

The reader will have noticed that, in this section, the space given to each geographical-cultural region is slightly different. This is not because one region was felt to be more deserving of attention than another. The reasoning was simply that the more a situation appeared (relatively) homogenous, the easier it was to describe in a few lines. Very complicated situations, on the other hand, called for somewhat fuller explanations, including, on occasion, reference to the historical situations that provoked the diversity.

As will have been seen in Section 1.2.2 above, each religion has a certain number of *truths* in which to believe, *moral standards* of conduct to practise, *rites* to perform at divine worship and something of an organized *community* of faithful believers. In an ideal world, all this would be relatively simple: membership of a faith would induce moral behaviour, attendance at services, and participation in the life of the community. However, as we know, this is far from being the case!

In the "real" world, one country has a majority of believers in a given religion and only a few thousand regular church-goers; in another country, a very lively faith goes hand in hand with much laxity of morals; in yet another, the "official" religious truths are mixed with a multitude of cultural elements from elsewhere giving rise to some quite obvious forms of religious syncretism; and in yet another country, acts of worship are abandoned in favour of new made-up rituals or practices distorted by a popular religiosity that verges on magic, and so on.

We shall consider some of these phenomena in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 below. Of course, they could also have been mentioned in this present section, but the size restraints of the document prohibit such a wealth of detail. A tome at least would have been needed, if not a whole encyclopaedia! The real purpose of the panorama we have presented, despite its many shortcomings, is to open up windows on the extraordinary variety and complexity of the religious/spiritual world in today's society and to provide a backdrop for the next two sections.

2.3 SOME FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS ON THE MAJOR RELIGIONS AND STREAMS OF SPIRITUAL THOUGHT IN THE WORLD TODAY

We are very much aware how insensitive it would be to describe the situation of the major religions in the world today by portraying (as we have just done) an entire continent with a few strokes of the pen in a couple of paragraphs. So let us look at the situation in another, perhaps more systematic, way and ask ourselves some fundamental questions.

1. What do the world's major religions/streams of spiritual thought represent in quantitative terms in the world today?

Together, the five major world religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and natural religions – animism and others) group some 4 billion members. If we add the next five religions in numerical importance (Sikhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Baha'i and Shintoism) the total is almost 4.1 billion people or approximately 75% of the world's inhabitants.[78] While it is obvious that these figures are relatively inaccurate, we should also remember that they tell us nothing about the degree of intellectual acceptance of religious beliefs nor about the degree of religious practice.

In this respect, it must also be mentioned that "dual religious practice is quite common in many countries". In Latin-America, for example, "many Catholics (registered as such because of baptism) are also followers of syncretic religions" and in Asia "this situation is also frequent".[79]

Even with such inaccurate figures, it must be recognized that "for a great many Christians, Jews, Moslems, Hindus and Buddhists religion is the structural element of their lives"[80] and that for a good number of them "religion underlies every aspect of their life".[81]

It must further be pointed out that, apart from the *personal dimension* of faith, there is also the *community/social dimension* which provides social cohesion, structures communal life and confers a special character on several countries. (See box on "The Role of Religions" at the end of Section 4.)

2. Are these "monolithic" religions or are they being traversed by various ideological trends?

The *three main monotheistic religions* (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) appear to be confronting, to varying degrees, *two opposing currents*: one, called *progressive*, which seeks to adapt faith and ethics to the modern world, the other, called *integrist* or *fundamentalist*, which tries to maintain tradition intact by rejecting all the so-called "pernicious" and "negative" aspects of "modernism". In the case of Islam particularly, "the failure of transposition of western models to Moslem countries has favoured Islamic revival" even if it is impossible to clarify whether it is "moderate" or "hard-line" (and to what extent), and whether it is dictated by the "comeback of the religious dimension" or by a "cultural" reaction to western patterns.[82]

3. What is the situation with regard to the desacralization, laicization and secularization of society in general?

First of all, some conceptual clarification is necessary. The French word "sécularisation" is a legal term for the transfer of a religious institution or its property to a civilian owner and also the process by which a member of a religious order returns to the secular state.

From the religious and sociological points of view, the word has two meanings, being used to convey, either

"… the diminution of the guardianship of the churches on society which results from the modern differentiation between institutions, [or]

… more radically, the loss of religious feeling in a society governed by scientific and technical reasoning".[83]

In Anglo-Saxon usage, the term is associated with the view adopted by Max Weber who used the expression "disenchantment of the world" to convey the idea that advances in science and technology had provided scientific answers to questions that had formerly been attributed to supernatural intervention.

Today, it is clear that the western world lives in an increasingly ***desacralized*** and ***pluralist*** context. The same may also be said of a considerable part of the developing world but any such statement should be accepted with much more circumspection. However, we shall have the opportunity to return to this point in connection with "re-sacralization", a very inappropriate label that is often used to describe the phenomenon of religious revival in the midst of modernity.

Before concluding this point, it is also necessary to distinguish between two French concepts: "laïcité" and "laïcisme". Although the terms are often used as synonyms, ***secularity*** (laïcité) is concerned, in actual fact, with the neutrality and independence of the State from all religions and all spiritual streams, as so aptly defined by Renan: "Secularity … that is to say, the neutral State between the religions".[84] ***Secularism*** (laïcisme), on the other hand, refers to a deliberate effort to divert religion from civil and political life and to confine it to the deepest level of the conscience, even to the extent of trying to deprive it of all outside expression.

It must also be emphasized that, for the experts, the word "secularization" "… signifies a process whose logic is indissolubly linked to western history".[85] However, while this does not mean that it cannot be applied to other cultural contexts, the transposition must be made with the utmost caution.

4. What do atheism, agnosticism and humanism represent in the world today?

The three terms are more or less radical denials of either the existence of *God, the Gods, the Divine, Divinity,* or of our possibility of knowing them.

"Absolute atheism is the denial of the very existence of God and also of the possibility of His existence". In its Western historical form, experts distinguish four main streams:

- *scientistic atheism* "… for whose adepts God is unnecessary because Nature obeys its own laws and, to explain this, science depends solely on calculation and experience without having to call on the hypothesis of God";
- *moral atheism,* which draws its force from the existence of evil especially when it strikes the innocent. This atheism maintains, like Stendhal, that "the only excuse for God is that he does not exist", a dictum taken up by Sartre;
- *humanist, social and political atheism:* from Bakounine to Nietzsche and Proudhon, from Lukács to Merleau-Ponty, its adepts claim that we cannot believe both in God and in human freedom because if we wish to manage our own destiny it is necessary to discard the notion of "an absolute thinker of the world", the very negation of freedom;
- *"ontological" atheism,* which replaces the idea of God by an even bigger Being in an even greater beyond. It was Heidegger in particular who gave weight to this argument.[86]

It should be noted that while scientistic atheism is now in decline, the same cannot be said of the arguments that affirm that the content of religion is *anthropological*– in other words, God is only a projection of human desire, a "personification by the transformation of human attributes into a divine subject", "…the promise of all that Man hopes for and that he doesn't have".[87] Hence, Marx's famous declaration that "religion is the opium of the people". Moreover, from Marx to Freud the perspective is the same: a liberating goal, a religious illusion of man seen as an alienation to be destroyed.[88]

In contrast to what might be thought at first sight, the judgement of religious experts on atheism is far from being entirely negative. Various forms of somewhat radical dissent have allowed the representation of God to be "purified". According to the terminology used by Bernanos, an image of God as a "key-ring God" (an answer for every question), a "handkerchief God" (solace for all suffering) or a money-bag God (source of all security) is no longer valid among enlightened theologians.[89]

Two more points of terminology:

- the term *"religious indifference*" is used "… to qualify non-reference to religion in existentialist attitudes".[90]

- secondly, ***agnosticism*** comes from "… *a-gnoscere*… the impossibility of knowing. In philosophy, it is the refusal of a rational and certain knowledge of that which overtakes experience and the rejection of the metaphysical in the irrational. In theology, it is the conviction that the existence and nature of transcendent realities cannot be attained by reason".[91]

To conclude this section, two observations:

- As may be seen, the definitions given above refer to the western historical context. While they could be used as points of reference when considering the situation elsewhere, over-zealous application to other cultures is to be avoided!
- The 1999 "Britannica Book of the Year" reports that there are some 150 million atheists in 165 countries, representing 2.5% of the world's population. These include "persons professing atheism, skepticism, disbelief or irreligion, including antireligious (opposed to all religion)". In addition, Britannica also gives figures for "Nonreligious" including "persons professing no religion, nonbelievers, agnostics, freethinkers, dereligionized secularists indifferent to all religion" for a total of circa 760 million people, representing 12.8% of the world's population.[92] However, no information is given on the methods used to calculate these categories.

"The term ***'humanism'*** is applied, historically, to the 'Religion of humanity'; Auguste Comte wanted this to replace the 'Religion of God'". It is therefore a "moral doctrine which recognizes man as the supreme value...".[93]

5. What is the situation with regard to the "privatization" of religious belief?

To complete the picture, mention must also be made of what is called the "privatization" of religious belief, a development that is not only well to the fore in the western world but also appears to be spreading to other geographical regions and cultures.

The term has several meanings, which call for brief explanation:

(1) "There's no room in the laboratory ... for religion!" This light-hearted play on words is in keeping with the general autonomization process of the temporal domain (see above) in what Max Weber called the "rationalization of all spheres of existence".[94]

(2) The second meaning comes from the currently fashionable expression "the rules of the market".

"The developments of social 'decouplement' and individualization correspond to the rules of the market and the logic of the competitive society. The market needs the individual unfolding in the plurality and diversity of offers, thus giving, in turn, new impetus to the market. Starting from the area of commodities, the competitive society has also seized the areas of thinking, opinion, religious conviction as well as social relations. The logic of the market penetrates all spheres of living to an extent that has never been experienced before".[95]

3) To some extent, the third meaning is a corollary of the second. It seems that there is growing *disassociation* (even among practising believers) between a *feeling of belonging* to a particular Church and the acceptance of its *ethical norms*. There is an "individual appropriation" of ethics whereby "everyone chooses what he wants to believe".[96]

In sum, as René Le Corre has said: "…from religion as an institution, we have moved to religion as a private matter of sentiment".[97]

These observations can lead us to ask: Does the search for a true faith still exist among young people? The answer is positive (as may be seen in Section 2.4 below).

6. What does the New Age nebula stand for today? How does it fit into the general pattern of religions, beliefs and spiritualities of our times?

The exact origin of this movement is not really known, but it began in the USA in the 1970s and has now spread to most parts of the western world. "The basic idea is that, on the eve of the year 2000 when the astrological sign of Pisces gives way to Aquarius, humanity will enter a new age of spiritual and planetary awareness, harmony and light, and profound psychic change".[98]

The New Age is "a new paradigm", a new way of looking at things, "a kind of intellectual structure which allows us to understand and explain certain aspects of reality.[99] "This vision will also encompass studies on the transformation of the brain, the specialization of its hemispheres, psychedelic effects, the hidden powers of the spirit, humanist medicine and transpersonal education as well as Zen Buddhism, the Book of Wisdom, Christian esoterism or Soufist meditation… It is a grandiose programme".[100] New Age ideas are to be found throughout the western world, particularly in business circles "in the form of techniques for the development of human potential…" to help businessmen to "…increase their efficiency by 're-energizing' and 'over-dimensioning'".[101]

It is still too early to draw any conclusion about this paradigm which is in full swing. Some have seen it simply as an answer to the existential anxiety of modern man, while others maintain that "…with the New Age, irrationality has come in through the front door". Others again stress the need to distinguish between some of its techniques "…which have their own authenticity and their own value" and the more or less explicit assumption that there will be a kind of "…world supra-religion in the Aquarius era…".[102] It should not go unheeded that there is an expanding and flourishing market for such manifestations. Here is a trend which should be carefully watched!

7. Is the rise of spiritism, astrology, alternative medicine and occult science really a major trend in religion and spirituality today?

Whether associated with the New Age or not, there are concordant signs of a growth in spiritism, astrology, numerology, alternative medicine, holistic therapy, the exploration of the conscience, neurolinguistic programming, spiritual healing, sophrology, telepathy, self-hypnosis for personal health and development, tarot and an almost inexhaustible number of clairvoyant techniques.

It would be simplistic and reductive to tar all of these activities with the same brush. Nevertheless, this upsurge is indicative – quite apart from the anguish of our times – of two very important trends that should not be overlooked. At the end of the 20th century, Man seems to be rejecting the epistemological demarcation lines between "science" and "para-science". At the same time, although he takes institutional science and its data for granted, he also seems to want to open up his mind to other ways of thinking, to find harmony by the law of sounds or to heal himself with colours (for example, by chromatotherapy). In other words, to build a bridge between two worlds that have long ignored one another.[103]

In many of these demonstrations of religious syncretism, experts see a resurgence, an awakening of traditional gnosticism. "Today's gnostic, just like that of yore, is a man suffering from being thrown into existence as a *homo viator,* particularly when society is 'senseless'. He seeks the hidden way to escape from the world, the saving light to escape from anxiety".[104]

This striking mixture was unveiled to the world in 1997 with the collective suicide of Marshall Appelwhite's "Heaven's Gate" group, a blend of New Age, science-fiction and Christianity. Members lived in a community called "the class" and had been selected to prepare the way to a superior level of life. The group functioned on the basis of very strict collective control: even the food, the way of shaving, etc., had to conform to the rules.[105]

To this must be added the emergence of a new mysticism. Perhaps the most significant example is Paulo Coelho, whose writings skilfully mix the "search for buried treasure", the "secrets of Man's heart" and "the signs of destiny".[106] It is not surprising that some of his books – for example "The Alchemist" and "The Pilgrimage, A Contemporary Quest for Ancient Wisdom" – have been translated into more than 20 languages and sold in millions of copies, because they reflect "l'air du temps" which he summarizes in the words spoken by one of his characters: "The truth is that life is generous to the person who lives his Personal Legend".[107]

Good examples are also Italian novelist Susanna Tamaro, author of such best-sellers as "Follow your heart" and "Anima Mundi", and Deepak Chopra, an Indian doctor of medicine based on Hindu mysticism who practices in USA,[108] not to mention the influence of the "para-normal" in such cult television series as "X files", "Millennium", Atlantis, PSI Factor and others in the same vein, all of which tend to convey the message that "the truth is out there".

Conclusions

What can we conclude from the above? Without going too far at this point, at least two conclusions can be emphasized:

- "The desire for enchantment has not disappeared from the world",[109] but it tends to be expressed outside the institutional channels. This is why the experts note the "importance of the *personal spiritual adventure,* disconnected from the doctrinal teaching of the major religions".[110]
- The "religion supermarket" is not simply a slogan that each one of us is free to feel happy or unhappy with. It is a reality that people, most of all young people, actually experience today.

Jean Vernette, as expert on the subject, has given an excellent description of this cultural mould: "Religion in the present 'era of emptiness' [G. Lipovetski] seems to be one of several means of self-fulfilment, of equilibrium and wisdom, in the same manner as Oriental Ways of Meditation and the western movements of the Development of Human Potential. In this perspective, *everyone tailors his own religion to his own measurements, drawing on elements from all beliefs in a vast haze of opinions".*[111]

2.4 SOME NOTES ON THE RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL WORLD OF YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

In the light of the background described in Section 2.3 above (which in no way claims to be exhaustive) and with much intellectual humility, we shall confine ourselves to a few salient points.

2.4.1 Individualization

Individualization is a process whereby "young people in transition towards adulthood follow ever more personal and subjective paths, only partly connected to their registered age".[112] Mario Pollo goes on: "We see in our societies a destandardization of the life of men and women and a diversification of life choices. Life becomes a *complex succession of transitory situations* which individuals themselves are called to select, organize and control. The new challenge is how to best exploit the opportunities of the market, the institutional regulations, the web of social relationships, in order to orient the trajectory of one's life in a calculated manner".[113]

Consequently, "although, on the one hand, individualization liberates …, on the other it renders [young people] weaker and more fragile in the management of their project of transition to adulthood and, in the end, penalizes the more disadvantaged",[114] those that have been called the 'biographiehavarist' by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck – the unskilful do-it-yourselfer who fails to put together the components of his biographic possibilities of combination. This development results in new solitudes".[115]

Various studies of young people in eastern and central Europe have confirmed this "tendency to make individual choices in religious matters".[116] "If we ask young people what they want, we find money, work, power, love, God and so forth, but always and increasingly the aspiration to a life made to measure".[117] "Even love, marriage, parenthood, increasingly seen with a sense of uncertainty for the future, are subject to the condition of binding and keeping together individual or centrifuge biographies".[118]

Individualization and personal search are accompanied by a reticence to follow established patterns. *"Prefabricated models of meaning lose significance"* and "the individual becomes the central point of his own story, of his belonging and not least of his own search for meaning and religion itself".[119] "Meaning's transcendent reference is declining to mere immanence".[120] As the German sociologist Gerhard Schmidtchen has said: "Religious feelings today have taken the path of the immanence of the world".[121]

One last observation to conclude this section: we should not automatically associate a person's wish to centre life around himself with selfishness or conceit. Individualism may be both positive – self-actualization, self-realization, ego assertion, personality development – and negative: egoism, narcissism, self-centredness, often in practical connection with the "hedonist society".

2.4.2 Spiritual perception versus superficiality

Young people seem to have at the same time a religious and/or spiritual need, desire, curiosity and to be attracted to the "culture of superficiality". Without going into the details of this "culture", reference should nevertheless be made to two books which have become classic works on the subject: "La société du spectacle" [The 'show' society] by Guy Debord (1967 and 1987) and "L'ère du vide: Essai sur l'individualisme contemporain" [The age of emptiness: Essay on contemporary individualism] by Gilles Lipovetsky.[122]

Superficiality cannot be measured against something, it is "experienced". Here are some simple examples:

- in television, the marginal role of genuine intellectuals and opinion-makers has been replaced by "charlatans" who present talk shows and variety programmes all day long.
- the growing amount of time and space given in the written press and on television to the section called "people". This is all the more important in that the results of research undertaken in several countries all demonstrate that television provides "discussion topics for everyday social contact and thus replaces to a great extent joint first-hand experience".[123]
- two other trends are TV zapping and surfing on the Internet. People no longer decide on something in particular, they look and then pass on. A point worth noting is that "such artificial opportunities of experience do not require any commitment".[124]
- The poverty of the symbols and symbols devoid of meaning: the "crisis of images, symbols and myths of the present-day collective imaginary".[125]

There is also the fact that young people have fewer opportunities for first-hand experience. "The community of old and young people, the experience of sickness and death, the immediacy to the animal world and flora, the everyday wisdoms, the basic movements of life and survival, which were important in previous generations, no longer exist".[126]

Some possible consequences are:

(1) A shift in realities: real life is increasingly replaced in people's minds by life on the screen, by artificial situations.

(2) This superficiality creates a vicious circle in that it is both cause and effect and creates reticence in asking real questions about the true meaning of things. Further, since this sometimes also goes together with wariness towards interpersonal relationships, is it surprising that it leads to a fear of long-term relationship and commitment?

(3) This leads us directly to atrophy one dimension: the meaning of the sacred (which cannot be perceived without a sense of time and depth) and to hypertrophy another, which, as E. Drewermann has reported, is exactly what happens to very many young people today.[127]

The logical conclusion is that there can be no deep spiritual/religious dimension without interiorization. We shall see in Section 4 how Scouting can contribute to the need for interiorization (of me) in young people. For the moment, suffice to say that this "contemporary interiority crisis"[128] can be seen in the growing difficulty that young people have in understanding themselves on an historical perspective.

2.4.3 The homogenizing experience of time

Experts have observed that time is being trivialized in our complex, modern societies and that the previously clear distinctions between time spent working and time spent on festivities, weekdays and public holidays, Holy Days and secular occasions, even day and night, are all becoming blurred. They call this phenomenon the homogenizing experience of time as lived by young people today and believe that it makes it more difficult for them to discover the meaning of life.[129]

Some necessary comments:

- There is a *weakening of the vertical axis of time* (past, present and future) and an *extraordinary reinforcement of the horizontal axis of time* (the present).
- In similar fashion, there is a loosening of the bonds between generations
- At the same time, our ties with people who live around us are weaker than the ones we have with people who do not live in our immediate surroundings (with Internet and e-mail, we can be in contact with the whole world… or almost!)

In consequence, the concept of "neighbour", the person who is "close at hand", has changed as has the concept of "community", hence the inability to perceive one's own life as a history endowed with meaning[130] and as a personal history within the history of a community.

It may be asked if this is not one of the fundamental differences between "western" and "eastern" cultures, or between the cultures of the rich countries and the developing countries, or between pre-technological and modern cultures. It may also be asked if "globalization" is not also "standardizing" the planet in this area too! However, an in-depth discussion of these questions would lead us too far away from the main purpose of this document.

2.4.4 The desacralization of sex

Since sex is a fundamental human experience, it is not surprising that it also reflects the characteristic impulses of our century: power, possession, enjoyment, consumption!

In many countries, the very sophisticated means of mass communication that now cover virtually the entire planet tend to present sexuality, sensuality and relations between the sexes as a matter of

- performance: Male Power, Viagra, etc.
- enjoyment and consumption, in a commercial sense: we "sell" a product, an escort service, a masculine or feminine stripper and so on!
- prestige and social status.

Worth noting is the advertisers' insistence that sexual pleasure is not only for youth and adults, it is also for the elderly and the very elderly, that adultery is not a male "preserve" but a female "right" as well, etc. These examples – and others could be quoted – show that hedonism is a life-style in search of official recognition and that it does not have too much difficulty in obtaining it, so long as it is paid for!

To put these observations in context, we need to remember that we live in a world where "satisfaction and immediate gratification are all important"

and "...where the value of self has taken on such proportions that anything can be sacrificed at the altar of the ego".[131]

If the consumer society is, in fact, the authority, it is obvious that young people are not being encouraged to adopt a life-style based on carefully thought-out values and principles and to understand that a true, lasting inter-personal relationship comes from the precept of a "sacred" bond between a man and a woman who accept a commitment "for life". Such a commitment has become only one of many other life-styles; it has to assert its legitimacy in a competitive context.[132]

2.4.5 Social culture: complexity and polycentrism, the market of multiple choice

As we have seen above, the dominant social culture is *complex* and *polycentric:* "The young person's moving from the family to school, to work, to the peer group, to associations, sports centres and mass media is the experience of a journey in a *non-homogenous and fragmented social reality,* inviting him or her to live pragmatically and without a project, and to avoid coherent decisions if he/she wants to be able to take advantage of the promises offered by each place he/she touches".[133]

Thus, the young person experiences "different places which often offer values, life-styles, norms and rules all very diverse, if not antagonist".[134] In the document "Trends" we have dealt with this subject: the dispersion and break-up of the individual.[135]

Conclusion: It is not surprising that, given this context, "it is impossible for many people, young people in particular, to acquire the certainty that values proposed to them or which they have chosen as a basis for their behaviour are authentic, important and right, forming only one of the many value systems present with equal dignity in social life".[136]

Hence, the trend towards "ethical relativism" and a "consumer mentality": look, compare, buy, ask for after-sales service and finally throw away.[137] (This reminds us of Alvin Toffler's "throw-away society" that he was already talking about 30 years ago!) Research in Germany shows that "the three popular Christian Churches – the Protestant Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church – have got themselves into a market situation in which each of them has become *one offeror among many".*[138]

As M. Affolderbach and R. Hanusch have observed: "Christian faith no longer seems to be the carpet on which all the pieces of furniture of my convictions find space, but a mobile piece of furniture that is placed in the middle of the room by one person and possibly in the storeroom by another in order to be got out again on occasion".[139]

Therefore, for many of our contemporaries, and even more so for young people, "[religion] …is no longer *The* vision of the world, even if it remains *A* vision of the world, one among several others. Not only can any religion now claim universality, but all religions will be subjected in the future to the criticism of the human sciences and to individual choice".[140]

N.B.: The following table is an outline of the trends presented in this section of the document and their consequences on young people's perception of the spiritual/religious dimension.

CHARACTERISTICS/TRENDS OF PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY	CONSEQUENCES ON THE PERCEPTION OF SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS DIMENSION
• Subjectivization, individualization, personal search →	• Difficulty in perceiving alterity/"otherness" Reluctance to follow pre-fabricated models
• Superficiality →	• Difficulty to perceive, even more to penetrate, in-depth conceptual/historical thinking
• Weakening of the vertical dimension of life (past, present, future) Weakening of the horizontal dimension of life →	• Difficulty in seeing oneself as part of a meaningful history or process Increase in the relationship with what is "far away" to the detriment of what is "near"
• Sexuality/relationships between sexes (performance, hedonism, consumer attitude) →	• Detriment of profound inter-personal relationships
• Complex and polycentric culture The "multiple choice" market →	• Ethical relativism Consumer mentality Dispersion and break-up of the individual

2.5 RELIGIONS AND CULTURES: TRADITIONAL, MODERN AND POST-MODERN

The situation we have described applies principally to countries with "modern" and "post-modern" cultures, i.e. Europe and other so-called "rich, industrialized or developed" countries in the northern hemisphere.

It is emphasized that when we speak of "traditional" or "modern" cultures, we are not being judgemental, we are using the words "traditional", "modern" and "post-modern" in their sociological sense.

In countries with a ***traditional culture***, a mentality of pre-technical civilization tends to prevail whereby stability, rather than change, is seen as a more desirable model of social organization. "They maintain that the survival of the group depends on the permanence of institutions, standards, beliefs, rituals, customs".[141]

In contrast, ***modernity*** is a cultural configuration that developed in Europe in the 16th century, more or less about the time of the Renaissance and continuing with the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment. Man became the centre of the universe, innovation and change were favoured as forms of social organization, the economic dimension came to the fore with the industrial society and the triumph of individuality was consecrated in "…a form of civic individualism where each individual grew in compliance with civic universality" [N.B. Citizenship and submission to the law] (Example: French Revolution).[142]

The recent (and disputed) term ***"post-modernity"*** covers the last 20-30 years. It is identified with modernity in its cult of individualism but substitutes the "tribal and reticular characteristic" for universality and "makes the ***me*** and its hedonic jubilation the supreme purpose". Paradoxally, the multiplication of identifications weakens the ***me*** and the image becomes intrusive: "…the advertising image, the television image, the virtual image, the trademark image …everyone and everything must make an exhibition of themselves".[143]

* * *

As for geographical distribution, a good half (and perhaps even two-thirds) of humanity lives in "traditional" societies or societies in transition, and a good quarter lives in areas of great social divide: relatively small "modernity" areas that are mostly in towns and "traditional areas" that are usually in the countryside. In other countries, there are "small islands of modernity" in the midst of a "traditional sea". In yet other countries, elements of "technical modernity" co-exist with highly traditional cultural configurations.

As to the situation regarding the co-existence between these different socio-cultural models, a ***few hypotheses*** may be advanced:

- The wind is blowing in the direction of modernity, all the more so since it has the strong backing of the mass media.
- Thus, the traditional areas are increasingly under attack from the penetration of modernity's habits and ways of thinking.
- The major "establishment" religions with their links to cultural configurations bear up better in traditional areas.

- Futurologists forecast areas of great tension along the lines of friction. As an example, the rapid expansion of fundamentalism in certain countries is seen by some experts as a withdrawal in the face of modernity (a simplistic explanation perhaps, but not entirely without foundation).

Conclusion: The dialogue *religion-modernity* and *religion(s)-modernity(ies)* should be carefully monitored not only from the geopolitical stance but also from the socio-cultural viewpoint, and most especially by everyone interested in the education of future generations.

* * *

Two important remarks, one on the essentials and one on the methodology:

1. It is impossible to draw univocal conclusions from what has been said so far. As the reader will readily understand, it is impossible to draw up precise rules because each case is a special one. The aim of the hypotheses outlined above is simply to help us look at certain variables more closely while trying to understand an actual situation.
2. Surveys are not carried out everywhere. In some countries it is not the custom, in others it is felt that people should not be questioned about their religious beliefs and ideas, sometimes because "these things go without saying", for example "everyone is Moslem here" or "everybody is Catholic", and so on. Still in other countries, while many studies and inquiries have been made, the change in religious attitudes is still one of the least known aspects of social evolution. It is clear, therefore, that the fragmentation already mentioned, the vagueness of people's convictions and the increase in the number of religious "labels" will not add to the clarity of the picture, at least in the immediate future.

* * *

We now come to the end of this "panorama" of the religious/spiritual world of the young. The site is vast and our description certainly incomplete. However, it does contain some pointers for research and some key reading which will be useful for anyone interested in pursuing the matter further.

That great expert in new spiritualities and new wisdoms, Jean Vernette, sets great store in "…the appearance of a new model of belief…" based more on "…the pursuit of a spiritual 'journey' than on the acceptance of a dogmatic message".[144]

This has three major consequences:

- the first concerns ***people***: when we are at ease with someone, we enter into communion. This remark echoes the importance that psychologists give to the peer group as a privileged place for the interiorization of values.
- the second concerns ***time***: truth should not be thrust on people. The individual must have time to interiorize. We must allow time for truth to penetrate into the unconscious and the conscious, for it will be even more firmly anchored when it is perceived as an "interior way" rather than an "exterior way"

- the third concerns the ***places*** of interiorization. We will examine the importance of nature, of solitude, of time spent "doing nothing", gazing at the stars, etc.

3. SPIRITUAL/ RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN BADEN-POWELL's THINKING

The main purpose of this section is to show to what extent the importance of spiritual/religious education was present in B-P's mind when he created the Scout Movement.

First of all, a preliminary remark. B-P was British and Scouting was founded in Britain. Therefore, it is not surprising if his comments on religion are mainly inspired by Christianity but it is not difficult to see how they go far beyond the limits of one religion and are applicable to any believer. B-P himself was aware of that when he said: "Reverence to God and reverence for one's neighbour and reverence for oneself as a servant of God, are the basis of every form of religion".[145]

For the sake of clarity and brevity, B-P's ideas will not be developed in a chronological order but rather in a thematic way.

3.1 THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IS FULLY PRESENT IN B-P's THINKING SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING

Every Scout leader knows the importance of "Scouting for Boys" in the history of the Movement. In order to show to what extent the spiritual/ religious dimension was present in B-P's mind, it is important to take three quotations extracted from the original edition of the book.

There is first a very categorical affirmation: "No man is much good unless he believes in God and obeys His laws. So every Scout should have a religion".[146]

Then, there is a short definition: "Religion seems a very simple thing: 1st Love and serve God, 2nd Love and serve your neighbour".[147] And finally, a very practical advice addressed to boys: "In doing your duty to God always be grateful to Him. Whenever you enjoy a pleasure or a good game, or succeed in doing a good thing, thank Him for it, if only with a word or two, just as you say grace at a meal".[148]

In 1926, B-P was requested to make a presentation to the Joint Conference of Commissioners of Scouting and Guiding at High Leigh, England, on the subject of "Religion in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movements". At the outset, he summarized his views by saying: "I have been asked to describe more fully than has been shown in 'Scouting for boys' what was in my mind as regards religion when I instituted Scouting and Guiding. I was asked 'Where does Religion come in?' Well, my reply is 'It does not come in at all. It is already there. It is the fundamental factor underlying Scouting and Guiding'".[149] And he insisted: "It is all important that this should be fully understood by Commissioners so that they can explain it to our Scouters and Guiders as well as to outsiders who may want to know about it".[150]

Those ideas accompanied B-P throughout his life. Thus, when he wrote in 1939 the Preface to the Special Canadian Edition of "Scouting for Boys", he said: "There is a vast reserve of loyal patriotism and Christian spirit lying dormant in our nation today, mainly because it sees no direct opportunity for expressing itself. Here in this joyous brotherhood there is vast opportunity open to all in a happy work that shows results under your hands and a work that is worthwhile because it gives every man his chance of service for his fellow-men and for God".[151]

We will see in section 4 how B-P's ideas on the subject were reflected in the Purpose and Principles of the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

3.2 THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IS NOT AN "ADDED DIMENSION". IT MAKES PART OF THE WHOLE AND IT IS INTEGRATED

B-P quoting J.F. Newton (at that time Bishop of Winchester) said "Religion is not a thing apart from life, but life itself at its best".[152]

In the same address, *Duty to God* is linked with *Duty to self*, *Duty to others*, the *spirit of service* and the pursuit of *happiness in life*, the whole culminating with an *ideal vision of society*.

Thus, B-P speaks of astronomy, then "...dealing with the objects nearer home, each child can imbibe for himself... the wonders and beauties of the Universe around him, and thus develop an outlook of wider interests together with some realisations of the Creator and of the spiritual side of life... This is one practical way by which the young soul can be attracted and led to a realisation of God. The further step is to show that God is love working around and within each one".[153]

Duty to self: "...The boy can then realise better that part of his 'Duty to God' is to take care of and develop as a sacred trust those talents with which God has equipped him for his passage through his life".[154]

Duty to others and spirit of service: "Thus we can teach them that to do Duty to God means not merely to lean on his kindness but to do his will by practising love towards one's neighbour... much on the line of the Sermon on the Mount".[155]

Spirit of service: "It is only through goodwill and cooperation, that is through cheerful service for others, that a man reaches true success, i.e. Happiness. For then he finds that Heaven is here in this world and not merely a vision of the next".[156]

And he concludes: "If this (all the above) can be brought about as a general rule then indeed shall we find Heaven upon earth".[157]

Conclusion: using the words of his time, B-P expressed clearly that the spiritual dimension is part of a whole, linked with the other aspects of the fundamental principles and all stems from the purpose of the Movement: the integral development of young people. We will see in section 4 the importance of this concept in programme design and development.

3.3 THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION: NATURE OF SCOUTING AS AN EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION VS INSTRUCTION

One deep conviction which permeated B-P's thinking throughout his life was the importance of education rather than that of simple instruction if society wants to create real citizens, young people with "character". This observation applies also to spiritual education.

Already in 1918, writing in the "Headquarters Gazette", he observed:

"Religion can only be 'caught', not 'taught'. It is not a dressing donned from outside, put on for Sunday wear. It is a true part of a boy's character, a development of soul and not a veneer that may peel off. It is a matter of personality, of inner conviction, not of instruction. The actions of a very large proportion of our men are, at present, very little guided by religious conviction. This may be attributed to a great extent to the fact that often *instruction* instead of *education* has been employed in the religious training of the boy".[158]

This observation was developed in 1926, in the address devoted to "Religion in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movement", already quoted above: "Nature study gives the most understandable and eagerly grasped method...We try to teach them through precepts and elementary theology, within school walls, while outside the sun is shining and Nature is calling to show them through their eyes, ears, noses and sense of touch, the wonders and beauties of the Creator".[159]

He came again to the subject in an address made to the York Conference in 1928: "There is in every human individual the germ of Love, the 'bit of God' as the soul has been termed, which, if its expression is encouraged, will develop till it permeates the character of a boy. Love, like radium, grows with the giving out. Once started in the boy it is never likely to die down in the man. Its tendency is to go on increasing until it permeates his whole being and his every action, till in fact it gives him the higher happiness of finding heaven here on earth...".[160]

This conviction of B-P came from two sources. The first one, an acute observation of the changing reality of young people in his times:

"The incoming generation... Even in the last thirty years the younger generation has emerged from the cocoon of Victorian discipline, which was applied from without, to the freer stage of regulating their conduct by their own control from within".[161] And the second one, his deeply-rooted conviction that active education is more suitable to the nature of young people : "...since the boy or girl is always ready to *do* rather than to digest".[162]

Before closing this section, a brief comment on the above: it is interesting to compare those phrases written in the beginning of the century with the findings of the two Reports on Education written by International Commissions under the leadership of UNESCO, the first one published in 1972 and the second one in 1996. They both talk of the importance of education including not only knowledge but also skills and attitudes and they both show that "learning to *know"* is not enough for today's world and that knowledge has to be accompanied by "learning to *do"*, "learning to *be"* and "learning to *live"* with others.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AND IN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

As we have seen above (see section 3.3), B-P. had true reverence for nature. "And yet in it all there is life and sensation, reproduction, death and evolution going on steadily under the same great law by which we... are governed. Man has his Nature-comrades among the forest plants and creatures. *For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the forest is at once a laboratory, a club and a temple".*[163]

He did not hesitate to counter the arguments of the atheists of his time: "The atheists... maintain that a religion that has to be learnt from books written by men cannot be a true one. But they don't seem to see that besides printed books... God has given us as one step the great Book of Nature to read; and they cannot say that there is untruth there – the facts stand before them... I do not suggest Nature Study as a form of worship or as a substitute for religion, but I advocate the understanding of Nature as a step, in certain cases, towards gaining religion".[164]

But, above all, he felt strongly that nature had the possibility of creating an atmosphere conducive to "…think of higher things". Thus, "the wonder... of all wonders is how some teachers have neglected this (i.e. nature study) easy and unfailing means of education and have struggled to impose Biblical instruction as a first step towards getting a restless, full-spirited boy to think of higher things".[165] And he insisted: "Scoutcraft is a means through which the veriest hooligan can be brought to higher thought and to the elements of faith in God".[166]

And this thought was so deeply rooted in his mind that he came back to it in his "Last Message to the Scouts of the World": "Nature study will show you how full of beautiful and wonderful things God has made the world for you to enjoy... Try to leave this world a little better than you found it".[167]

We will see, in section 4, the pedagogical and legal consequences of this legacy that B-P left on his Movement but there is a further point that has to be emphasized.

3.5 THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION SHOULD BE A UNIFYING FACTOR IN SCOUTING, NOT A DIVISIVE ONE

"...As in nationalism, so it is in religion. Support of one's own form of belief is a right and proper thing, but it becomes narrow sectarianism when it does not recognise and appreciate the good points in other denominations; if it fails to look with broadened and sympathetic view on the efforts of others to serve God it fails to help in bringing about God's Kingdom upon earth".[168]

This matches with his concept of God: "God is not some narrow-minded personage, as some people would seem to image, but a vast Spirit of Love that overlooks the minor differences of form and creed and denomination and which blesses every man who *really tries to do his best,* according to his lights, in His service".[169]

No less comprehensive was his definition of God's kingdom: "By the term 'God's Kingdom' I mean the prevailing of love in the world in the place of dominance of selfish interest and rivalry such as at present exists".[170]

From all the above, we can draw a clear conclusion: the spiritual dimension belongs to the core thinking of B-P, expressed throughout his life, in a very

consistent and coherent way, in a variety of occasions and in a multitude of written publications, from which we have selected only a few quotes mentioned in this section.

The next section will show how this thinking of the Founder has been present in the Movement throughout the years. In other words, we will try to answer the question: has WOSM been faithful to the heritage of the Founder?

Relationship between SCOUTING, NATURE and RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

If we look at the great spiritual traditions in the history of humanity, the mountain is a major theme in several of the world's religions, and this is why the mountain has been chosen as the theme here.

- Already in the time of the Hittites, "each mountain [was] … the seat, the earthly fixation point of a powerful, vigorous god of thunder and symbol of strength… The mountain was therefore a place of high sacrality".[171]
- In the Hindu tradition, Arunachala is a sacred mountain which shows darkness turning to light, in other words, the dawn. It is the demonstration of Shiva, of absolute reality.

  Shiva is the God of the cosmic dance, and the fire that destroys the world at the end of times giving rise to a new world. The pilgrim circles the mountain to look at it from every point of view, but the truth is in the centre, immobile like Arunachala, the sacred mountain that symbolizes the way to God, to the one who does not change.[172]
- In Japan, "the mountains have been considered as the sacred residence of the *kami* (gods) who provide the water to grow rice since ancient times". "Following the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century, the mountains that had been considered particularly sacred became centres of religious and ascetic practices".[173]
- The mountain has a special place in the Bible too. It was on Mount Sinai that Moses received the Tablets of the Law;[174] in the First Book of Kings, the prophet Elijah heard the Lord say: "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by".[175] In the New Testament, it was again on a mountain that Jesus Christ proclaimed the Beatitudes and where the Transfiguration took place in the presence of Moses and Elijah.[176]

Thus, in several religious traditions, ***the mountain*** is a privileged place ***to encounter God*** and also ***to encounter oneself***. The mountain theme is often linked to that of solitude, to leaving the everyday world aside, to escaping from other human beings… some mystic authors even claim that, in any genuine search for truth, solitude is not a choice but a necessity!

And none of this escaped Baden-Powell. In his book, "Life's snags and how to meet them: Talks to young men", written in 1927, Baden-Powell ponders on life's difficulties and how to overcome them. Recalling his own experience, he wrote: "It was in the woodland which surrounded school and playground that I learnt the most… Then hikes on the open road brought Nature lore and human side into proper mutual relations, both through historical relics at the wayside and through the intercourse with men on the road. Then sea cruises and rock climbing widened and confirmed the lessons of the copse, and later on led one to appreciate across the oceans and among the eternal snows the good things the Creator has set for our enjoyment on a wider scale in the wilder parts".[177]

Later on in this book, he devotes chapter 15 to the mountains under the title of "Climbing as education". He describes the different steps, starting with a three-year-old child climbing an obstacle, then tree-climbing for older children and he mentions the benefits of team-climbing which gives "…additional education in the moral qualities of leadership, discipline, good temper, unselfish co-operation and emulation".[178] And finally, he asserts *"But best of all is mountain-climbing. It makes true men –men of sinew, energy and daring, lovers of Nature, beauty and religion".*[179] He mentions General Smuts on the experience of climbing a mountain "We feel a great joy. The religion of the mountain is, in reality, the religion of joy and of the release of the soul from things that weight it down with a sense of weariness, sorrow and defeat".[180] And B-P concludes: "So when you climb, climb your mountain in company with others, but when you reach the glorious summit with its vast outlook, sit down apart and think. And as you think, *drink in the wonderful inspiration of it all.* When you come down to earth again *you will find yourself another man in body and mind –and, what is more, in spirit, the spirit of broadminded outlook".*[181]

In similar vein, "nature (forests, mountains, the sea) shows itself to be a place which favours hierophanes. In some cases it is simply the dimension of the silence, beauty and harmony of nature which reveals the presence of God, in other cases it is mountain-climbing with its symbolism which is the place of the revelation of the Divine presence".[182]

With symbols of nature – and most especially the mountain – we can open up young hearts to the mystery of God. This is particularly important in an age such as the one we know today, with its dearth of collective symbols! (see Section 2.4). The language of signs becomes particularly significant when it is welcomed and practised by a small community, such as a patrol or a troop, when the sharing of experiences takes place in an atmosphere of fellowship after a collective effort that mobilizes the energy of everyone!

4. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN SCOUTING. EDUCATIONAL AND LEGAL CONSEQUENCES IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

First of all, a preliminary observation. This is a separate section from Section 3 for reasons of logic and conception. It is, however, important to emphasize straight away that the pedagogical thinking of the Movement and its forms of legal organization over the years must be seen as a direct consequence of the thinking of Baden-Powell, especially as many of them were adopted while he was actively involved in the leadership and management of the Movement.

4.1 PEDAGOGY OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

The Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement clearly states that Scouting is "an educational movement".[183] If we refer to the classification used by UNESCO (formal, informal and non-formal education), Scouting clearly belongs to the category of non-formal education because it is an "…organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable learning objectives".[184]

The purpose of Scouting, as established in Article I of the WOSM Constitution is "…to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities".[185]

Thus, four of these areas appear in the WOSM Constitution: physical, intellectual, social and spiritual, while the "emotional" area is systematically being added to all educational publications of the World Scout Bureau to take account of recent advances in the field of social sciences related to personal development.

In other words, the aim of Scouting is the integral development of the personality of children and young people.

In so doing, Scouting adopts a *holistic approach* to a young person's education. In concrete terms, this means that Scouting recognizes that the individual is "a complex being whose identity is formed in part through interaction and relationships between the various dimensions of the individual (physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual), between the individual and the external world (family, community, peer-group, village, city, country …) and, ultimately, between the individual and a Spiritual Reality".[186]

The implications of this assertion are many but, for the purpose of this document, two of them are of particular importance:

- Scouting recognizes that "the various dimensions of the human personality are connected and influence each other"
- Scouting acknowledges that the development of the person as a whole can only take place as a result of a multiplicity of experiences … spread over a period of time".[187]

Scouting thus endeavours to offer to a young person a multiplicity of experiences in a safe, friendly and supportive environment in which the young person can "experiment" at his/her own pace, learn from experience,

develop his/her inner resources, experience a feeling of belonging, develop his/her value system and progressively enrich his/her personality and, therefore, "…develop as a unique human being who is ever more autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed".[188] By definition, the educational process implies a permanent search on the part of the person leading to further development of his/her personality. Indeed, this is built into the concept of "doing one's best".

Later on, we shall see the importance of the above remarks concerning spiritual/religious education which should not be conceived entirely as a separate activity, secluded in a little box but rather as something that is linked in theory and in practice with the other components of the "holistic Scouting experience". This observation is essential in programme design and development.

4.2 THE QUESTION OF "DUTY TO GOD" AND THE ALTERNATIVE PROMISES

The subject of the formulation of the spiritual dimension in the Scout Promise is a complicated one with a long historical background. Everyone who has read the history of the Movement in its early years would agree that its growth at that time was "charismatic" (undoubtedly due to the appeal of both the Founder and the ideals) and, consequently, somewhat disorganized. In addition, there was the impact of the First World War (1914-1918) and the fact that communications were not so rapid and efficient as they are today.

The Movement was founded in 1907 but there was no World Scout Conference, Committee or Bureau until 1920 when the World Bureau was founded. The majority of Scout countries that had started Scouting assembled at the 2nd World Scout Conference in 1922 and elected the first International Committee (now called the World Scout Committee). These countries were considered to be the Founder Member Countries. They were not, in actual fact, required to meet any recognition requirements or standards but were accepted as *bona fide* Scout Associations following the accepted practices laid down by the Founder.

Among these founder countries there were several having federations of more than one association. In half a dozen of these federations, some of the component associations had the full promise including "Duty to God" while in others this was optional. Three of those countries started many branch associations in their colonies and overseas possessions and these associations followed the pattern of their parent associations.

From 1924 onwards, applications from prospective member countries were reviewed by the World Committee. The original World Constitution was adopted in 1924 and thereafter applications were referred to the member countries for approval with the recommendation of the World Committee.

It should also be noted that, in 1924, the World Scout Conference adopted Resolution 14/24 entitled "Principles of Scouting" which contains a strong affirmation of the spiritual principle. This reads:

"The Boy Scouts International Conference declares that the Boy Scout Movement is a movement of national, international and universal character, the object of which is to endow each separate nation and the whole world with a youth which is physically, morally and spiritually strong".[189]

The resolution then defines what it considers to be the national, international and universal character of the Movement and in the last paragraph declares:

"The Scout Movement has no tendency to weaken but, on the contrary, to strengthen individual religious belief. The Scout Law requires that a Scout shall truly and sincerely practise his religion, and the policy of the Movement forbids any kind of sectarian propaganda at mixed gatherings".[190]

4.3 DECLARATION OF THE WORLD COMMITTEE (1932)

As from 1924, the World Scout Committee kept an eye on the different formulations of the Scout Promise. Several instances are mentioned here by way of example:

- The World Committee agreed that Buddhists could use the term "Duty to my Religion" and that Hindus used the term "my Dharma".
- It also agreed with a more elaborate formulation of some Muslim associations: "To be faithful to God and follow in the footsteps of His Prophet and His Disciples".
- In the case of animists, it was accepted that a belief in some Superior Power is all that could be required.

It should be emphasized that in these three instances, the Promises were not "alternative Promises" but expressions of the Promise "with God" according to the different religious beliefs. Indeed, since the Movement's beginnings, Baden-Powell's concept of "Duty to God" was equally meant to apply to non-monotheistic religions such as Hinduism or those, like Buddhism, that do not acknowledge a personal God.

To clarify the matter further and reaffirm its religious policy, the World Committee issued a Statement of Principle in 1932. This was published in the magazine 'Jamboree' "for general information and guidance".[191]

The document signed by Hubert Martin, then Director of the World Scout Bureau, begins with a recapitulation of the recent history of the Movement: the origins, the number of registered associations, the first Jamboree and Conference in London in 1920, the creation of the International Bureau and the assumption that "…all countries which up to that date had adopted the Scout Movement had done so without making any alteration in the fundamental principles laid down by its Founder. On that assumption the International Bureau recognised all existing known Boy Scout Associations".

The Statement continues: "Later, however, it became known to the International Bureau that a small minority of these Boy Scout Associations had altered the Scouts' Promise either by omitting, or making optional, the clause of 'Duty to God' ".

The World Committee established the "non-retroactivity clause", reaffirmed the general principle and established the rule for the future. Because of their importance, the four paragraphs in question are extensively quoted below:

"This matter was discussed at length at the Second International Conference in Paris in 1922, and it was felt that as these few Associations who had altered the Scouts' Promise had already been recognised it would not be

right to cancel their recognition, but it was hoped that in due time they would see their way to restore the full Scouts' Promise.

"The International Committee decided that as regards any new associations applying for recognition the acceptance of the full Scouts' Promise must be regarded as a *sine qua non.* Since 1922, therefore, no new Association has been recognised unless its Promise included the clause of 'Duty to God'.

"There have been two or three cases in which new associations have applied for recognition whose Promise did not originally contain that clause, but in every case the full Promise has been adopted before recognition.

"The International Committee feel that it is essential that any association wishing to be recognized as member of the World Brotherhood of Scouts shall be prepared to accept without any omissions the fundamental principles laid down by the Chief Scout when he founded the Movement. Those principles have now stood the test of twenty-five years and have been found acceptable not only by Christian countries but also by people of other religions, Mohammedans, Jews, etc."[192]

4.4 RESOLUTION OF THE 18th WORLD SCOUT CONFERENCE, LISBON, 1961

The World Scout Conference returned to the subject of "Duty to God" on the occasion of a presentation made by Michel Rigal, who was then General Commissioner of "Scouts de France" and Secretary-General of the "International Catholic Conference of Scouting", as it was then called, in which he proposed that "Duty to God" be rephrased in less restrictive terms, i.e. in a wording such as "a spiritual reality" or "a Higher Spiritual Power in the universe". The World Scout Committee had also asked John Thurman (Camp Chief, Gilwell Park, UK) to speak to the Conference on "Spiritual Training in Scouting" and in his presentation he adopted a more restrictive approach.

Confronted with these two points of view, the Conference adopted a "compromise" solution in Resolution 8 "Duty to God/Religion". Those favouring the traditional wording found satisfaction in both paragraph 1 which reads "The Conference recognizes that Duty to God/Religion is basic in the philosophy and intent of the Boy Scout Movement" and paragraph 4, viz: "The Conference sees as the responsibility of the Scout organization the need to reach as many boys as possible in the area of our influence, to guide them toward a spiritual life and to assure that the religious faith to which a Scout belongs is fully safeguarded".[193]

For their part, the supporters of a "flexible/wider" interpretation were satisfied by paragraphs 2 and 3 of the same Resolution: "For Scout associations which so wish the Promise must be capable of being formulated so that allowance is made for the fact that their membership may include believers in a Personal God and also those who acknowledge a spiritual Reality. "Any such information must be in accord with the original Scout Promise that recognizes a supreme spiritual Presence in the Universe."[194]

In reading this Resolution, it is interesting to note how the essence of "Duty to God" was safeguarded. At the same time, it is also interesting to observe

that, 30 years later, it was again the notion of "Spiritual Reality" that found favour with the Constitutions Committee and the World Committee as a valid alternative in response to the challenges posed by the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the requests for recognition from central and eastern European countries (see Section 4.6).

4.5 1965-1977 REORGANIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT, NEW WORLD CONSTITUTION AND NEW CHAPTER I ADOPTED BY THE 26th WORLD SCOUT CONFERENCE, MONTREAL 1977

As will be appreciated from the brief summary above, Scouting has always been a very pragmatic Movement. However, until the 1960s, the Movement did not pay a great deal of attention to formal elements, the more so because the Secretariat, first in London and later in Ottawa, had difficulty in keeping pace with Scouting's world-wide expansion. At the initiative of the World Committee and with financial support from the Ford Foundation, Dr Laszlo Nagy, a Researcher from the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, was commissioned to carry out a major study on World Scouting in 1965. The results of this study, a voluminous document entitled "Report on World Scouting" was presented to the 21st World Scout Conference in Seattle, USA, in 1967.

The Report was adopted by the Conference as the basis for the reorganization of the Movement and Dr Nagy was invited by the World Committee to become Secretary-General. Two other important changes were the World Bureau's move from Ottawa to Geneva and a significant increase in staff.

One of the study's primary recommendations was the need to revise the World Constitution. This was done in 1973 at the 24th World Scout Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, when a new Constitution was adopted, covering all the structural elements, except for the chapter on Fundamentals (then Chapter II) which, it was agreed, required special attention.

Between 1973 and 1975, a questionnaire on the subject was sent to all National Scout Organizations, the results of which were compiled and presented to the 25th World Scout Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1975. The Conference noted that the results of the survey were "…a general reaffirmation of the validity of the content of Chapter II, coupled with the desire to re-express this Chapter in better and more significant terms" (see Annex I) and requested the World Committee "…to establish a Task Force, representative insofar as is possible of the principal societies and cultures found among membership of the World Organization, and to submit for consideration of the 26th World Conference proposals relating to Chapter II…".

The Task Force was created by the World Committee in October 1975, with a very broad geographical and cultural representation. After extensive preparation, it met in Geneva in March 1976 and continued to work by correspondence until the final version was ready for presentation to the World Committee. After careful study, this was approved by the World Committee which presented it to the 26th World Scout Conference in Montreal in 1977. The new version of Chapter I of the WOSM Constitution was adopted by a two-thirds majority and has never been called into question since then.

The structure of Chapter I is very succinct and clear. It comprises the following: the *definition:* what the Movement is; *the purpose:* what the Movement tries to accomplish**;** *the principles:* the fundamental laws and beliefs or basic precepts (which also constitute attitudinal and behavioural rules for its members); and the *method:* how the Movement tries to accomplish its objectives.[195]

Chapter I of the Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement refers to the question of spirituality/religion/Duty to God in several places. For the sake of clarity and brevity they are given below:

- In article I, paragraph 2, under ***Purpose****:* "The purpose of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their *full* physical, intellectual, social and *spiritual potentials* as individuals … etc.".

- In article II, paragraph 1, under ***Principles****:* "The Scout Movement is based on the following principles: ***Duty to God***…".

  It should be noted that this title has been used to reflect a long-standing practice in Scouting, which has traditionally referred to this principle in the terms used in the text of the original Scout Promise (see below in this section).

  In contrast to the title, the body of the text does not use the word "God" to make it quite clear that the clause also covers non-monotheistic religions, such as Hinduism, or religions which do not recognize a personal God, such as Buddhism.

  Thus, the body of the text reads: *"Adherence to spiritual principles, loyalty to the religion that expresses them and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom".*

  The opening phrase *Adherence to spiritual principles* emphasizes the essential spiritual foundations of the Scout Movement. These principles are clearly linked to a specific religion and for that reason the text continues: *loyalty to the religion that expresses them and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom.*

- In article II, paragraph 2, "Adherence to a ***Promise*** and Law", which states: "All members of the Scout Movement are required to adhere to a Scout Promise and Law reflecting, *in language appropriate to the culture and civilization of each National Scout Organization, and approved by the World Organization, the principles of Duty to God,* Duty to others and Duty to self, and inspired by the Promise and Law conceived by the Founder of the Scout Movement in the following terms:

  The Scout Promise

  On my honour I promise that I will do my best –
  To do my duty to God and the King (or to God and my Country);
  To help other people at all times;
  To obey the Scout Law".

- Finally, in article III, the Scout ***Method*** is defined as "…a system of progressive self-education through:

  . A promise and law…".

The connotation of the promise and law being mentioned as part of a "system of progressive self-education" is worth highlighting since it means that spiritual development (as well as the other elements of the concept of integral development) are to be seen in a *dynamic perspective*.

4.6 THE IMPACT ON THE WORLD SCOUT MOVEMENT OF THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET BLOC

The question of the spiritual dimension in the promises of National Scout Associations had become a major issue in the process of recognizing Scout associations in Eastern and Central Europe, who claim inability to use the word "God" for a variety of generally valid reasons relating to their recent history.

As will be recalled, we have already dealt very briefly with the particular problems of young people in countries formerly dominated by Marxist regimes – that is, the former Soviet Union and countries in Central and Eastern Europe – in Section 2.2 of this document. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, sociologists quickly noticed the existence of an ideological vacuum and an almost complete lack of landmarks. This was generally true not only of the population as a whole but also, as was perhaps to be expected, especially so among the young.

Moreover, some Churches and/or a few religious leaders have been severely criticized for their compromising behaviour vis-à-vis the former communist regimes. In addition, the official indoctrination of atheism – despite being differently enforced in different countries – has nevertheless had considerable impact.

The question with which Scouting had to wrestle was: can the name of God be imposed in their Promise on young people who are completely "secularized" with deep-rooted prejudices? The solution adopted by the Constitutions Committee, with the support of the World Committee, was as follows:

As a first step, the Constitutions Committee drew up a definition of the spiritual dimension which was felt to be both theologically and educationally sound:

"Acceptance of a Spiritual Reality and search for its full significance".

In the same manner, the Committee accepted the following formulation for the Promise:

"To do my duty to God, that is to accept a Spiritual Reality and to search for its full significance".

In so doing, the Constitutions Committee, with the support of the World Committee, noted that:

- Either one and/or the other part of the formulation could be used but that in no case would there be a Promise without a spiritual dimension.
- The above formulation was considered to be an "adult formulation" that would need to be adapted to the age, language, etc., of the member.

In addition, the Committee endeavoured to discuss the question with each of the associations at length, to help them find a formula that would be the most conducive to the spiritual development of young people in their respective societies.

4.7 WHAT IS THE STRENGTH OF THE SCOUT METHOD IN PROMOTING AND ENRICHING THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN YOUNG PEOPLE? WHAT ARE THE MAIN CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS?

At the end of our reflection on the evolution of the concept of "Duty to God" since the Movement's beginnings up to the present day, we should now be able to understand more clearly how the Scout programme/method meets the spiritual needs of Scouts and how it enriches their spiritual life.

Let us begin with a clear affirmation: *Scouting has its own way of introducing and developing spirituality and the spiritual dimension in young people.*

As Dominique Bénard has observed in the Foreword to "God, are you still in there?": "In Scouting, there is too often confusion between *spiritual development* and *religious education*. There is a tendency to ensure that one's 'Duty to God' is fulfilled simply by adding some religious activities to Scout activities. Many Scout leaders are trapped in this rigid notion and feel unable to deal with spiritual development. As a result, they do nothing about it".[196]

Contrary to the approach described above – which may be called *juxtaposition* – what is needed is *integration*. In other words, "…there is no need to add external elements to Scouting in order to stimulate the spiritual development of young people. What we need to do is to take advantage of all the elements within the Scout programme and propose activities which already include a spiritual dimension".[197]

We are now going to examine this question from several different points of view, the first being the psychology of development.

4.7.1 Developmental perspective

"Sometimes, when people say that they don't believe in God, what they are really saying is that they don't believe in their wooden dolls, their pictures of God. Those pictures may come from early childhood. They may be pictures of God as a super-policeman waiting to catch us out for our misdeeds. There are so many pictures of God picked up for some reason or another in childhood that, as we move towards adulthood, we rightly reject as non-acceptable. But that does not mean that we necessarily reject God".[198]

The most privileged time for this rejection of "false images" is adolescence. The transition between infanthood and adulthood is a transition from dependence to independence. A combination of several factors – rendered even more difficult to manage today by the pressure of social factors – puts the adolescent in a state of emotional turmoil: bizarre behaviour, confrontation and provocation, and rebellion against authority are part of the repeated crisis of identity and insecurity in many adolescents. As part of the process of growth, the adolescent tends to alienate himself from what he regards as the "old-fashioned and outworn attitudes" of his parents and

to rely more on his peer-group. Is it surprising if he also rejects "the idea of God/religion" or at least expresses doubts about it?[199]

When an adolescent is in this situation, the Scout educator must be able to *recognize* what is happening, *observe* its multiple facets, *keep* the young person *company* and *listen* to help him overcome the problem.

* * *

How can we demonstrate this impact of the Scout programme and method on the spiritual dimension in young people? As a guideline for this part of the document, we have borrowed the five dimensions put forward in the publication "God, are you still in there?" recently issued by the Scottish Scout Council (The Scout Association, U.K.) with the support of the European Scout Region.

4.7.2 The WISDOM dimension: Helping to develop a balanced personality, inner discipline and a set of personal values

Scouting is based on an educational proposal. It does not intend to make the young person conform to a pre-set ideal model. He or she is invited to do his/her best to develop to the full all the dimensions of his/her unique personality, including of course the spiritual dimension.[200]

For that reason, Scouting encourages a lifestyle and activities which help young people to develop responsibility towards themselves, to resist negative influences, to identify positive personal goals and the necessary steps needed to achieve them.[201]

Accordingly, Scouting is fully successful when a member leaves the Movement with a positive attitude towards entering adult life and has the abilities to do so in a constructive, assertive and responsible way, realizing that he or she will need to continue his/her development as an autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed person.[202]

We have already drawn attention (in Section 2.4) to the risk of dispersion and superficiality that lies in wait for young people today, and Scouting is a part of the response to this.

4.7.3 The WELCOME dimension: The need for a loving and caring relationship

Baden-Powell fully realized that the natural tendency of adolescents to be associated in small groups and the resulting peer pressure could play a very positive or a very negative role in young people's development. This was why the patrol system which was a cornerstone of the experimental camp at Brownsea Island became a foundation for the Scout method.

Through the patrol system, young people play an active role in a small group (patrol), share responsibilities, develop constructive relationships with others and learn to live according to a democratic form of self-government.

In this mini-society, young people develop mutual trust, loving and caring relationships, and a sense of identity, self-worth and belonging. They feel accepted and they accept others as they are, thus developing a sense of tolerance that is increasingly necessary for social life in a pluralistic society. As a result of all that, they grow not only emotionally and socially but also spiritually.

4.7.4 The WONDER dimension: Contact with nature

As we have seen in Section 3.4, Baden-Powell recognized that activities in nature play a central role in the integral development of young people, and very particularly in their spiritual development.

The various "sites" in nature that are part of the history or symbolism of different religions also provide occasions when young people can have contact with beautiful surroundings that cannot fail to inspire feelings of peace, love and wonder. As the box at the end of Section 3 shows, we have drawn particular attention to the symbolic role that mountains can play as a place where a person can meet with God, but there are also other examples such as the sensation of eternity between the sea and the sky, the desert as a place of solitude and retreat from worldly things, and so on.

Similarly, we can think of different activities that help young people to explore and discover the wonders of nature, and to understand why we must protect wildlife and the environment.

4.7.5 The WORK dimension: The need to create a more human and just society – in action and especially in service

Since the inception of Scouting, the concern for the improvement of society has been present in the "good turn", in the spirit of service that is enshrined in the Promise and Law. The same original inspiration is expressed in the World Constitution as a principle "…participation in the development of society…". In developing countries, millions of Scouts are involved in community development activities intended to improve the quality of life in their respective communities: health and sanitation, literacy, nutrition, habitat, water, energy and food production are only a few examples. In industralized countries, the needs may be different but the commitment is also present: activities to break the isolation of the elderly, to help the young unemployed, to fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia, to help under-privileged and marginalized groups, etc.

Such activities help young people to understand that, through dedication and commitment, it is possible to create a more caring, tolerant and inclusive society. Is there any doubt that this involvement also contributes in no small measure to their spiritual development?

4.7.6 The WORSHIP dimension: Silence, meditation or prayer (contact with Transcendency)

Lastly, through and with all of the above dimensions, the dimension of Worship. Here again, "spiritual moments" should not be dissociated from other activities but closely integrated into them. Such moments should help young people to *think* about the events they have been through, to *understand* their value, to *put them together* and to find them a *meaning*. It could simply be a song or a phrase at the end of a painful effort, such as climbing a hill or building a tower or winning a race!

There are, of course, more structured moments called "Scouts' Own". Why not selecting one of Baden-Powell's favourite thoughts such as "God has put us in this wonderful world to enjoy it" or "the best way to be happy is to be able to make other people happy". Virtually anything can be woven around times of silence, meditation, expression (drawings, songs, drama, poems). Thinking about prayer and worship, "…many young people today find it difficult to pray, yet the best prayers come from them".[203] Let us remind ourselves of Baden-Powell's idea that "to pray" is not necessarily the

same as "reciting prayers" and that the best prayers are the ones that we make up ourselves. "Let prayers come from the heart, not said by heart".[204]

4.7.7 Conclusions

- Spiritual development is an integral part of Scouting's fundamental principles and *there is, therefore, no real Scouting without spiritual development.*
- With regard to the "religion/spirituality" pair, Scouting concentrates on spirituality, encouraging young people to open up to Transcendency and the discovery of a Spiritual Reality that is greater than Man. In so doing,
  - it enables young people to understand the "substance" of religion;
  - it constitutes the foundation "… on which the branches of formal religious education can grow …".[205]
- Scouting is not a kind of religious syncretism where a piece of zest from all the religions are thrown together higgledy-piggledy! Quite the contrary, the World Constitution makes it absolutely clear that Scouting helps, motivates and encourages the faithful of each religion to be "real Catholics", "real Muslims", "real Buddhists", etc.
- "In the area of spiritual development, the role of the Scout leader is not to give religious instruction, nor to tack religious observances onto Scout activities. It is to use the kind of experiences offered by Scouting to help young people discover a spiritual reality and incorporate it into their own lives."[206]
- Spiritual development (as "duty to others" or "duty to self") is not an activity in itself, isolated from the others. It is "embodied", it imbibes the Scout programme and its activities, in the different Scout sections. For the same reason, it should not be left systematically to the "expert" (the chaplain, the imam, the guru, etc.) but is the responsibility of every Scout leader.
- By virtue of its very active educational method (learning by doing), Scouting avoids inasmuch as possible dogmatic instruction or scholastic learning.
- An observation should be made here which derives from the definition of Scouting as "…a system of progressive self-education". Young people do not live in an ideal world, but in a real world, full of imperfections, dangers and temptations. They have not promised to be "perfect" but to "do their best". Therefore, "…we should not expect the result of education to be achieved before the educational process itself has already started; …to use spiritual development as an example, we should not expect Scouts to be the perfect examples of devoted believers of the faith to which they belong, but accept that they will do their best to understand it and develop spiritually, both personally and as members of a religious community".[207]
- Finally, the spiritual dimension in Scouting unifies people and should not divide them. A *true* Scout activity (and the same applies to a *true* religious activity) should give birth to or reinforce a feeling of tolerance, respect and understanding of the faith of others.

* * *

The reader will surely appreciate that it is impossible to deal with such a vast and complicated subject in a document like the present one in more than rather general terms. It may well be that this or that statement does not exactly correspond to the philosophy and practice of a Scout Association. It may also happen that the reader feels that, on a given point, we have not gone far enough while on another we have gone too far!

We therefore ask everyone, Associations and individual readers alike, to understand that what we have done is to provide a number of reference points within a general framework and nothing more. Adjustments will need to be made to each particular case and (begging pardon for the repetition!) case by case!

THE ROLE OF RELIGIONS AND SPIRITUAL FAMILIES

Since Scouting works towards the integral development of young people, including their spiritual development, what could be more normal than cooperation with the great religions and spiritual families of our time that have an objective on similar lines. All the more so, because Scouting clearly recognizes the role of these great religions not only in spiritual matters but in many other areas as well.

- ***Transcendent dimension***. Religions provide a vertical, transcendent dimension, which reminds Man that he is not absolute, not the centre of himself, the centre of the world.[208] Such a reminder is particularly called for at the end of a period like the 20th century, which has seen the most horrible totalitarian absolutisms in history!

  A religion is the presence of God in the here and now of a man, a God who has chosen to meet us, to become part of our history, albeit in different forms in each religion.

  But a religion is not merely a body of doctrine, it unfurls in several dimensions.

  Religions are the expression of a ***promise of salvation*** in a bewildered, sometimes despairing world. They speak of a new day when God's love will appear, of a time of abundance, a "paradise" with a thousand different colours, and thereby invite us to renounce the rule of pure materiality, contingency and a daily life that is so hard and difficult for so many people. Religions enable people to wake up to hope!

- To provide an ***ethical dimension*** where they have the strength to tackle major issues, for example to monitor science. Is everything that is scientifically possible also acceptable from the moral point of view?

  This ethical influence is also present in the concern for justice:

  "Already in the Jewish tradition, a Jubilee year was celebrated every 50 years which was devoted in a special way to God. During the Jubilee year land was not cultivated, slaves were liberated and debts were pardoned".[209]

Who today will criticize the ethics of triumphant liberalism, if it is not the religions and the Churches? Who will speak up clearly against the message proclaimed by the neoliberal economists that *work* is not a *burden* but *wealth* for society? Who will say that the fact that more than 35,000 children in the world die each day of malnutrition and diseases that can be cured is a scandal and should be seen as a collective failure for humanity? Who will help children understand that values such as love and compassion will enable them to live more joyfully than success and productivity?

- ***Aesthetic dimension***. Each religion brings its ***"own poetic colour"***, its symbols, its rhythms. This is particularly important in a world that is more and more dominated by technology and whose predominant colour is that of money!

  Thus, religions encourage us to pray, sing, walk in procession; there is a whole artistic and poetic dimension in the praise, embodied in a multitude of symbols! This symbolism can sometimes reach its peak in pilgrimages. These are considered by (almost) all religions as a symbol of spiritual progress and they also have a dimension of popular religiosity. "The attraction for sensitive representations – pictures, apparitions, relics, tombs, statues – [is often linked] to a taste for the miraculous".[210] Because of this, they open our heart to breathless admiration.

- ***Environmental dimension.*** All major religions affirm the world as beloved by God. Most of them also insist that human beings are the stewards, not the owners, of creation. For a true Scout, the relationship between the three fundamental principles (Duty to God, to others and to self) appears in a very clear way in this field: reverence to God, linked with recognition of the dignity of every human being and the integrity of the natural world, and with responsible action to improve himself, society and the shared earth.

- The religions (and the religious) are also ***witnesses of God's love:*** to look after the disadvantaged in our society… At the same time, they call on people to put the strength of love that comes to us from God into practice in the world.

  Religions invite people to fight against evil, to serve a brother crushed by misfortune, to relieve human suffering, to bring words of peace and comfort to their fellow men.

- Religions ***instigate acts of free will.*** In choosing a religion, a person is seeking, whether consciously or not, a liberator in whom he can confide, maybe a powerful king who will deliver him from his misery, or a master of wisdom who will initiate him in unknown ways, open up to himself, reveal the secrets of the universe, etc. But the real adherence of a man to this way, that wisdom, this belief, can only be an act of his own free will (*should* only be an act of his own free will!).[211] Thus, "God wants man to acknowledge Him not by forceful imposition, but by letting him accept the gift He offers".[212]

> In fact, in addressing the heart of a person, each religion creates a tension in him/her, a desire that draws him/her forward and which makes him/her consider the world (i.e. the material realities) in a new light.

In conclusion, apart from the strictly "religious" aspect – that is communion with the divinity – all religions (whoever they may be!) provide the world with a cultural heritage that is of priceless value.

5. SOME INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

Having examined the religious/spiritual dimension of B-P's thinking in Section 3 and its pedagogical and legal consequences in Section 4, we now turn our attention to some of the institutional aspects. In Scouting, everything that concerns the organization is derived from the educational foundation/approach and not the other way round. It should be no surprise, therefore, that these institutional questions come so late in the present document.

5.1 THE RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL QUESTION IN THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS

Because of its historical origins in a number of countries, the question of the structure of the associations within WOSM has often been linked to the religious question, and it is for this reason that historical clarification may be useful for a better understanding of the situation.

In the beginning, WOSM took a little while to discover and decide that there should be only one organization per country – namely, one single entity or an entity grouping a number of others. The immediate preference was for a single entity. Thus, Resolution 12 of 1922 states: "The Conference decided that wherever possible, in the best interests of the boys of all nations, every reasonable effort be made for an amalgamation of the various associations in any one country and if this be impracticable, the various associations concerned arrange amongst themselves for the selection of one International Commissioner to do business with the International Bureau".[213]

For many years, there were no World Conference resolutions on the subject of national structures. The World Scout Conference came again to the subject in 1969 on the occasion of a paper presented by the British delegation entitled "The Unity of the World Scout Movement". Resolution 4 of 1969 reaffirms that "…the unity of the World Scout Movement in brotherhood, structure and action is of the highest importance in its efforts to serve the boys of the modern world and to bring Scouting to all boys desiring membership" and "it directs the World Committee to ensure that any new country wishing to apply for membership of the Conference *shall be encouraged and helped as necessary to establish a single, united national organization open to all boys".*[214] However, despite the encouragement to create single associations, the World Scout Conference in the general revision of the Constitution adopted in 1973 (World Scout Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya) continued to recognize federations as a valid legal option within WOSM.

Thus, article V, paragraph 2, while confirming the principle that "only one National Scout Organization from any one country" can be recognized for membership in WOSM, acknowledges that: "A National Scout Organization may consist of more than one Scout association participating in a federation based on the common Scout purpose" and established the requirements for membership. We will deal with this point here-below.

The advantages and disadvantages of a single association or a federation in each country have been the subject of numerous debates since the inception of the Movement. The present document is not the place to discuss them *in extenso* and even less to describe the controversies they aroused.

However, there is call for reflection on the main theme of this document: the spiritual dimension in Scouting. As in any other form of associative life, legal, theoretical and ideological elements are closely interwoven with practical considerations in a given socio-cultural context.

Accordingly, our reflection must include a sociological facet which we see as essential in any consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of single associations vis-à-vis federations with respect to the religious and spiritual dimension in Scouting.

On the one hand, we must ask ourselves: while it may offer a framework adapted to the pluralism of today's world and the need to stimulate dialogue, is the "single association" really the best means of conveying – from the point of view of organization and educational competence – the spiritual message of the different religious traditions in the country concerned and thereby fulfil the spiritual development needs of its members? Does it offer an institutional framework that encourages the acquisition and development of a personal faith linked to the spiritual tradition of each of its members?

On the other hand, the "federation formula" has certain advantages in that it facilitates the transmission of the appropriate denominational religious message of each religious tradition. But is it in step with an increasingly "globalized" world, a world that is open and interdisciplinary, with its constant flow of migration and major demographic changes in many countries? Is there not also a tendency for such federations to adopt a "rigid" stance instead of encouraging dialogue with others and working together? Is it the best way of helping young people to discover and appreciate the richness of religious traditions other than their own? And above all, does it not curb the development of a united National Scout Organization, moving forward together in the same direction in the accomplishment of its educational mission?

In 1991, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the World Scout Committee was called upon to examine in a relatively short period of time requests for recognition from some 20 recently formed Scout associations in countries that had been dominated by communist regimes. At that time, the World Committee had believed it to be its duty – in order to safeguard the unity and integrity of WOSM and its member organizations and show its loyalty vis-à-vis potential candidate associations – to express major reservations with regard to federations. In so doing, its main preoccupation was not the spiritual dimension but the priority to be given to the unity of Scouting in the "new countries". Each time a new Scout organization was created in a country, the various trends that very quickly made themselves felt proved to be more of a fight for power than genuine pedagogical differences, with damaging repercussions on the unity of the Movement. In actual fact, the pedagogical and methodological differences in no way justified such conflict and even less the creation of federative structures.

Therefore, in a brief document on the position of the World Scout Committee concerning federations, after recalling the provisions of Article V, paragraph 2 of the WOSM Constitution and the historical precedents, the World Committee went on to state:

"2. In practice and since the World Organization was established, the majority of members have comprised only one national association. Federations were only accepted on the basis of major cultural, and in particular religious, considerations which clearly justified the separate existence of the associations comprising them.

"3. In interpreting its responsibility under Article VI, the World Committee confirms that, in considering requests for membership of federations, *only the original cultural characteristics which justified departing from the normal situation of one association uniting Scouting within a country shall apply."*

and continues: "4. The World Committee strongly emphasizes the importance of the unity of the Movement and warns against its fragmentation at any level other than for the most compelling reasons".[215]

In adopting this formulation, the World Committee did not (obviously) raise doubts about the principle of non-retroactivity, from which it is clear that federations in existence at the present time are not called into question in any way.

5.2 SOME ELEMENTS LINKED TO THE NATURE OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT

The aim of Scouting is the integral education of young people through its own pedagogical method.

In Sections 3 and 4 we have examined the importance of the spiritual dimension in Scouting and we have emphasized how much "Duty to God", as expressed in B-P's own formulation, was already present in the original Promise. We have also seen that, far from diminishing, this emphasis has been reiterated by several World Scout Conferences. We have also highlighted the formulation used in Chapter I, Article II, paragraph 1, of the WOSM Constitution to define "Duty to God", which is composed of three clearly defined elements:

- "adherence to spiritual principles,
- loyalty to the religion that expresses them and
- acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom".

We are now going to examine three elements that are closely linked to the educational nature of the Movement: its complementary character, and the unity and independence of the Movement.

5.2.1 Complementary role vis-à-vis other educational agents

It is worthy of reiteration that Scouting "…has a *complementary role* to play in the personal development of an individual… Scouting is not a formal educational agent like school, nor is it an informal one, like the family, peers or other influences. Scouting has a distinctive role to play; it is not a repetition of – or a substitute for – what happens in school, at home or in any other institution that has an influence on the development of a young person. A Scout leader, therefore, has a distinctive function; he or she is not simply another teacher, parent, officer or priest".[216]

To play this *complementary role* to the full, Scouting cooperates with the family, the school, the State, the Churches and the spiritual communities, but is not subordinate to any of them. It has a specific status - that of a *non formal educational agent* with an *original educational proposal* using its own *unique method*.

Accordingly, it is quite normal that, in the interests of the integral education of young people and in the respect for its independence, Scouting should

cooperate here and there, globally, regionally and nationally, with this or that social organization – including, in particular, the different spiritual families – and maintain relations of dialogue and reciprocal esteem with very many others. It goes without saying that WOSM has inherited historical situations which are not an example to be followed in this field. In those cases, WOSM exercises its legal and educational functions to ensure that those situations evolve in a positive way.

This having been said, it will now be easier to appreciate the role played by Scouting in religious/spiritual matters at world level.

At the world level:

- WOSM believes its principal task in religious/spiritual matters is to help National Scout Associations reinforce this dimension in their Scout programme as an integral part of young people's education.

  This is normally achieved through the preparation and dissemination of educational tools. One good example is the development of the dossier "God are you still in there?", by the Scottish Scout Council of The Scout Association of the United Kingdom, with the support of the European Scout Region. The French translation of this dossier (together with the English version) has been widely disseminated in Europe through the sponsorship of "The Fund for European Scouting".

  This is also achieved through advice and assistance to single national Scout associations to enable them to set up an infrastructure which would support the religious/spiritual dimension (particularly through the creation of "pastoral commissions").

- WOSM encourages cooperation with organizations that are able to help it enrich the content of spiritual education and adapt it to the needs of the Movement's members. This is particularly true in the case of the ICCS for Catholics, DESMOS for the Orthodox, IUMS for Muslims and the "Conference on Christianity in Guiding and Scouting" for Protestants.

- WOSM also encourages inter-religious dialogue because the affirmation of the spiritual and religious dimension by all religions in Scouting has always been one of Scouting's greatest strengths when facing non-believers.

The best example of the two above-mentioned points is the creation of the "World Inter-religious Group", one of whose main tasks is the organization of religious activities at World Scout Jamborees and World Scout Moots (see Section 6.2).

These are the main lines of WOSM policy in spiritual and religious matters.

5.2.2 The unity of the Scout Movement

The concept of unity is recognized in the Constitution of WOSM (see article IV, paragraph 2), which reads: "The purpose of the World Organization is to foster the Scout Movement throughout the world by: (a) promoting unity and understanding of its purpose and principles …".[217]

"A movement implies unity. This unity results from the sharing of a common purpose, a common set of values and a common educational method which together create a sense of belonging among its members and which makes their identification with the Movement possible...

"…It is the duty of the world bodies to ensure that these fundamental elements are respected by all National Scout Associations…".[218]

Unity has an important consequence for organizations with consultative status (see section 5.3 below). In no case should they consider themselves as "another kind of Scouting" within the Scout Movement. In other words, there is no such thing as "Catholic Scouting", "Orthodox Scouting", "Muslim Scouting", etc. There is one single Movement to which persons of different faiths can belong in accordance with their particular sensitivities. This enables us to speak of "Orthodox Scouts", the "Catholic experience or the Muslim experience in Scouting", "Protestant Scouts", "Buddhist Scouts", and so on.

It is in this context, for example, that the adjective "Catholic" in a title such as "International Catholic Conference of Scouting" qualifies the words "International Conference" and not the word "Scouting". In similar vein, if we take the English title of IUMS, "International Union of Muslim Scouts", the word "Muslim" is a description of the word "Scouts".

That being so, the priority given to Scouting's objectives in no way diminishes the motivation which leads young people and adults to join a confessional Scout movement rather than an open association when a choice exists, or a group attached to this or that church in a pluriconfessional Scout organization, so long as any such attachment does not affect Scouting's independence or its objective: the integral development of the personality of young people.

5.2.3 The independence of the Scout Movement

The concept of independence is recognized in the WOSM Constitution (see Article V, paragraph 3. d) as follows:

"Maintenance of the Organization as an *independent*, non-political, voluntary movement of probity and effectiveness".

It should be clearly understood that this concern is directly linked to the Movement's mission and specific identity:

"Scouting can succeed in fully achieving its educational purpose only if its specific identity is safeguarded. Any loss or diminution of this identity – through, for example, being too closely linked or influenced by another organization or authority – will inevitably have a negative impact on the Movement".[219]

"The Movement must, therefore, remain independent, with its own sovereign decision-making authority at all levels".[220]

"This means that all levels of the Movement must be vigilant in their relationships with other entities – sponsoring bodies, working partners, kindred organizations, governmental authorities, and the like – to ensure that the Movement's specific identity and independence are not compromised as a result of these relationships.

"For example:

"• Scouting's cooperation with other educational youth organizations must never lead to the loss or compromise of its own independence and specific role in educational provision to young people.

"• Scouting's sponsorship by a religious or community organization must never result in a Scout association being controlled by that organization or being perceived as being subordinate to it".[221]

Once again, an observation is called for. As we have already seen (Section 4.7.7), in the case of single associations there is no question of making Scouting a sort of "spiritual synthesis", which would bring the faith of each individual down to the lowest common denominator. A Catholic remains a Catholic, a Muslim a Muslim; Scouting asks them *to deepen and enrich their faith, to practise it and live it to the full and, at the same time, to develop a feeling of respect, tolerance and understanding for the faith of others.*

5.3 CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

Article XIII, paragraph 9, of the Constitution of WOSM provides that one of the functions of the World Scout Committee is "to grant consultative status to such organizations as may be of assistance to the Scout Movement".[222]

The World Committee in its meeting in September 1994 revised the rules concerning the consultative status and decided that "consultative status, once granted, shall be considered for renewal at each first meeting of the World Scout Committee following a World Scout Conference".[223]

The granting of consultative status is guided by the principle that the organization receiving it should be able to provide "assistance to the Scout Movement". In more concrete terms, this means:

"• enhance WOSM's ability to fulfil its mission by providing support in fields which are not part of its normal functions;

• enable WOSM to have access to expert information or advice, or other type of support, which may be of assistance to the Scout Movement".[224]

Furthermore, the consultative status requires that the organizations receiving it:

"• have objectives which are consistent with the Constitution of WOSM and shall not be primarily of a commercial or profit-making nature;

• have a constitution or similar document, a headquarters address, a democratically elected governing body and the authority to speak for its members;

• be international in structure and scope, cover a substantial number of countries in different parts of the world and represent a substantial proportion of the associations concerned with its field of activity".[225]

At present, the "International Catholic Conference of Scouting" (ICCS), the "International Union of Muslim Scouts" (IUMS), the "International Link of Orthodox Scouts" (DESMOS), the "International Scout and Guide Fellowship" (ISGF) and the "World Scout Parliamentary Union" (WSPU) have been granted consultative status by the World Committee and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with WOSM.

6. CONCLUSIONS. SOME POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE

After having examined the past and the present, we must now turn our attention to the future.

6.1 FROM THE GEOPOLITICAL AND CULTURAL POINTS OF VIEW

The intention of this Section is not to provide "geopolitical fiction" but to set out some of the directions which experts see as promises for the future.

- **Migration can help to promote encounter**

It is a well-known fact that several countries in the "North" are now experiencing rapid changes in their demographic make-up as a result of the massive on-going influx of migrants from the "South".

To give a concrete example: the presence in Europe of so many young North Africans can also help to fashion a new rapprochement in the comprehension of the Christian and Muslim faiths and promote cross-cultural interbreeding as a promise for the future.

In this respect, some already see the first signs of a "westernized" Islam that will be perfectly capable of reconciling the purest features of its religious tradition with the requirements of pluralism.

We know that "…Historically speaking, the theological discussions between Muslims and non-Muslims go back to the early centuries of Islam"[226] but, apart from meetings of experts, there are centuries of mistrust and reciprocal misunderstanding to overcome, all the more so because the sources of information are biased and incomplete – on both sides! It is here that encounters between young people in a spirit of fellowship can advance dialogue and mutual understanding, particularly since there is no lack of symbols that are common to the three monotheistic religions (see "Abraham's Tent" in Section 6.2 below).

- **Encounter between Buddhism and the West**

Several centuries old, this encounter promises much hope. Why should this be so? Because the cross-fertilization of the western historical concept – which is linear – and the eastern concept – which is cyclic/circular – is not only fascinating to intellectuals but also because " …in some of its intuitions, Buddhism calls Christian dogma into question very radically". In fact, some scholars maintain that "…with Taoism, Buddhism is the religion furtherest away from Christianity…".[227]

However, there are three other factors which make this encounter even more exciting today. First, because it is not on the edge but at the heart of each of the civilizations. For example, "…there are almost as many Buddhists in the West as there are Christians in the Far East…".[228] Then, the establishment of Buddhist communities in the West has been accompanied by a growth in conversion to Buddhism among westerners.[229] Lastly, because Buddhism "…with its contemplative teaching which invites people to existential wisdom and its aptitude for assimilating modern schools of thought, will inevitably find many followers in tomorrow's world…".[230]

Therefore, the way is wide open for the exploration of the similarities and the differences: on the "largely superimposable character of the two ethics", on human rights, in the monastic domain, the comparison of the liturgies, symbols, rites, initiation procedures, spiritual influences, all leading to "…a profound reflection on the constitution of the human being: …body, speech and spirit according to the Buddhists… body, soul and spirit according to the Greek trichotomy…".[231]

Is this not a fascinating perspective?

- **Rapprochement between the three monotheistic religions could make the Middle East a haven of peace**

This simple evocation may seem utopic or even delirious at a time when today's clashes are even tougher than in the recent past, at a time when both sides continually blame the other for the breakdown of the negotiations with the result that it is not people but guns which are talking now! But is it not a characteristic trait of religions to maintain hope and utopia, to distance themselves from the present – however hard it may be – to envisage a far-off horizon where the world will be *different* because people will be *different?*

So that this may come to pass, we need to make concrete gestures that are also symbolic and prophetic. One such example is the "Oasis of Peace" village ("Neve Shalom" in Hebrew and "Wahat-as-Salam" in Arabic) which was founded in Israel in 1979 by a Dominican priest and a group of pioneers as enthusiastic and "crazy" as him. In the village school, a genuine school of peace where Jewish, Christian and Palestinian children are in daily contact, there is one single rule written in rainbow colours on the walls: "Respect is a right and a duty for all". It goes without saying that neither the village nor the school are a sterilized environment, that the tensions of the world around them penetrate all the time and that problems of identity are sometimes keenly felt. However, what matters is that the experiment exists and flourishes. Its leaders have already organized seminars to consider the role of spiritual and ethical values in education for peace and would like to set up a "Pluralist Spiritual Centre".[232]

When the Pope visited the Holy Land in March 2000, the whole world watched him on television as he walked with difficulty towards the Wailing Wall to deposit a written request for pardon. If it is important to regret the faults and failings of the past, it is equally important to contribute "…to a change in mentalities so that such tragedies can never be repeated".[233] This change has begun, but it must be continued and consolidated if it is to bear fruit.

- **The road to ecumenism between Catholics, Protestants and the Orthodox is long but very promising**

On the occasion of the Grand Jubilee in 2000, which encouraged the undertaking of concrete steps of conversion, Pope Jean Paul II requested, on behalf of the Catholic Church, pardon for: "the sins committed against unity during the schism of the 11th century and the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, the methods of intolerance and persecution practised by the Church, particularly by the Inquisition (against the Cathars, against Galileo…)".[234]

The World Council of Churches, which was founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, groups all the major Reformed Churches. In 1961, these were joined by the Orthodox Churches. Today, the Council represents some 300 Churches in approximately 100 countries and around 450 million Christians.

With regard to the Catholic Church, in 1960 the Vatican created a Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, which became the "Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity" in 1967. There is also dialogue with the Orthodox Churches, the old Eastern Churches, the Anglican Communion and so on.

This wish for dialogue has been demonstrated by various initiatives of different kinds at different levels.[235]

In addition, the general trends in today's society are supportive of this movement. As one expert in the subject has said: "After centuries of quarrelsome rupture and dispersal…, the evolution of society has induced the Churches to seek emulation without rivalry and cooperation without anathema".[236]

- **Inter-religious dialogue and encounter**

The United Nations having declared 1986 as the "International Year of Peace", Pope Jean Paul II invited 150 religious leaders to a day of fasting, prayer and pilgrimage for peace. On 27 October 1986, delegates from 12 religions, "…Buddhists, Shintoists, Hindus, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Jains, Baha'is, Muslims, Jews, Amerindians, African animists and Christians from various Churches, met in Assisi … Each religion retained its autonomy and specificity in the prayer for peace".[237] Olive branches were distributed to the participants… and the ceremony closed by the take-off of a flight of doves of peace".[238]

Even if this was not an inter-religious dialogue in the strict sense of the term, it is important to stress the fantastic testimony of this occasion in the eyes of the entire world. It is to be hoped that the "spirit of Assisi" will be prolonged in many other ways so that relations between believers of all religions may be characterized by tolerance, understanding and cooperation.

* * *

Without any claim to exhaustivity, we have presented here some of the initiatives that can prepare (and perhaps prefigure) the future. It would be foolhardy to launch into over-confident predictions that might subsequently be contradicted by events. However, it is important to show a trend, an indication of the direction that is being taken. Perhaps in the future, believers and non-believers of sincerity – people with confirmed convictions but with tolerant and open minds – will show the world the strength of their respective testimonies in the face of widespread religious indifference, and encroaching materialism expressed through hedonism, utilitarianism, egoism, the thirst to consume and the drive to possess!

To some extent, the mystics of all the religions have sought a way (or ways) of likening themselves to God, to resembling him: in giving, in renouncing, in a daily life that becomes a prayer… perhaps they too will have to play an important role in showing a bewildered world the way!

6.2 FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

Where does Scouting fit into this general picture? In any contemplation of the prospects for the future, we must return to the ***central message*** of this document, i.e. *the extraordinary force of the Scout method in promoting and enriching the spiritual dimension in young people.*

1. A fundamental message for the world: to stand on the side of love, fellowship and peace

Even if we must guard against any Manichaean differentiation, Scouting, just like the major religions and spiritual currents, aligns itself with "positive" or "constructive" forces, forces which try to make people grow and lead them to an all-transcending ideal.

Scouting – born of the educational intuition of a great soldier who had become a great educationalist – shares with the major religions and spiritualities the themes and convictions that are essential for the survival and development of not only each individual human being but also each human community from the smallest to the biggest: the desire to build a world of ***fellowship and love*** by banishing all temptations to dominate and hate from our thinking and our collective life; a ***spirit of service*** so that when we face our neighbours mere material considerations are set aside; and the respect for ***nature*** which the Founder himself described as a "laboratory, a club and a temple".[239]

The different religions urge their followers to become artisans of peace and justice in the world. Scouting's own method, which has demonstrated its efficacy for almost a century, prepares young hearts to undertake this process.

2. Making the most of the educational capacity of the Scout Movement in every area but most especially in three ways, as follows:

- **Understanding that the current of young people's lives is not a peaceful flow**

This is not the right place to launch into a long explanation about the changes and pressures that young people encounter in their lives. A brief outline has been given in Section 2.4 above. Experts claim that there is a confluence of biological, psychological and social factors. There can also be notable changes in the spiritual/religious area as well. Even among adults, the "typical" believer living his faith with calm assurance is no longer the rule. In all religions, there is the "pilgrim", the "convert", the believer who doubts and the non-believer who has bursts and glimmers of faith…[240] But there are also people who live their religious lives (indeed, their lives, full stop) like a mountain stream or ravine with ups and downs, short or long crises, and periods of agitation and torment followed by periods of calm...

It is essential to understand that the role of an educational movement such as the Scout Movement is not (particularly during the squalls) to "preach", to condemn, to exert pressure or even to judge, but to be there, to ***accompany!*** To surround young people with a love and support that reassures and liberates, and helps a personality in full evolution to emerge more mature and wiser from a crisis!

- **Correctly situating the approach and the pedagogical point of incidence of the Scout method**

In the religion/spirituality pair, Scouting concentrates on spirituality. To understand what this means, we will quote a distinction drawn by J. Westerhoff between "…two interdependent ways or forms of thinking and two also interdependent dimensions of the consciousness". The first is "…the intellectual form of knowledge, the rational way of thinking and the active form of consciousness". "Its interest is the result… and its world is that of order, structure and certitude". "The alternative… is an intuitive form of knowing, an affective/emotional mode of thinking, a passive form of consciousness …[it] offers a subjective and experiential means of knowing, its explicit interest is the process, its form of expression is definitely non-verbal and its world is therefore one of chaos, anti-structure and ambiguity. Its globalizing and sensual style is the most appropriate for the imagination, the mystery and the discovery".[241]

At the risk of appearing simplistic, it could be said that the pedagogical practice of Scouting is situated on the side of the second word of the "pair" – that is, on the side of ***spirituality***, *being global in fashion, intuitive and affective in knowledge, globalizing and sensual in approach, favouring imagination and discovery.* On the other hand, the doctrinal/theological teaching of the different religions is, as Westerhoff has said, more on the side of verbal expression, of ordained and systematic talk that appeals to a form of rational and structured knowledge.

It is unnecessary to add that far from being mutually exclusive the two approaches are in fact perfectly complementary and each of them plays an essential role!

- **Making the most of the potential of Scouting as a tool of spiritual development**

We have seen earlier (in Section 4.7) how Scouting is a tool of spiritual development, because it enables young people to "religare" and make sense of their different experiences.

This seems very clear when we focus our attention on the pedagogical potential of *small group* activities in *nature.* They offer a two-fold spiritual approach: discovering the beauty and splendour of creation and learning the language of symbols.

In fact, it is in practising activities in nature that young people really discover the relationship between Man and nature and the magnificence of the world: "…many of the activities practised by Scouts in nature correspond to fundamental experiences in humanity and are themselves charged with a very strong spiritual sense: exploring a territory, arranging a space, building a shelter or a house, coming together round the camp-fire, looking for a source of fresh-water, etc.".[242]

However, there is another equally important function: *having access to symbolic language.* "In the symbol, we express our experience of life, our feelings with all their clarity and confusion, their profound meaning".[243] This function is essential in a period like our own, which is so poor in collective symbols! Because "…people who have no access to symbolic language have nothing to talk about except practicalities. This is the 'métro-

boulot-télé-dodo' [i.e., humdrum] life-style. Since they cannot 'talk spiritually' (at a symbolic level), they cannot reflect on their life and they become the impotent toys of all kinds of pressure and conditioning, living and enduring them day by day".[244] Therefore, to live our life and reflect on it enables us to avoid being the victim of daily routine on a constant level of pure immediacy, and to stand back, have points of reference and not be at the mercy of pressure and manipulation.

3. Develop Scouting's enormous potential for inter-religious dialogue, encounter and cooperation to its full capacity

While much has been done in this area, much still remains to be done. The creation of the World Inter-religious Group is a step in the right direction which will be followed by others.

It is inspiring to have seen how Scouts from different religions behave at World Jamborees… They have to be seen to appreciate the incredible diversity of their convictions which represent an extremely wide range of the aspirations of today's youth. Above all, one has to have seen their unfailing respect for each other, their care to avoid offending someone else's belief, and the real friendship and comradeship that grows up between them. Can we dream of a more favourable atmosphere in the search for peace and internal truth?

Taking that thought as a starting-point, the World Programme Committee is now preparing several activities for young people. These will be proposed at the next World Scout Jamboree which will be held in Thailand.

The objective is two-fold:

- illustrate how Scouting offers possibilities for spiritual/religious development, and
- initiate young people into a spirit of understanding and respect for other religions.

In concrete terms, the plan is to suggest the following to the young participants in the Jamboree:

1. Examples of actions with a spiritual potential:
   - action favouring self-discovery,
   - action favouring discovery of the wonders of nature,
   - action favouring activities in the area of service,
   - action favouring encounters and solidarity to overcome racial prejudice,
   - action favouring inter-cultural discovery, etc.
2. Examine with the young people how these actions are to be "evaluated" or "integrated" by the different major religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.) with examples of sacred texts, prayers and meditations that can be used to celebrate the spiritual meaning of these actions.

There are very many more initiatives at the ***national and local*** levels, even if they have not been publicized as they should have been. "Abraham's Tent" is a significant example.

Abraham represents a symbol who took up the challenge to "live life like a constant spiritual quest for the Ultimate, thus giving life its meaning and who accepted the challenge in full freedom".[245] At the same time, Abraham is a figure that young people belonging to the three monotheistic religions can identify with.

In recent years, "Scouts Musulmans de France" have taken the initiative to invite members of all the associations that make up "Scoutisme Français" to join in a real sharing experience during the course of a meeting on Scouting's contribution to inter-religious dialogue. The meeting held in 2000 took place in Toulouse (France) from 29 April to 1 May and had the fraternity around Abraham as its central theme. A Protestant pastor, a Jewish rabbi, a Catholic priest and a Muslim philosopher took it in turns to throw special light on the subject and their exposés were followed by questions and general discussion in small groups. The second part of the meeting considered the question: What do you expect of Scout associations in favour of inter-religious dialogue? And followed with a conclusion: What type of fraternity should be practised today?[246]

This example, which is far from being unique, is a good illustration of one of the many ways advantage may be taken of the cultural and religious diversity that exists among young people today to promote encounter and dialogue in the spiritual domain.

6.3 BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

The reader will certainly understand that in a document of this kind it is possible to make only broad statements and affirmations of a general nature, which is out of step with a world that is full of variety, richness and nuance…

Therefore, it may be that here or there one statement or another does not exactly tally with the philosophy or practice of a given Scout association. It may also be that a religious group, or a Church, or a spiritual community in consultative status with WOSM feels that its position has not been mentioned at all or only insufficiently, or that it has been treated too broadly or over-simplified, at the risk of misrepresentation. If this should indeed be the case, we wish to apologize but would ask for your understanding that the action or omission was not intentional in any way. Thus, we hope we may count on your indulgence because, as the French say: *"faute avouée est à moitié pardonnée"* ["apologizing is half-way to being forgiven"]!

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ANNEX I:

RESOLUTIONS OF THE WORLD SCOUT CONFERENCE

Resolutions on Principles of Scouting, Duty to God/Religion, Declaration of Principle and Keynote Resolutions are so closely related that they are not separate by theme but presented in chronological order.

14/24 Principles of Scouting

The Boy Scouts International Conference declares that the Boy Scout Movement is a movement of national, international and universal character, the object of which is to endow each separate nation and the whole world with a youth which is physically, morally and spiritually strong.

It is national in that it aims, through national organizations, at endowing every nation with useful and healthy citizens.

It is international in that it recognizes no national barrier in the comradeship of the Scouts.

It is universal in that it insists upon universal fraternity between all Scouts of every nation, class or creed.

The Scout Movement has no tendency to weaken but, on the contrary, to strengthen individual religious belief. The Scout Law requires that a Scout shall truly and sincerely practise his religion, and the policy of the Movement forbids any kind of sectarian propaganda at mixed gatherings.

18/55 Keynote Resolution

The Conference believes that Scouting with its methods as initiated by B.P. can always attract the boy if we insist on giving boys real Scouting with its romance, adventure, inspired leadership, advancement programme and spiritual life.

The Conference as the central world body of our Movement expresses the conviction that World Scouting in the existing general international atmosphere can play a most important part by preparing good citizens for tomorrow with the right ideas of a constructive mutual understanding among all nations and towards lasting peace.

19/57 Keynote Resolution

The Conference, as the central body of the Boy Scouts world brotherhood, on the occasion of its Founder's Centenary and the fiftieth Anniversary of the birth of Scouting in the world, reaffirms its faith in the fundamental principles of Scouting as founded by the former Chief Scout of the world, the late Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell:

1. Duty to God.
2. Loyalty to one's own country.
3. Faith in world friendship and brotherhood.
4. Accepting, freely undertaking and practising the ideals set forth in the Scout Law and Promise.

5. Independence of political influence.
6. Voluntary membership.
7. The unique system of training, based on the patrol system, activities in the open air and learning by doing.
8. Service to others.

The Conference firmly believes that these principles, which have proved so successful, strongly contribute towards the formation of character in the boy of today, the man of tomorrow, to the great benefit of every nation, and through the spread of understanding and unity of purpose, of the world as a whole. May this be our endeavour in the strengthening of freedom and peace.

8/61 Duty to God/Religion

(Argentina and Venezuela dissented)

The Conference recognizes that Duty to God/Religion is basic in the philosophy and intent of the Boy Scout Movement.

For Scout associations which so wish the Promise must be capable of being formulated so that allowance is made for the fact that their membership may include believers in a Personal God and also those who acknowledge a spiritual Reality.

Any such information must be in accord with the original Scout Promise that recognizes a supreme spiritual Presence in the Universe.

The Conference sees as the responsibility of the Scout organization the need to reach as many boys as possible in the area of our influence, to guide them toward a spiritual life and to assure that the religious faith to which a Scout belongs is fully safeguarded.

3/69 Declaration of Principle

The Boy Scouts World Conference:

a) Asserts its belief that the ideas as set forth in "Scouting for Boys" are so fundamental as to transcend the limits of race and country.

b) Records that the aims, basis and fundamental principles are defined by the World Scout Constitution (Articles III and IV).

c) Declares that the Boy Scout Movement is a movement of national, international and universal character, the object of which is to endow each separate nation and the whole world with a youth which is spiritually, morally and physically strong. It is national in that it aims, through national organizations, at endowing every nation with useful and healthy citizens.

   It is international in that it recognizes no national barrier in the comradeship of the Scouts.

   It is universal in that it insists upon brotherhood between all Scouts of every nation, class or creed.

d) Reaffirms its steadfast loyalty to the aims, principles and methods of Scouting for Boys, as inaugurated by the late Lord Baden-Powell, and its belief in the value of international Scouting in the promotion of understanding and goodwill among all peoples.

e) Asserts that whilst membership in Scouting in any country should foster true patriotism, this should genuinely be kept within the limits of international cooperation and friendship irrespective of creed and race.

Therefore

The Conference reaffirms that the conditions for international recognition of any national Scout organization (and its membership) are set forth in the Constitution of the Boy Scouts World Conference.

Recognition does not represent intrusion into the field of politics, nor should it be considered by any government or official as affecting the sovereignty or diplomatic status of any country.

4/69 Unity of Scouting

Convinced that the unity of the World Scout Movement in brotherhood, structure and action is of the highest importance in its efforts to serve the boys of the modern world and to bring Scouting to all boys desiring membership:

The Conference having carefully studied the paper presented by the British delegation entitled "The Unity of the World Scout Movement", is deeply impressed by its relevance in a divided world. It recommends a careful study of this paper by all member countries and by the World Committee.

It also requires that every effort be made to put into practice as soon as possible the proposals for unity and practical Scout internationalism contained in it and that its spirit guide the work of the World Movement. It directs the World Committee to ensure that any new country wishing to apply for membership of the Conference shall be encouraged and helped as necessary to establish a single, united national organization open to all boys.

4/75 Purposes, Principles and Methods (Constitution, Chapter II)

The World Conference

- Considering that the survey on the Purposes, Principles and Methods of the Scout Movement (Constitution, Chapter II) constitutes, on the part of the respondents, a general reaffirmation of the validity of the content of Chapter II, coupled with the desire to reexpress this Chapter in better and more significant terms,
- Convinced that, refined and clarified, the Purposes, Principles and Methods embodied in Chapter II would emerge strengthened and unchallenged,

- Requests the World Committee to establish a Task Force, representative insofar as is possible of the principal societies and cultures found among membership of the World Organization, and to submit for consideration by the 26th World Conference proposals relating to Chapter II in the light of the positions revealed in the survey and all views submitted by Member Associations before January 1, 1976.

10/90 Scouting and Values Transmission

The Conference

- expresses its appreciation to the Chairman of the World Scout Committee and to the Secretary General for their reports and the particular emphases given therein to:
  - the importance of the spiritual dimension in the personal development of young people and in the youth programmes offered to them
  - the need for community development as an effective expression of Scout solidarity and awareness of the duties we have as Scouts towards others
  - the priority to be given to conservation of the environment in order to develop harmony between Man and Nature, in full application of the Scout Method
  - Scouting's global educational approach and the consequent need to coordinate the efforts at all levels in terms of organization, youth programme, adult leader training and particularly research, in order to reinforce the dynamism and growth of the Scout Movement
- thanks the World Scout Bureau for the work accomplished and for the increasingly close and clear connection established among national Scout organizations
- encourages the World Committee and the Secretary General to continue along the same lines and to promote the pursuit of a deeper knowledge of the basic values of the Scout Method
- invites national Scout organizations and the World Bureau to increase and develop the mutual exchange of information so as to achieve an effective communication concerning progress and an active awareness of the worldwide dimension of the Movement.

10/96 Inter-religious dialogue

The Conference

- considering the fundamental and universal importance of the spiritual and religious dimensions within the educational method of Scouting
- considering the Scout Movement as providing a privileged place and opportunity for knowledge, understanding and fellowship among Scouts of different religions which are present in the world

- welcoming the first meeting of representatives of the different religious families held in Geneva in March 1996

- recommends to the World Scout Committee and to the religious families to convene forums of representatives of the religions that are present in the Movement
- encourages the World Scout Bureau to promote the spiritual dimension and to improve mutual understanding between different religious faiths
- calls on the World Committee and National Scout Associations to make full use of the ecumenical and inter-religious potential of Scouting.

13/96 Peace

The Conference

- referring to resolution 7/88 adopted in Melbourne concerning education for peace and understanding
- noting the proliferation of conflicts which devastate the world and destroy human lives as well as socio-economic and cultural infrastructure
- particularly welcoming initiatives by Scout associations to help safeguard and re-establish peace, notably the seminar on the role of Scouting in socio-political crises organized by Scout associations in the Great Lakes area (Burundi-Rwanda-Zaire)
- challenging xenophobia and racism, and noting that inter-cultural learning opportunities for young people challenge nationalistic stereotyping and provide education for peace and tolerance

- recommends that the World Scout Committee encourages Scout associations to review their youth programmes in order to:
  - enable Scouts and their leaders to research and analyse the underlying causes of conflict
  - promote peace, tolerance and reconciliation between communities, especially among young people, thereby helping to establish solidarity
  - encourage co-operation and exchanges which transcend ethnic, religious and cultural differences
- recommends that the World Scout Bureau supports such initiatives by providing Scout associations with educational input and by helping them to find financial and human resources.