



5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium Report



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5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium **Report**



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Introductory



The 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium, themed 'Duty to God-Duty to Scouting', was held from 27-29 January 2017 at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in New York, USA. One hundred and twenty Scouters from 40 National Scout Organizations (NSOs) attended and participated in the symposium which included keynote presentations, breakout and general sessions, religious observances and fellowship.

The symposium was jointly hosted by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Religious Relationships Committee and the Interreligious Forum of World Scouting (IFoWS), and supported by the World Scout Bureau (WSB). Much of the organisation and administration was provided by a strong local committee co-chaired by Rabbi Peter Hyman and Bray Barnes. Significant support was also provided by the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID).

The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, proved to be a perfect venue for the symposium. Housed in 216 acres of park land and first built for the training of Catholic priests, the seminary provided ample housing for each participant who enjoyed private single rooms with a private bathroom. There were ample conference rooms, an auditorium capable of holding over 200 participants, lounges, recreation facilities, a dining hall and three chapels. Additional rooms were made available for Muslim and Jewish services.

As the seminary is large and spacious, all activities took place under one roof. One participant noted the quietness of the building and how easily they slept at night. The beautiful grounds, located on Long Island Sound provided ample opportunity for participants to take reflective walks, retreating to the peace and solitude throughout the day.

Presentation topics allowed each participant to engage in discussion surrounding Religion and Spirituality, Scout Values and Diversity, all of which were centred on the common theme of the importance of Duty to God in a Scout's life.



The goal of the symposium was to help participants reflect on strategies, action plans, curriculum and measurable objectives that aid and assist Scouts in understanding Duty to God as a historical cornerstone value of the Scout programme. In other words, participants should take away with them a plan to better assist them in delivering a Scouting programme that incorporates Duty to God to the Scouts whom they serve.

The symposium was preceded by a two-day training in interreligious dialogue for 40 participants, led by KAICIID. This also took place at the seminary.

The symposium was the fruit of effective collaboration between a number of parties: the members of the Religious Relationships Committee of BSA who provided many of the presenters, group leads and facilitators; the staff members of the International Division of BSA who provided the visa support essential for international Scout events; the members of IFoWS who contributed their insight and experience; and the staff members of the WSB who handled coordination, registration, announcements and invitations, and led some of the sessions.

Some difficulties were experienced due to the late provision of information regarding flight schedules, special needs and food requirements by participants. This presented some unnecessary challenges in terms of logistics. While everyone was accommodated, participants at future Scout events are encouraged to be more considerate towards the volunteers.

This report aims to provide a brief overview of the symposium as a guide for future work and as an invitation to participate in future events of this kind. It is hoped that it will contribute to the ongoing reflection on the historical centrality of Duty to God as a one of the key pillars of Scouting.





Acknowledgements

and for the financial support which helped underwrite the funding for approximately 40 participants. Without KAICIID's assistance, those individuals would not have been able to attend the symposium. Their support was invaluable.

The WSB: Göran Hagerdal; Hany Abdulmonem; Cynthia Marquez; Brian Dahlgren; Hana Pasic; Fr. Jonathan How (WOSM Advisor), Mohamed Omar (Dialogue for Peace lead trainer).

The IFoWS and its chair, Dr Annette von Stockhausen In cooperation with the Organisations with Consultative Status: ICCS, IUMS, CPGS, DESMOS, IFJS, WBSC..

Workshop Facilitators and Coordinators: Roberto Cociancich; Donna Copeland; Houston Costolo; Pedro Duarte Silva; Georges El Ghorayeb; Ruth Ouezana; Mathew 'Troll' Percival; Marco Petrovic; Rabbi Joseph Prouser; Dr James Wilson.

Lastly, sincere thanks goes to the co-chairs, Rabbi Peter Hyman, National Jewish Chaplain of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting; and Bray Barnes, World Chairman of the International Catholic Conference of Scouting; Jerry Scanlan, who served as the Vice Chair for the symposium and provided the administrative and logistical support that gave everyone a very memorable experience; and Fr. Kevin Smith, National Chaplain of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and alumnus of the Immaculate Conception Seminary, who helped to make all this possible.



The success of the 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium would not have been possible if it were not for the commitment and hard work of many. It is with the deepest gratitude that we recognise:

The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception: Its Rector, Rev. Msgr. Richard Henning, and Hillary Plate, their Hospitality Coordinator; Most Rev. William Murphy, retired Bishop of Rockville Centre, New York; Most Rev. Robert Guiglimone, USCCB Episcopal Liaison to Scouting.

The BSA: Religious Relationships Committee; International Division; Suffolk County Council; Charles Dahlquist, National Commissioner; Dr Ron Aldolph; Rev. Chip Turner; Paul Moffat, Chairman of the BSA Religious Relationships Committee; Janine Halverson; Phil Krajec; George Sparks, Chairman of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting; Order of the Arrow Dance Team.

KAICIID: Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer; Prof. Patrice Brodeur; Anas Alabbadi; Katerina Khareyn. For the dialogue training preceding the symposium



Highlights From The Symposium

Keynote addresses:

The opening day began with a welcome address from the co-chairs, the BSA, WOSM and the seminary. The keynote address was presented by Rev. Chip Turner, the former Chairman of the BSA Religious Relationships Committee. Rev. Turner spoke about the importance of Duty to God, as a unifying principle for the Scout Movement, and how the BSA, through the 31 different faith-based organisations of the Religious Relationships Committee, sponsors Scout units and provide youth ministry to Scouts regardless of their respective faith or belief.

This has created a better understanding of each person's belief and led to the cooperation and sharing of Scouts values, while supporting each Scout. Scouting looks at those ideals, values and beliefs that bring us together as a worldwide youth serving organisation, rather than to look at the differences among us.

Prof. Patrice Brodeur next spoke about the importance of interreligious dialogue and the need to better understand one another in today's world. Scouting is a great vehicle to

promote the sharing of dialogue, and the teaching of life lessons that will benefit young people throughout the rest of their lives.

BSA National Commissioner Charles Dahlquist, carried the theme forward with the impact that Scout leaders can have. Among those are the faith-based organisation leaders who impart the cornerstone of Duty to God.

On Saturday morning, George Sparks, National Chairman of the US National Catholic Committee on Scouting, and Paul Moffat, Chairman of the Religious Relationships Committee spoke on 'How the BSA works with its religious partners'. Being an open NSO, the BSA partners with 31 different faith-based organisations to promote Duty to God through activities such as the religious emblems programme.

Over lunch on Saturday, Bishop William Murphy (emeritus bishop of Rockville Centre) provided a special welcome to all the participants and thanked them for all they have done for the young people of the world. Bishop Robert Guglielmino then spoke about the Scout Promise and Law, and how Duty to God is very much a part of those values learned by every Scout.

Plenary sessions also included:

- an update on the work of the Duty to God Task Force with a presentation of some of their initial findings
- a workshop on Measuring Impact in Duty to God, part of an ongoing project within the movement
- a presentation from the 2019 World Scout Jamboree Team
- presentation on Dialogue for Peace Programme and the Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) Badge





Seminars

The seminars were broken into three general topics: Religion and Spirituality, Scouting Values and Programme in Diversity. Participants signed up for one topic in each one of the three groups.

Religion and Spirituality

Seeking Equilibrium: The Founder's Vision and the Challenges of Modernity
Religion as a Definitional Component of Cultural Identity
Spirituality and Duty to God - Are They One and the Same?

Scout Values

Duty to God: Unifying Principle for the Scouting Movement? Discussion.
Duty to God: A Culturally Translatable Concept in Scouting: what does this mean?
The Scout Promise and Law in the 21st Century: remaining faithful to foundational values in a dynamic and diverse global movement?
Scouting as a Worldwide Values-driven Organisation: Alignment and Divergences
Scouting as a Change Agent in a global context: programming spiritual and religious development can contribute to the creation of a better world. Case studies, practices and theoretical perspectives.



Programme in Diversity

Seeing 'the Other': Sharing practices and stories, acknowledging that we are all Scouts.

Sharing Sacred Space: Relationships with Other Religions in Scouts' Owns and Interreligious Ceremonies.

Spiritual and Religious Development at National and World Jamborees

Religious Diversity and Cultural Unity in Youth Programme: How to help Scouts to recognise the importance of Duty to God, whether understood in Religious or Spiritual terms? Sharing of practices.





Programme Summary and Conclusion

Facilitated by Prof. Patrice Brodeur, along with the three group leaders, each presented a summary of takeaways from the seminars. Each participant was then asked to briefly list 2-3 things they were taking away from their experience, as well as 2-3 things they learned during the event, and what they would change for future events. The following are a small sample of the responses:

What do you take away?

- Wider knowledge of the variety of Duty to God interpretations in Scouting.
- That there is a wide spectrum of understanding of Duty to God. However, at the same time there is acceptance and respect for other views and opinions.
- A network of spiritual resources who can help to better serve and understand young people in my community and the larger world.
- The technique of dialogue
- How to measure impact
- To emphasise Duty to God as an important value that cannot be left out in our educational method.
- An idea on how to live Duty to God without talking about God.
- The need to support spiritual development for non-religious groups.
- A suitcase full of new ideas, new skills, and a firm belief that Scouting can overcome actual dilemmas regarding its fundamentals.
- Ideas (examples) on how to deal with the different concepts/understanding of Duty to God.
- The need to experience the practice of religious faith and the practice of spirituality embedded in the Scout method – that's the only effective 'learning by doing'.
- Ideas for implementing Duty to God and religious/non-religious faith in the movement
- Lots of new friends
- Enthusiasm

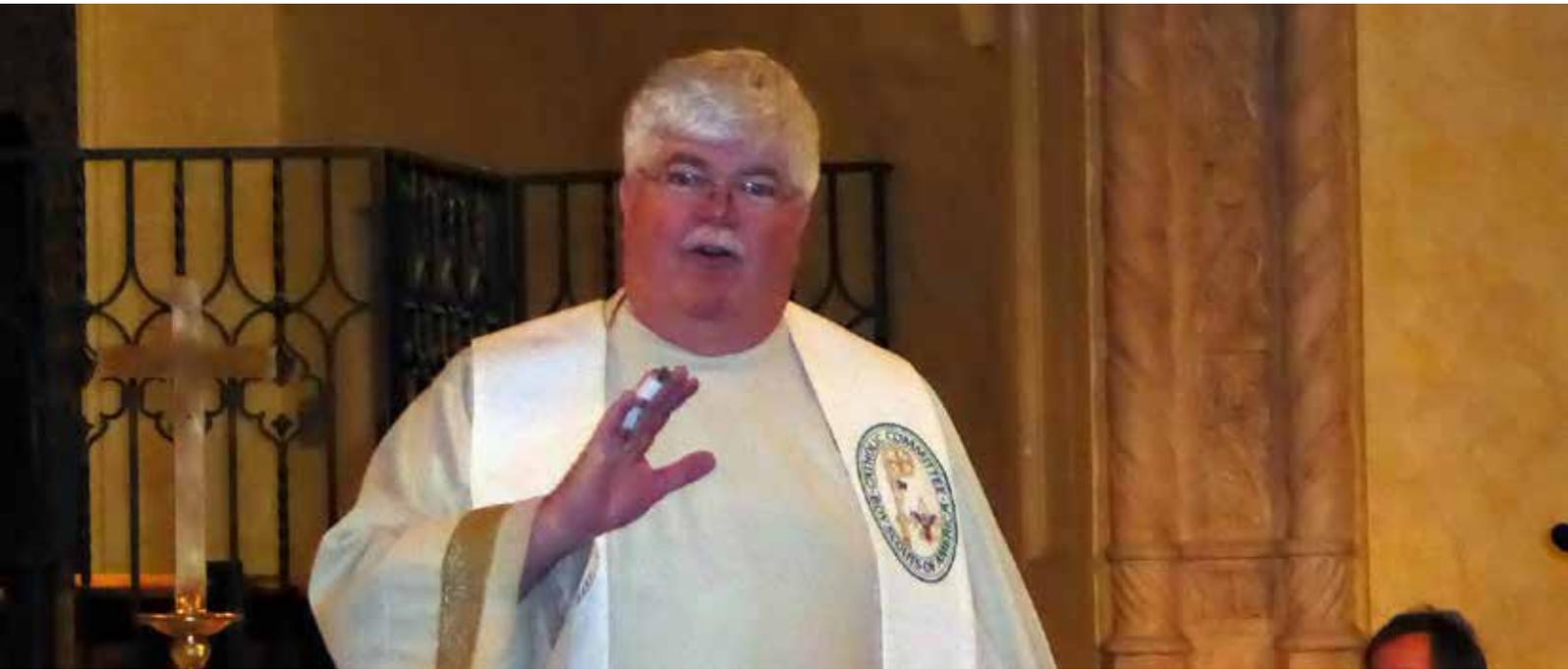


What did you learn?

- The place of religious groups in the structure of BSA.
- Practical ideas, even if I can't remember them at the moment.
- Dialogue – key elements, procedure, purpose, importance
- I expanded my personal understanding of spirituality.
- Europe is facing challenges different from other regions.
- How Jewish readings and teachings work
- Scouting provides the environment for dialogue as it is a place for friendship.
- I have gained a better understanding of the operating philosophies of many of my brother and sister Scouts in regard to spirituality and religion in a Scouting context.
- Fascination with the cultural and religious diversity that we have in Scouting
- Understanding what is meant by Duty to God and its impact among Scouts.
- Love, tolerance, gratuity, search for peace and justice are common values in all religions.
- The danger of a single story.
- Spirituality is important for all Scouts.
- Although we are all different, we have the same dignity and honour in our search for God and for the highest values.
- How different NSOs conduct programmes on Duty to God/spirituality/religion.
- Several new things about the faith of fellow Scouts and that the practice of sharing in a safe space can really move people.

What would you change for future symposia?

- Plenary sessions that were shorter or more interactive
- Clearer focus and expectations of small groups communicated in advance
- More papers shared in advance to allow effective preparation and participation
- Time in small working groups for more extended discussion
- Fewer presentations from a single NSO
- Some outdoor activity
- Sessions for 'specialists' and room for advanced discussion
- Some sort of common prayer
- Recycling and attention to the environmental impact of the symposium
- More activities for discovery of other faiths



The following recommendations emerged from the discussions and activities at the 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium:

- Design programme components that help Scouts understand that Duty to God is a founding principle of the Scout Movement as it was understood by our founder, Lord Robert Baden-Powell
- Develop programme components that help Scouts to demonstrate Duty to God
- Develop resource materials for Scout leaders that address Duty to God; religious diversity; what is faith; what is spirituality; the Scouting imperative to be respectful of others and to understand that Duty to God is a shared Scouting value
- Develop material and organise formal leaders training opportunities on the topics of Duty to God, having faith as a Scout, spirituality as a form of Duty to God and the diversity of world religions



Evening Programme

Saturday evening was the highlight of the cultural and social programme with a banquet-style dinner featuring local food. The evening programme was provided by the Scouts who are youth members of the Order of the Arrow, BSA's Brotherhood of honoured campers. They performed native American Indian dances in native costumes that they designed and crafted. They had travelled some distance to perform at the symposium and were much appreciated.



Host Evaluation

- Good host NSO support is essential for such things as visa letters, possible financial support, staffing, coordination and legal requirements. Although this was not a BSA event, the size of the organisation in the USA allowed for the symposium to be successful through volunteers and with limited support from BSA divisions such as the International Division. Certainly, the WSB was key to providing many administrative functions.
- Managing the event within budget and without the need to draw financial resources from local Scout organisation was made possible by good working relationships with the host venue and by their generous and flexible approach to the symposium and its needs.
- If possible, an all-inclusive facility requiring minimal travel should be selected. The fact that all activities were under one roof eliminated the need for walking long distances, thus taking away valuable programme time, and not having to encounter adverse weather.
- Participants have to be advised as soon as possible to provide travel and accommodation information. This will help the Planning Team to coordinate pickup, allocate rooms, and identify food and room costs.
- Having one person identified as the Logistics Coordinator proved very beneficial as one point of contact is needed for transportation and facility coordination. A visit to the venue six weeks before the symposium with the co-chair enabled effective planning.
- There should be at least one presentation dedicated to give each of the major faiths time to briefly present an overview of their respective faiths. This will allow a better understanding of those aspects that are similar and bring us together rather than focusing on those aspects that are different.





- The use of English as the main language should be continued as the majority of participants all spoke English to some degree of understanding. French translation was provided for several participants and this practice should be continued. Attention will need to be given to the location of future events and the primary language.
- A location that requires easy travel points from around the world. The 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium was accessible via three major airports and one regional airport. Future locations should also be accessible by at least one major airport to reduce the need for transfers and minimise cost.
- Religious services were open to all. This opportunity should be continued as it promoted a better understanding of other faiths.
- Consideration should be given to an 'all-faiths' service. A short prayer by each faith was provided which could be augmented by bringing all together in the spirit of Scouting.
- The Saturday banquet included an American Indian dance performance by Scouts. This was well received and a similar performance was conducted in Korea. Such cultural opportunities in the host country, especially done by Scouts, lends to a better understanding of that culture.
- The 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium focused on Duty to God and each participant provided one thing they learned and one best practice they could take back to their NSO. This is a beginning and the next World Scout Interreligious Symposium should continue to not only provide a learning experience, but to deliver best practices. For example, the BSA's religious emblems programme is wide ranging and provides method by which each Scout learns about their respective faith. Many faith-based organisations in the USA use the religious emblems programme as their youth ministry.
- Copies of all presentations should be made available for distribution to participants. This could be accomplished by compiling the presentations and distributing them electronically.
- While the formal programme was well received, ample time should be provided for discussion and sharing of ideas, fellowship, reflection and relaxation.
- KAICIID provided a two-day training course for about 40 participants prior to the symposium. This was well received and enjoyed. Whether this is continued or not, it had no impact on the positive or negative on the symposium, other than to give those who had not received diversity training an understanding of what to expect from the symposium and it is assumed a more meaningful experience.
- Rooms with private bathrooms were well received, and if possible, facilities with similar arrangements should be considered.
- Having the symposium at a religious facility was beneficial. Since the entire seminary was dedicated to the symposium this allowed for interaction by participants and kept with the theme of 'interreligious'. Although a Roman Catholic seminary, many enjoyed the history, having chapels available for worship, and there seemed to be a better acceptance of why we all came together – for interreligious dialogue, understanding, learning and tolerance of each as all being part of the Scout Movement.
- A welcome guide, an app and various 'goodies' that were donated by supporters made sure that participants were informed and excited about the symposium.
- A range of small gifts were given to group leaders and facilitators and also to the members of the seminary staff who had supported the event. Although a small token, the gesture was well received and genuinely appreciated.
- Consideration should be given as to how to handle legal contracts, public liability insurance and other legal matters for such events, and how this might best be arranged between the NSO, WSB, and the local organising committee.



Agenda

Thursday, January 26

All day	Arrival
18:30 - 19:30	Dinner
21:30 - 22:00	Evening refreshments

Friday, January 27

08:00 - 09:00	Breakfast
09:30 - 11:00	Opening/welcome and introductions Bray Barnes Keynote address #1 Rev. Chip Turner
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00	Interreligious dialogue (KAICIID) Prof. Patrice Brodeur
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch - remarks Charles W. Dahlquist
14:00 - 14:30	Muslim Juma'a Prayer
14:30 - 16:00	Duty to God presentation
16:00 - 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 - 18:00	Session 1: Religion and Spirituality

Group Leader: Dr Ron Adolphi

Defining Duty to God for Scouting in the 21st Century
Facilitator: Ruth Ouezana

Seeking Equilibrium: The Founder's Vision and the
Challenges of Modernity
Facilitator: Rabbi Joseph Prouser

Religion as a Definitional Component
of Cultural Identity
Facilitator: Dr James Wilson

18:00 - 18:30	Jewish Sabbath evening worship
18:30 - 19:30	Dinner
20:00 - 21:30	Workshops
21:30 - 22:00	Evening refreshments



Saturday, January 28

07:00 - 08:00 Jewish Sabbath morning worship
08:00 - 09:00 Breakfast
09:30 - 11:00 How does BSA conduct spiritual and religious development work
11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 - 13:00 Breakout Session 2: Scout Values
Group Leader: Marco Petrovic

Duty to God: The Unifying Principle for the Scouting Movement?
Facilitator: Rev. Chip Turner

Duty to God: A Culturally Translatable Concept in Scouting
Facilitator: Mark Francis

The Scout Promise and Law in the 21st century: How do we remain faithful to our founding values in a dynamic and diverse global world?
Facilitator: Georges El Ghorayeb

Scouting as a Worldwide Values-driven Organisation
Facilitator: Houston Costolo

Scouting as a Change Agent in a Global Context
Facilitator: Roberto Cociancich

13:00 - 14:30 Lunch with presentations
13:30 - 14:00 2019 WSJ presentation: Scott Sorrels, Marty Walsh
14:00 - 14:30 Keynote address #2 - Bishop Robert Guglielmone
14:30 - 16:00 Measuring the Impact of Duty to God: Developing Measurable Goals
Facilitator: Hana Pasic
16:00 - 16:30 Coffee break
16:30 - 18:00 Breakout Session 3: Programme in Diversity
Group Leader: Fr. Jonathan How

Seeing 'the Other': Acknowledging that we are all Scouts
Facilitator: Dr Annette von Stockhausen

Sharing Sacred Space – Spiritual and Religious Development at Jamborees
Facilitator: Mathew 'Troll' Percival

Religious Diversity and Cultural Unity in Youth Programming
Facilitator: Pedro Duarte Silva

Helping Scouts and Scouters to recognise the importance of Duty to God, whether understood in Religious or Spiritual terms.
Facilitator: Donna Copeland

18:30 - 19:30 Dinner
20:00 - 21:30 Evening programme
21:30 - 22:00 Evening refreshments



Sunday, January 29

07:00 to 08:00	Catholic mass/Christian worship
08:00 to 09:00	Breakfast
09:30 to 10:00	Dialogue for Peace Programme and the Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) Badge Co-presenters: Hany Abdulmonem and Fr. Jacques Gagey
10:00 to 11:00	Supporting Spiritual and Religious Development: Going Forward (Moderated panel discussion)
11:00 to 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 to 12:30	Supporting Spiritual and Religious Development (continued)
12:30 to 13:00	Final discussion/wrap up: Prof. Patrice Brodeur, Fr. Jonathan How, Dr Ronald Adolphi, Marco Petrovic
13:00 to 14:30	Lunch
14:30 to 16:30	Closing – departures





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