

South East Region
District Commissioners Conference
Scouts Own
26th November 2006



Creating a Better World

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

(Isaiah 11:6-7, NRSV)

A woman dreamed she walked into a brand-new shop and, to her surprise, found God behind the counter.

“What do you sell here?” she asked.

“Everything your heart desires,” said God.

Hardly daring to believe what she was hearing, the woman decided to ask for the best things a human being could wish for. “I want peace of mind and love and happiness and wisdom and freedom from fear,” she said. Then as an afterthought, she added, “Not just for me. For everyone on earth.”

God smiled, “I think you’ve got me wrong, my dear,” he said. “We don’t sell fruits here, only seeds.”

(from Anthony De Mello, Taking Flight)

Water

Water is an essential life-sustaining element. It pervades our lives and is deeply embedded in our cultural backgrounds. The basic human needs of a secure food supply and freedom from disease depend on it. Social development – endeavours such as the smooth functioning of hospitals – likewise relies on the availability of clean water. Economic development requires energy resources and industrial activities, and both are in turn water-dependent. The provision of sanitation for girls in schools offers yet another example of water’s broader links – it has positive effects on hygiene and health, keeps girls in school, and helps to safeguard the natural environment. For these reasons and many more, access to safe drinking water and sanitation is both a development target in its own right and integrally linked to achieving all the Millennium Development Goals.

(Kofu Anan, Water – A Shared Responsibility, 2006)

Some water facts:

- By 2025, 1 800 million people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under stress conditions.
- It has been estimated that in order to ensure our basic needs every individual needs 20 to 50 litres of clean water each and every day. 900 million slum dwellers only had 5 to 10 litres per day. In the same city others used 50 to 150 litres.
- Sanitation coverage in developing countries (49%) is only half that of the developed world (98%)

Let's thank God for clean water to sip.
Let's thank God for clean water to gulp
Let's thank God for clean water to slurp
Let's thank God for clean water to gargle
Let's thank God for clean water to drink
Thank you God for your precious gift of water.

Lives of service

So that is where our Scout ideals made their appeal, namely among men [and women] who could really appreciate their value, and who saw in the teaching of Service the satisfaction of a world-wide need.

By "Service" I mean the submission of self to the willing rendering of helpfulness to others, without thought of return or reward.

The first step for bringing this about has to be the cultivation of a spirit of habitual kindness and goodwill towards one's fellow men [and women], the second step is putting it into practice through active helpfulness and cooperation. This goodwill must exist towards all and every no matter who or what are those fellow men, be they rich or poor, or of other creed or country, colour or station; they must be thought of only as brothers [and sisters] in God's great family against whom prejudice or ill-feeling must be non-existent and to whom active friendship is to be extended.

It is difficult to teach an old dog new tricks, and our hope therefore of bringing about the prevalence of such a quality must largely lie with the oncoming generation.

So it is for this that in the Scout Movement, and in that of the Guides, we promote the daily "good turn" as the embryo of this greater development of goodwill and helpfulness. It is for this that we encourage the three-fold efficiency in character, health and handicraft, so that it may be employed by the boy [or girl] in the further development, namely service, i.e. not merely in benefiting himself but rather giving help to others.

(B-P. *Jamboree*, January 1924)

This I will do to create a better world:

(Provide space in the programme for participants to write down something they would do to create a better world)

Final Prayer:

God help us to change. To change ourselves and to change our world. To know the need for it. To deal with the pain of it. To feel the joy of it. To undertake the journey without understanding the destination. The art of gentle revolution.

(Michael Leunig)