

Friday 20 July (16.45) – Tuesday 24 July (noon) 2007

A Grassroots Dialogue of Civilizations

Background

In July 2005, Kofi Annan called for ‘an alliance of civilizations’ against divisions, prejudice and misunderstanding between different groups that menace the peace of the world – notably between the West and the Muslim world. In Europe, as elsewhere, especially in our cities, this works out in social inequalities and tensions between groups from different origins. In a world where different cultures live side by side, a society where each feels at home still has to be created. The path each takes towards the other can help to bridge the gap and reduce the dangers of conflict between the West and the Muslim world.

Method

To move beyond a spirit of confrontation and lack of mutual understanding, an open-hearted dialogue must start between all those who seek to bridge differences. We must learn the art of listening to each other, and the courage to talk about the things that make our relationships difficult: the roots of our fears, the feelings of injustice and humiliation.

Each of us, as citizens, has a specific role to play in building an alliance of civilizations. To become peace-makers, we must find freedom from our own bitterness. In humility, as we question our own attitudes and personal points of view, we build trust.

The conference

Caux provides a safe space, a meeting point for honest conversations between people of different backgrounds. All are invited to come a spirit of openness, travelling both towards the other and towards a deeper understanding of ourselves.

It will ...

- offer opportunities to change the images that we have of each other;
- to go to the roots of our fears and frustrations;
- to appreciate the riches of our differences;
- to tackle problems of history in a spirit of trust and pacification;
- to identify the values that we share in common with an aim of passing them on to future generations.

Practical information:

For conference application and costs, travel details etc, please see the general Caux conference programme in print, or on line at www.caux.ch.

April 2007