

My Sons Are Boy Scouts ... For Now

For roughly the last 10 years, my twin sons have been in Scouting. Both are now First Class Scouts; one is a member of the "Order of the Arrow," Scouting's national honor society.

They started as Cub Scouts and have grown up with a band of boys and dads they love and respect.

Here's how the Boy Scouts' own website describes what it means to be a Cub Scout: "Being a Cub Scout means you are a member of a worldwide youth movement that stands for certain values and beliefs. Cub Scouting is more than something to do. It's all about the boy you *are* and the person you will *become*."

Beliefs. Values. These words are at the heart of what Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting always have been: a forum in which boys learn to become men—men of high moral character, men who are resourceful and purposeful, who do what's right when no one is looking, who help the weak voluntarily and lead others humbly.

We have spent countless hours camping, hiking, learning skills of all kinds, and growing together as father and sons along with other men and boys who have become like family.

These things are now in danger of being lost. Every week, Scouts take an oath, "on their honor," to do their duty to God and their country. They promise to be "morally straight" and "reverent."

These terms have objective meaning, grounded in Scouting's historic basis in biblical truth. To this day, every edition of Scouting's premier magazine, *Boys Life*, contains a Bible story.

Must one be a Christian to be in Scouts? Thousands of Jewish, Muslim and other Scouts rightly would say no. But has Scouting always taught that objective right and wrong exist and are found in God's eternal law? Yes, indisputably.

What would happen if Scouts allow homosexuals to serve as leaders or participate as self-identified "gay" men and boys? Seventy percent of Scout troops in the United States are chartered at faith-based institutions. Many of these are Catholic and Evangelical Protestant churches, Mormon stakes, Jewish synagogues, and Islamic mosques.

Consider the kind of message we would be sending our sons if we tell them, "When we take the BSA oath and recite the Scout Law, we mean one thing—but the guys in the troop at the church down the street mean something completely different."

Boys should be allowed to be boys, and teens allowed to be teens, without the compulsory introduction of controversial sexual issues at a young age. Most Scouting families feel this way. Just last July, then-Chief Scout Executive Bob Mazduca said of a two-year study of Scouting and homosexuality: "The vast majority of the parents of youth we serve value their right to address issues of same-sex orientation within their family, with spiritual advisers, and at the appropriate time, and in the right setting." Other than the intense political pressure of a handful of homosexual activist groups, what's changed?

We also have to face the fact that homosexual predation within Scouts has been a significant problem. Is every homosexual a pedophile or predator? Of course not; no one suggests, or should suggest, that. Yet the abuse that has taken place in the Scouts has been initiated by homosexuals. Consider: "A Seattle attorney has published online what he says are the names of 1,932 Boy Scouts of America leaders accused or convicted of sexually abusing children—a small slice of the nearly 20,000 names in the BSA's secret 'perversion files.'"

Check the names on this list: They are male, and their crimes involve molestation and/or assault of boys and young men.

Many of us have homosexual friends, neighbors and family members. It's my hope that all believers treat them with love and respect. Yet as a Christian, I affirm Scripture's teaching that the only appropriate sexually intimate conduct exists between a man and a woman within marriage. This means I don't want, as role models or life-influencers for my sons, heterosexual adulterers or fornicators—or homosexuals. This is grounded in the teachings of the Word of God, not hatred or bigotry.

I'm not sure if my sons will ever make Eagle Scout, although that's long been a cherished goal. Why? Because I'm not sure we'll stay in Scouting.

That breaks my heart, but better that than compromise the moral law of God, which is fixed in heaven forever.

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