

Churches Can Stand Firm Against New Boy Scouts Membership Policy

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) is providing guidance to churches on the legal ramifications of the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) change to its long-standing membership policy. In May, the BSA executive committee changed the policy so that it now allows Scouts to be of any "sexual orientation or preference." Many churches sponsor Boy Scout troops.

"Churches have an obligation to retain their values and teach biblically based morality," says ADF senior counsel David Cortman. "They are not the ones who are abandoning the Boy Scouts. Rather, it is the Boy Scouts who have chosen to abandon the centuries-old moral and religious principles that formed a shared bond between BSA and religious groups."

The ADF memo explains that "under threat of litigation, a church that chooses to maintain ties with BSA could face forfeiting the ability to teach biblical principles of sexual morality to its Scouts and to require them to adhere to those principles."

The memo also explains that "a compromise on this issue could have the undesirable side effect of weakening a church's First Amendment rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association."

"We have provided this information to churches that have been associated with BSA so that they can protect their freedom to freely preach the gospel," adds senior legal counsel Erik Stanley, an Eagle Scout. "Churches cannot abandon their duty to be a witness to our nation's youth and must be able to continue to make decisions based on their religious principles."