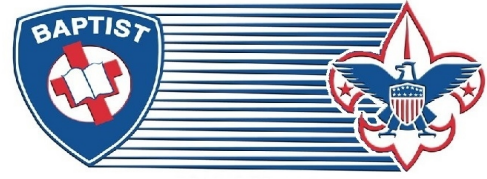


July 27, 2015

Statement in Response To the Action of the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America to Change its Adult Membership Standards to Eliminate Any Restrictions With Respect to Sexual Orientation.



1. As Baptists, we embrace the Bible as our guidebook to living a Godly life. We believe that homosexual relationships are contradictory to Biblical teachings.
2. With respect to adult leaders in Scouting, we deeply regret the cultural shifts and the legal landscape that have forced the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to make the move to no longer have an adult leader standard related to sexual orientation.
3. We take comfort in the fact that churches who charter a Boy Scout unit will continue to “own” their units and have the ability and obligation to select their own adult leaders based on the moral tenets and beliefs of their congregations.
4. We appreciate that the BSA is firmly committed to protecting and enhancing one's “Duty to God” as a core value and program element, while regretting that it was felt that it was necessary to change the adult standard in order to protect that core value. We are pleased that the code of conduct within Scouting has not changed in any way, neither now nor in recent years.
5. Even with this change, we continue to believe that the program made available by the BSA constitutes one of the most effective youth character development programs in existence. We emphatically believe that it continues to have the potential to be a powerful community outreach, evangelism, and ministry tool for any church, particularly in reaching families who currently have no religious or church affiliation.
6. We believe that youth who are struggling with their own sexual identity are as much in need of character development programs such as Scouting as any other young person, and that Baptist congregations can and should be part of filling that need as an outreach and ministry program of their church.
7. We urge Baptist churches to start or continue Scouting programs, and to have them led by adults who are faithful to the moral beliefs of that congregation, thereby aiding in the spiritual development of our youth. We believe conditions resulting in this policy change by the BSA provide clear evidence of the increasing need for current and future moral champions in our society.
8. We urge families who are searching out a place for their child to enjoy the benefits of Boy Scouting to give strongest consideration to those Scout units which are chartered to a church or other entity having beliefs and conduct which are consistent with their own personal beliefs.
9. Faith affiliation statistics from National Scout Jamborees confirm that there are tens of thousands of Baptist youth Scouts and adult Scouters in units not chartered to Baptist churches. We encourage them to continue to be “salt and light” in their units and we urge all Baptists to be supportive of their efforts.
10. We encourage all Baptists in Scouting, both those in Baptist church chartered units and those in other units, to be a Christian witness within this mission field and to sustain their voice in Scouting at the local and national levels.