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ABS Today



A Publication of the Association of Baptists for Scouting

The Future of ABS: Our 5-Year Plan

By A.J. Smith, President ABS

It is a privilege to address you as your newly elected president. A few short years ago I could not have envisioned this moment. As a boy I did not have the opportunity to be in Scouts. My involvement began when my son became a Tiger Cub. If someone had

told me I would find a ministry in Scouting, I would have thought they had lost their mind. So, I am truly humbled by the honor that you have given me to serve as president.

I was reared in a Baptist home and am the youngest of five siblings. My father was a bi-vocational Baptist preacher with an eighth-grade education. My wife, Michelle, and I have been married for almost 22 years and have five children – three girls and two boys, with one Venture Scout and one Boy Scout. I am an active volunteer in my district and council, and recently completed Wood Badge SR-982. I teach church history for Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and served as part of a church planting team. I currently teach Bible study and play keyboard in my church's praise band. And, my entire family loves Scouting.



A.J. Smith, President ABS

Enough about me; you want to hear my ideas for making ABS stronger in the days ahead and for positioning us to fulfill our mission—leading youth to Christ through a Scouting Ministry. So let's start with talking about who we are, what our mission is, and how we can best fulfill it.

Who We Are: Baptists

First and foremost we are Christians of the Baptist persuasion. What does that mean? It means we are a diverse lot who are little understood by the Christian world around us. At last count there are some 60 different Baptist groups in the USA. We do things differently. We have

no hierarchy. There is no "Baptist Church." We have no single, stated creed that embraces all Baptists in all places at all times. Each church is its own autonomous body, free to elect its officers and set its course in whatever manner it perceives to be consistent with the Bible and the leading of the Holy Spirit. And yet, we are a voluntarily interdependent people. We form voluntary societies, associations, conferences, and conventions with other like-minded churches to advance the cause of the Kingdom.

Secondly, we are Baptists who believe Scouting is an evangelistic tool for churches. We believe Scouting is a positive force in our communities if used properly by our churches. This is something we, for all our differences, have in common. We are committed to reaching people with the Gospel and we share the belief that Scouting can be a useful tool for churches in that regard.

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www.baptistscouters.org

For years I worked in construction, and I've tinkered as a "shade-tree" mechanic since I was boy. I understand toolboxes. There is a wide variety of tools that can go into a toolbox. Some are very specialized, while others have a wide range of uses. A flat screwdriver can open a paint can, connect a wire to an electrical plug, or adjust a carburetor. But a pair of pliers is a poor choice for removing a head bolt from an engine, and a hammer is not the right tool for adjusting a bicycle seat.

I see Scouting as a multi-purpose tool in a church's outreach toolbox. It can build character, teach citizenship, life skills, and provide a moral foundation for choices. Through the Religious Emblems program it can be an evangelistic tool for churches.

As diverse as Baptists are, we come together around this theme and work together to impact our individual spheres of influence at the local, associational, state and national levels. No individual can reach out and build relationships with every Baptist group in the U.S. Realistically, some of the 60 plus groups will never unite with us as part of ABS. But we represent a variety of Baptist groups, and each of us can impact the Baptist group from which we come to encourage partnering with ABS to reach youth for Christ through a Scouting ministry. Everyone must make a concerted effort to recruit members to ABS in the communities where we live and our respective branch of the Baptist family so that we can build bridges that will create positive relationships between our various Baptist groups.

One thing I hope to do as president is to prepare a fraternal letter to the national meetings of our larger Baptist groups based on how frequently they meet in national sessions. This letter will include who we are and summary statistics about Scouting in Baptist life. It will also include success stories that will drive home the

point as to how our churches are using Scouting effectively to make a difference in our communities.

One thing I hope you will do is offer, as you have ability, to represent ABS with a display at your local associational, state or national meetings. Let us know you are willing and the dates of the meetings, and we will do all in our power to assist you.

What Do We Provide?

Before our annual meeting I spoke with our secretary, Merri Addison, about ABS's future and the service we provide Scouting units. We ask people to pay dues and give donations to an endowment, but what do we do with those funds to help churches reach youth for Christ through a Scouting ministry? This is an area I think we should focus more attention. Annual membership dues help pay for this newsletter, your membership patch, pin and card.

It also includes our participation with P.R.A.Y. Publishing, which provides the Protestant Religious Emblems curriculum. We provide training every two years at Philmont for Scout leaders to learn about reaching youth through a Scouting ministry. Can we do more? Should we do more? I believe the answer is, yes. I also believe that if we demonstrate that, people will be willing to support us financially through endowment giving. To this end I propose that executive officers take time in 2012 to work on a five-year plan to focus ABS on servicing Baptist constituencies in tangible ways and help them use Scouting as an evangelistic tool. Let me offer some suggestions.

ABS Council Chapters

Tim Cooper, ABS member and a former Council Exec, began a pilot project in the Greater Alabama Council to utilize a chapter structure similar to OA. It is a Baptist Scout Camporee, which invites all Baptist units and Scouts who are members

or attendees of Baptist churches. The event will include typical activities, but with an emphasis on religious instruction centered on the outdoors that is distinctively Baptist. It will involve Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts in planning and leading the event. Our goal is for Baptist churches to see the value of Scouting as a creative tool for sharing the gospel.

Growing Membership

Another important step is to grow membership. Outside of life members, we currently have less than 100 members in ABS. We cannot impact Scouting in Baptist life at the local level with so few members scattered across the nation. Our best way to grow membership (at church or in Scouting) is word of mouth. I encourage each of you to recruit at least two new ABS members.

Connecting with Student and Campus Ministries

We must connect with children's ministers, youth ministers, and campus ministers. To reach younger children through Scouting, ministers need to buy into the ABS vision and become an active and visible presence in Cub Scout Packs. Youth pastors must view Scouting for the potential it brings to youth ministry, both through Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts. They should actively engage in ministering to young people in troops and crews, as well as their families. An overlooked opportunity exists in our reach through college campus ministries. If these groups chartered a Venture Crew, we could do two things. First, we could reach college students through high-adventure activities offered by Venture Scouting. Secondly, at the college level, we could educate youth pastors and future senior pastors of the value of Scouting as a ministry.

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ABS and New Media

In 2009 ABS stepped into virtual media. Although I resisted Facebook, I agreed to set up an account to promote ABS through social media. While it has been a limited success, we can do more. New media like Twitter, Google+, webinars and blogs hold educational opportunities to reach pastors, youth pastors, and children's ministers in the comfort of their offices. We must find the most cost-effective ways to conduct webinars, select appropriate leaders, and provide online sessions dealing with specific issues related to a Scouting ministry. Our ABS website can be updated with current information and links to the Baptist Scouting ministry.

Getting the Word Out

ABS Needs You – Baptist Conferences By Merri Addison

The ABS mission is to reach youth for Christ through a Scouting ministry. We further this ideal at conventions and conferences by meeting pastors, youth group leaders and church committee members to share what ABS members know; Scouting is a wonderful outreach ministry. Starting a Scouting unit provides churches with a way to minister to communities and show them our love for Christ.

We must spread the Scouting story and share how churches with Scouting units develop relationships with the parents of Scouts who come into their buildings. We must think of them as a part of us and not as "the noisy kids who meet here weekly."

One way to reach many people at once is by attending different Baptist conferences, assemblies and conventions. This year ABS was invited to attend a total of five events. We had a great response from attendees and brought back many good memories from those who were Scouts in their childhood. Some of the highlights from conferences we

A recent hurdle over the past two years is ignorance of our existence among Baptist leaders and laymen. People don't know we exist. We don't have name recognition, even in Baptist churches with Scouting. Furthermore, I've been unable to gain traction with Baptist news agencies for submitting press releases and getting them published. We must build relationships with Baptist news outlets that serve branches of our denomination and encourage them to publish success stories about churches that effectively use Scouting to impact their communities.

Conclusion

Our challenge, from a human perspective, may look daunting, even impossible. Certainly that's how many saw William Carey's challenge

to send missionaries to India in 1795. It was a God-sized problem that required a God-sized vision and solution. And God took care of it.

We face a God-sized problem. Of the millions of U.S. Baptists, we're a tiny drop in the bucket. But, we are a drop that can make waves if God is in what we do. I don't have a full-blown plan, but I have a team of officers who work together, and there are three things I'm certain of: our God is a great God who delights in doing the impossible so that He can get the glory; to fail to plan is to plan to fail, and; if this is going to work, we must plan the work and work the plan. Will you help me move ABS forward so that together we can help churches reach youth for Christ through a Baptist Scouting ministry?

attended included:

Cooperative Baptist: Jeff Thompson pretty much manned this by himself. He provided information, hard candy, and had the privilege of meeting the daughter of the second Eagle Scout in the USA. About 45 to 50 people registered.

General Baptist: Mark Hazlewood and Mark Wappel attended this gathering where Dr. Murray was presented with the Good Shepherd and a memorandum of understanding was signed with the General Baptists. We presented Scouting information and did a P.R.A.Y. presentation.

National Baptist: Chip Turner represented ABS and P.R.A.Y. and met with several people who were excited to see us and wanted information about starting Scouting units. We also met a pastor who shared how his church uses Scouting as an outreach program in his community.

Southern Baptist: Chip was also at this meeting and was again greeted with attendees who were glad to see

us. Several requested more information. We'd like to do another presentation at their next conference.

Regular Baptist: A new member, Alan Ashley, talked with a former college professor about ABS. Before he knew it, we were invited to host a booth at the conference. Alan and his father had the honor of representing Scouting at this gathering.

Each of us belong to a denomination that attends a national annual meeting. If your meeting is not listed, we challenge you to find out when it will be held and to have ABS represented at the next one. We should make ourselves open to God to help with conferences scheduled in 2012. As a volunteer group, everyone who is willing should have an opportunity to be blessed by helping at one of these events. It may be intimidating to speak with all "those people," but it is actually fun and enjoyable. After all, we are talking about two things we believe in and love: Scouting and sharing Christ. How can we possibly go wrong?

Wondrous Things Can Happen When You Say Yes Instead of No

By Pastor Carl Allen, Fairview Baptist Church, Grand Prairie, TX

Before October 2009 if you had asked me if I thought that the Boy Scouts had a place in our local church or could function as a ministry of the church, I would not have hesitated to say, no. Thankfully though, God showed me different and in October 2009. He instructed me to contact the local Boy Scout Council about starting a Boy Scout unit in our church to reach out to boys in surrounding neighborhoods who might not otherwise enter our doors.

In December 2009, we officially chartered Troop 1948 with five boys who attended our church. We have been active in Scouting for almost two years now and have seen our troop grow to 14 boys. The additional boys who joined were not from our church, and most had no church home or had never stepped foot into a church before. One young man even said he had never seen or read from the Bible before.

We purposely hold troop meetings on Wednesday night's after our youth group meeting and encourage Scouts in the troop to come early so

they can be part of it. Praise to God all who show up early each week to attend youth bible study. Two of our Boy Scouts have come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. To make things even better, when planning their campouts and activities for the year, the boys ask if they can attend church youth camp as well.

Our church youth group has grown because of the addition of the Boy Scout unit. I encourage any church and/or pastor to prayerfully consider chartering a Boy Scout unit in their own church. It is not just an organization that needs a place to meet, but is a wonderful ministry opportunity, which draws in young men and boys to church who might not ever darken its doorways otherwise – you also just might have the chance to share with them the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

We have seen such a great spiritual growth in our Boy Scout troop that in September we chartered a Cub Scout pack to further reach out to those in need of the saving grace of the gospel. God is so good.

Remembering An ABS Founder

By Al Lineberry, Jr.

Al Lineberry, Sr., a founder of Association of Baptists for Scouting (ABS). As I ponder that statement, I think of Smoky Eggers who is the catalyst for many good things in the Boy Scouts of America and ABS. It was Smoky who planted the idea for ABS while Dad and others nurtured it into fruition.

I don't know when ABS began, but it must have been in the late 60s or early 70s because I was away from home at college, so I missed out on the grandness of the organization. It was typical of Dad to start something in Scouting and not make a big deal of it—or anything he did. His familiar saying was, "It makes no difference who gets credit for the job done as long as the job gets done."

Dad's roots in a Christ-centered life were a paramount and driving force behind his actions. The BSA embodied his belief system. And since he was a Baptist, this flowed together in a very logical sequence. At least that is the way that I think of it.

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Chaplain's Corner

By Sam Houston

The Knots Prayer

Dear God:

Please untie the knots
That are in my mind.
My heart, and my life;
Remove the have not's,
The cannots, and the do not's
That I have in my mind.

Erase the will not's,
May not's, and
Might not's

That may find a home in my heart.

Release me from the could not's,
Would not's, and
Should not's that obstruct my life.

And most of all,
Dear God,
I ask that you remove from my mind,
My heart, and my life all of the am
not's
That I have allowed to hold me back.
In Jesus's name, Amen.

[Author Know but to God](#)



Joke

My teenage Scout son just started driving. I decided to stop worrying about his driving skills and took advantage of it. I got one of those bumper stickers that says, "How's my driving?" and put a 900 number on it. At 50 cents a call, I've been making \$25 a week. I soon hope to have enough money to send him to summer camp for a week.

It may have been a holdover from educating WWII troops through survival training, but mother and dad always enjoyed educating and instilling Christian ethics in young people. They innately knew the value and importance of preparing the next generations for a life that included worship, work and play. Both taught Sunday School, lead church programs, and were actively involved with Young Life. All five of his children were introduced to Scouting at an early age. While dad was never a troop leader, I knew of his activities as President of the General Greene Council of the BSA.



Al Lineberry, Sr. and his wife Helen.

In his life he was a driven leader through not only words but actions. He gave through his talents, resources and time. The biggest driver, however, was that of Christ. He told me on many occasions that whatever you do in life, when it is over, you will only be remembered for what you did for God. That is your legacy; not fame and fortune.

Dad, a founder? I don't think so. He was just one who was led by the Master Leader and accepted the push. Al Linberry, Sr. was taken into God's hands Sunday, July 11, 2010.

A Little Elbow Grease from the American Heritage Girls

St. Louis, 2011 - It was a small act of kindness from the American Heritage Girls (AHG). Members from AHG Troops MO2002 and MO1345 joined the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Beaumont Reservation camp staff and helped close Camp May this fall by scrubbing, sweeping and organizing the Emerson Center at the BSA Beaumont Reservation.

These same AHG Troops converged on Camp May early in June to open Camp May. The girls joined the camp staff in morning and evening flag ceremonies. The camp staff offered archery, swimming, crafts, mud cave, shooting, and hiking to the girls during a four-day camp experience. A BSA staff chaplain joined the girls in their candlelight worship service in the camp chapel.

AHG is the first all-girl organization to have an official relationship with the BSA. In 2009, AHG was presented a Memorandum of Mutual Support by the BSA. This Memorandum is historic in nature as it is the first presented to an all-girls' organization in the one hundred year history of the BSA. The Memorandum was presented to AHG National Executive Director, Patti Garibay.



The benefits to AHG and BSA take shape in the local BSA Councils through cooperative events such as camps, trainings and service to the community. "BSA and AHG offers scouting for the entire family through



the local church," Garibay said.

American Heritage Girls was started in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1995 to offer a faith-based leadership development program to girls ages 5-18. Through the AHG program, girls are enriched physically, mentally and spiritually through a diverse range of badge activities, community service projects, camping and more, thus making the AHG program a good book end to a church sponsored BSA charter.

American Heritage Girls currently has more than 14,000 members in 41 states, and its new independent girl program, the Trailblazer Program, currently operates in two European countries and Japan and in state side areas that presently do not have AHG troops. The structure of both organizations is very similar thus allowing BSA and AHG to work cooperatively on service projects, membership growth and programming initiatives across the nation. To learn more about AHG go to www.ahgonline.org.

Chick-fil-A Takes Heat From Blogosphere for Standing Up for its Heritage of Christian Principles

Several activist blogs are waging war on Chick-fil-A over the company's Christian philosophies. The alleged atrocity, one of its outlets in Pennsylvania donated sandwiches and brownies to a marriage seminar run by the Pennsylvania Family Institute, which naturally opposes same-sex marriage.

In the name of tolerance, the anti-Chick-fil-A protestors deride the company's main product as "Jesus Chicken," its no-Sunday-work policy, and attacks its operators as anti-gay. Petition drives demand the company change and disavow its standards. Facebook users dutifully organized witch hunts against the company on college campuses, while progressive groups gloat over Chick-fil-A's public-relations troubles.

This is not because they care about winning hearts and minds over gay rights or marriage policies, but because their core objective is to marginalize political opponents, and chill Christian philanthropy and activism. The fearsome muscle flexing is being done by hysterical bullies trying to drive the chain off of college campuses and out of their neighborhoods in the name of human rights.

Chick-fil-A is an American success story. Founded in 1946 by Georgia

entrepreneur Truett Cathy, the family-owned chicken-sandwich chain is one of the country's largest fast-food businesses. It employs thousands of workers across the country at over 1,500 outlets in 39 states and the District of Columbia with more than



\$3.5 billion in revenue, who serve millions of happy customers with their trademark Southern hospitality.

The Cathy family contends that the debacle will not interfere with their faith, however. Dan Cathy, President and CEO of Chick-fil-A stated, "Chick-fil-A's corporate purpose is 'To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us, and to have a positive influence on all who come in contact with Chick fil-A. As a result, we will not champion any political agendas on marriage and family. This decision has been made, and we understand the importance of it.

At the same time, we will continue to offer resources to strengthen marriages and families. To do anything different would be inconsistent with our purpose and belief in Biblical principles."

This past March, Dan Cathy was awarded the Boy Scouts of America's top citizen's honor – the Golden Eagle Distinguished Citizen Award – from Georgia's Flint River Council. Dan earned his "merit badges" working at the family's first Dwarf House restaurant in Hapeville. He started his career with the company at the age of 9 when he sang songs for customers and did radio commercials for the chain's original restaurant. While Dan wasn't able to participate in Scouting as a boy, he says, "It is an honor, a true honor, to be associated with the Boy Scouts of America."

Chick-fil-A and Dan Cathy not only support Scouting, but are also supporters of the Association of Baptists for Scouting. Dan Cathy was honored in 2009 with the Silver Good Shepherd award for his work with his church, Scouting and youth.

If you believe in Christian values, stop by Chick-fil-A today for lunch to get some "Jesus Chicken" and waffle fries, and let their workers know you support them.



New Guidelines for National Membership Organizations

These new guidelines are based on the priorities of the 2011-2015 National Boy Scouts of America Strategic Long Range Plan and direction from the Community Alliances Committee.

A New Focus

To support local councils through National Membership Organizations: (NMO) such as religious, community, and educational.

Membership

Be a registered Scouter in the BSA

1. Follow the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations of the BSA
2. Complete required Youth Protection Training
3. Attend needed Training: Philmont/Sea Base or within your organization/denomination
4. Pay required Association fees (if applicable)

New Unit Growth

Promote the full Scouting family within your organization

By working with local councils through:

1. Prospecting and organization of new Units
2. District Commissioner Staffs
3. District Membership Committees
4. Unit Serving Executives

Visibility

Attend Annual Meetings and Conventions within your organization and BSA

Work with your organization's or congregation's governing body:

1. Recruitment of needed personnel to serve in your Exhibit booth
2. Distribute promotional materials for your organization

3. Attend and serve as presenters in workshops and electives as determined by your denomination

Unit Service

Serve in your Council, Region and National BSA as directed by your organization/congregation

1. Volunteer as Chartered Organization Representatives and Commissioners
2. Serve on National BSA Committees
3. Serve on National BSA Task Force Meetings.
4. Serve on Regional Committees

Affiliation

Serve and report directly to your organization's/congregation's leadership

1. Follow your organization's/ congregation bylaws and procedures
2. Represent the interests of your organization/congregation in Scouting
3. Support the MOU between BSA and your organization or congregation
4. Promote your organization's religious emblems program



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National General Baptist Leader Receives Good Shepherd Award



Dr. James Murray (right), National Executive Director for General Baptists, received the Baptist Good Shepherd recognition from Mark Hazlewood during the 2011 General Baptist Mission and Ministry Summit held in Collinsville, IL. Dr. Murray was honored for his lifelong service to children, youth, and families. From his youngest days as a Boy Scout in Missouri, he has exemplified the tenants of his faith and of the Scout Oath and Law.

Also at the Summit, Dr. Murray spoke to the General Baptist Men in Missions.

Men's Director Steve Forster is pictured with Dr. Murray holding a framed copy of the recently completed Memorandum of Understanding with the Boy Scouts of America.





ABS Today

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Membership & Endowment

Share the news of ABS with fellow Baptist Scouters and church members by encouraging them to become members. Applications are available on our Website. Checks for endowment and membership may be mailed to: BSA National Office, Attention: Community Alliances; PO Box 152079; Irving, TX 75015-2079.

Register Today for 2013 National Jamboree Staff Positions

How would you like to get your hands dirty at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree? Pitch in and serve on staff.

There are plenty of cool jobs available to help pull off what's sure to be a memorable jamboree experience at the new Summit Bechtel Family Scout Reserve in West Virginia.

Would you like to work in a high-adventure area, behind the scenes at an arena show, or even as a media correspondent for one of the many jamboree news outlets? Go to bsajamboree.org to view current staff positions. Then, make your selection of the top three jobs that suit your interests and skills. Most volunteers are typically placed within one of their selections.

Staff volunteers ages 16 to 25 (through July 14, 2013) will pay \$425 to register. For volunteers older than age 25, registration is \$850. Staffers also have the option of working half of the jamboree for \$425 no matter the age of the volunteer.

For more information or to apply online, visit bsajamboree.org or send your questions to 2013jamboree@scouting.org.



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2011 ABS Officers

- ◆ **President:** A.J. Smith
- ◆ **Executive VP:** Bob Swan Sr.
- ◆ **Secretary/Newsletter:** Merri C. Addison
- ◆ **VP Membership:** Bobby Boykin
- ◆ **Treasurer:** Ed Brown
- ◆ **Chaplain:** Sam Houston
- ◆ **Webmaster/God & Country:** Michael Grissom
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