

Studies in Scouting and the Lutheran Pioneers

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by Lutheran Pioneers, Inc.

Over the years there has been much discussion about the religious element in the Scouting program which makes it unacceptable to the concerned Christian. Likewise, a great deal has been said about the benefits of having Lutheran Pioneers in your congregation to help in the educational program for your boys. This booklet is a compilation of various articles dealing with these topics. We hope it finds wide acceptance and greater use, so that many will benefit from the information gathered here. The following articles are included:

The Testimony of a Former Scout by Mr. Paul Randolph

Very quickly the reader receives the information that scouting is a religion, that it teaches a philosophy of life—"the unchristian doctrine of work righteousness." On the basis of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law (the very heart of scouting), Mr. Randolph shows the danger how a scout may by-pass the doctrine of his own church and incorporate work-righteousness into his faith and life. There is also the danger that others, even scout leaders themselves, do not recognize this as a religious organization. There are no special classes for instruction in Scout doctrine, but as these tenets of scouting are put into practice, the unchristian teachings become the convictions of unsuspecting Christians. Mr. Randolph's candid report on his personal experiences with scouting will bring us to share his realization of the inconsistency of scouting with Christianity.

Why Lutheran Pioneers by Pastor Richard Weeks

It is a natural procession to go from the article by Mr. Randolph directly into "Why Lutheran Pioneers." Mr. Randolph posed an interesting question, whether there was talent and manpower available to organize and conduct a program for the boys of our own fellowship. The title of Pastor Weeks' paper is already a partial answer to the question. In this interesting history of Lutheran Pioneers, Pastor Weeks takes us back prior to the founding of Lutheran Pioneers, and shows us how God chose a man and led him into our fellowship through adult instruction classes with the pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Burlington, Wisconsin. At one point in the class, this man asked, "What's wrong with scouting?" The answer was given, as you will read, and soon the talents of this man, Mr. Bruce Thompson, were utilized in the formation of Lutheran Pioneers.

In the second half of his paper, Pastor Weeks addresses four objections that we find with regard to scouting: their definition of God, their denial of the total depravity of man, their idea of man's duty to God and its fulfillment, and their emphasis on good works. Each of these points is amply refuted and correctly explained by Holy Scriptures.

A Study of Scouting by Pastor Ronald V. Ash

Here we have a paper that was designed specifically for the purpose of exposing scouting for what it really is. Using the Scouting Handbook for Boys, the author clearly sets forth the Scout Oath, the Scout Law and Ideals of Service. He also uses God's, handbook for all of us, the Holy Bible, to show how scouting falls short of its purpose of being a religious organization for the moral molding of our youth. Oh, it has religion enough, but not the Christian religion! And yes, it does shape attitudes and mold characters, but definitely not the kind approved by the God

of our Bible! Since the scouting program does present a religion which is plainly “contrary to the teaching you have learned,” we can only heed the apostle’s advice, “Keep away from them” (Rom. 16:17).

The Boy Scouts and the Lutheran Pioneers—A Comparison by Mr. Bruce Thompson

The next piece in our collection has been written by our first National Commander, Bruce Thompson. And it is written, as he says, in “dime store” English. The earlier articles were quite replete with theological discourses, so it is refreshing to have the message set forth in lay language. Many of the same ideas herein have been stated before in different ways, yet here we have some practical insight into the two organizations and their differences. We have some practical advice about how to discuss Lutheran Pioneers in a positive light with our own, albeit skeptical, brethren. We can show them from their own convictions that Lutheran Pioneers is a good program for our boys.

The Purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers by Pastor Martin T. Bradtke

This brief entry in our collection of articles certainly deserves reading and rereading many times. In carrying out the theme, Pastor Bradtke shows what is *not* the purpose, that is, simply a replacement of scouting in our synod. Rather, it can be part of the total educational program of the congregation in which arts, crafts and skills are presented and taught from our Christian perspective.

I Would Like To Know, Northwestern Lutheran, February 15, 1984, by Pastor Paul E. Kelm

If we have a reputation for “being against” everything, then here is an excellent presentation of the other side of the coin. In a short and concise, yet very evangelical, fashion, the author points out that we are for God, for man, and for salvation. Since the Boy Scouts worship a generic god and make man his own savior, their entire philosophy for training our youth militates against Scripture and makes it unsatisfactory. Pastor Kelm concludes: “I guess that’s why a lot of our congregations have established Lutheran Pioneer groups. Check that out.”

Scouts by Pastor Larry I. Zessin

This is another brief description of our objections to religious elements in scouting because they are not in agreement with Scripture.

The Lutheran Pioneers—Is The Lutheran Pioneers A Substitute? by Pastor H. Marcus Schwartz

The writer shows the purpose of any organization in the church. If it is not connected with the primary purpose to carry out the great commission, then it is unnecessary and does not deserve to be called a church organization. Lutheran Pioneers is not a substitute for scouting, it is a good program to aid the church to give the boys many “extras” in their young and formative years.

May I Join the Boy Scouts?

This short story could very well be used as a discussion starter in a Pioneer meeting. It will help our Pioneers to realize that we are different from Scouts, just as our church is different

from other churches in the community. While there are many similarities in activities, when it comes to religion we part company.

**Why Lutheran Pioneers by Members of Train 58, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Hales Corners, Wisconsin**

“Why Lutheran Pioneers” uses a pool of information which shows Lutheran Pioneers and Boy Scouts of America are immensely different in purpose and program while remaining similar in activity and structure. This excellent little article first appeared in tract form for the Pioneers of Train 58. They could find all the necessary information to show why they are Lutheran Pioneers instead of a scout. It is because Jesus is their Savior. Rather than walking down some foggy road of uncertainty, wondering if he has accumulated enough good works to get to heaven, the Pioneer confesses with Paul, “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out” (Romans 7:18). So he rejoices that the same apostle writes, “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith, . . . not by works” (Ephesians 2:8,9). This is a worthwhile topic that could be read to the boys every year.

We express our thanks to the many people who have spent many hours in study and research to prepare and produce these articles. If this book helps answer any questions, if it keeps just one more boy from falling into the uncertainty and despair of work-righteousness, then our efforts in reproducing this material have been worthwhile and we have been amply rewarded.

The Testimony of a Former Scout

by Mr. Paul Randolph

Recently there has been a great deal of discussion in our church on the subject of scouting. I have read a number of arguments both for and against, and have heard many unwarranted assertions made by well-meaning individuals. However, I cannot remember whether or not any of these writers were scouts or former scouts. Therefore I am writing this testimony with the hope and prayer that I may serve to clear up some misunderstandings and doubts. These are my firm convictions and impressions based largely on personal experience.

I am a former scout. By no means does this imply that I am an authority on scouting, and that I now speak as an expert on this whole question. However, scouting was rather dear to my young heart; I was eager to advance myself, and by the time of my induction into the army, I had become a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and a member of an Explorer detachment, a senior scout group. During my entire military service I kept in close contact with my scout troop, intending to return to scouting after the war. However, the post-war confusion and the necessity of completing the work for my college degree forced me to postpone and eventually cancel my scouting plans.

First, let us agree that scouting does have many commendable features. We all have read in our newspapers how boys have saved lives with a little first-aid learned in scouting. We ex-G.I.'s can all report that our scout experience in such things as morse code, knot tying, first-aid, mapping, and so on, was of considerable value in our military training. Other activities such as camps, hikes, hobbies, etc., serve to fill the free time of the boys in scouting and to improve them in mind and body. All these purely civic projects are of great value. They contribute not only to the physical health and the emotional stability and adjustment of youth, but also to the betterment of our country and our society as a whole.

However, scouting is not only these purely secular activities. In fact the aim and purpose of scouting is to train for good citizenship and to build character. To fulfill this, scout authorities realize that they need at least one essential—religion. For they “maintain that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligation to God.” Scout authorities also recognize “the essential part that religion must play in character building.” If they mean the Christian religion, we agree. But what religion do they mean? Let us see.

One of the four basic policies and principles adopted early in the history of the Boy Scout movement was to emphasize religion. Therefore, it has been “one of the fundamental policies of the Boy Scouts of America...to develop reverence to God.” Since there are scout troops in almost every type of church, and even in some institutions which are not even churches, you may wonder just what “God” scout authorities mean. Furthermore, scouting “is specifically pledged to encourage reverence and faithfulness to religious obligations.” Then, when we are told that the “religious emphasis of the Scout promise and Law” makes “the picture of scouting complete”, we see how much religion has been slipped into scouting, especially since the Oath and Law are the “soul of scouting, its vital principle, and its living expression.” Scouting has religious prayers. Scouting has scout chaplains. Scouting sponsors religious worship. Scouts are even expected to consider their scout dues as “a part of stewardship training”, just “like Sunday School collection.” But notice, doesn't all this make scouting itself a religion?

Scouting is a general religion, purposely made such in order that it may cross denominational lines. In fact, since scouting is not limited to Christian denominations, the name

of Christ is deliberately left out. This makes scouting a Christ-less and heathen religion—a non-Christian faith.

Like all religious groups scouting has a doctrine, or at least doctrinal tenets. This fact is not too apparent to most of us, since scouting does not outwardly display the usual features of a religious group. The worship program of the scout religion is not as formally organized as in our Lutheran Church, nor is it as precise doctrinally. In fact scouting often seems to provide only a program of leisure time activities. However, with careful study, one can discern a definite religious teaching and worship. Let us examine a few characteristics of this scout religion.

The doctrine of scouting, like that of all religions, includes a god. It is not the Triune God whom we Christians confess and worship. They call their god the “great scoutmaster”. In my troop we youngsters offered a prayer of benediction to him at every meeting just before we went home. In addition there is an official scout table-grace in which scouts ask this “great scoutmaster” to bless their food. I can also remember other ceremonies, such as initiation and court of honor, which included prayers to this “great scoutmaster.”

Many pastors and laymen in our church claim that scouts teach a philosophy of life. They say scouts teach the philosophy of work-righteousness; that is, the earning of one’s own way to reward, including salvation, by one’s own efforts or works. This is a serious charge, since work-righteousness is contrary to the teaching of Christ.

There is another group in our church which tends to “pooh-pooh” this idea that scouts teach a religious philosophy. This group includes many of our church leaders. They carefully point out all the activities of scouting, and the good times boys seem to have as scouts.

However, I tend to agree with those who say that Scouting does teach a philosophy of life. From my own experience I have come to the conclusion that Scouting amounts to a laboratory course for teaching the un-Christian doctrine of work-righteousness. Let us see if you will not agree with me. One of the first things a scout learns is the Scout Oath. In this the scout vows, “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.” Concerning oaths, Jesus said that we are not to swear by anything, not even our head, much less our honor. (Matt. 5:33-37) Instead He said, “Let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.” Don’t our youngsters in scouting learn an oath which has more than the yea and nay in it? However, the sad part of this oath is that the emphasis is on the scout himself and his own resources. Each scout promises that *he* will do his duty to god, *he* will obey the law, and *he* will keep himself morally straight. In confirmation we Lutherans learn that we are dead in trespasses and sins, and that we are completely unable to do our duty to God, to keep the Law, and to keep ourselves morally straight. Instead, we learn that the Holy Spirit has “called us through the Gospel, enlightened us by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved us in the true faith.”

The benediction we scouts offered at each meeting was: “May the great scoutmaster of all good scouts be with us until we meet again.” Since we prayed this benediction at the end of the meeting, I often thought of it as I walked home. In my boyish way, I used to wonder if I had to be good to have this great scoutmaster keep me and if my efforts were good enough. These thoughts seemed to cloud over the fact that I do have a Father in Heaven, who does love me and is concerned about me, and who even sent His Son to die for me, whether I have been good or bad. However, since my scouting days, my Christian training has come into its own, and I now cling to the faith that I am a child of God because of the merits of Jesus who died for me, and not because of my efforts to be good.

Another thing a boy learns when he becomes a scout is the Scout Law. The Scout Law also fits into the work-righteousness pattern of scouting. One law frankly states, "A scout is reverent; He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion." To see that scouts obeyed this commandment, our troop kept a church attendance record. We were required to state publicly whether or not we had attended church the previous Sunday. Lack of church attendance was not very pleasing, since the troop as a whole gained some type of recognition within scoutdom for a good church attendance record. Thus, we scouts went to church, not necessarily because of a love and desire to hear God's Word, but to make a better record for our troop.

Notice that one of the aims of this law is to teach the scouts to respect the religious convictions of others. You and I as Christians cannot compromise our faith by "respecting" the convictions of others. For example, we cannot respect the idolatry and Mary worship of Roman Catholicism. We cannot respect the convictions of Roman Catholics in South America, France, Spain, and other Catholic countries when they believe that they must destroy all other churches, attack Christians, and kill missionaries. We cannot respect the conviction of a Jew or modernist when he says that Jesus is not God. Instead, we recognize the *right* of any individual to his convictions. We may even fight for this right. We may respect the *individual* but must only *tolerate* his convictions, recognizing that under our constitution he is free to worship as he pleases. This important distinction between tolerance and respect is being ignored more and more in these days of social gospel. Tolerance is the Christian way and the true American way.

This scout doctrine of respect tends to teach that all religions are equal, and no particular one is the true religion. It teaches that all religious groups worship the same god, whether they worship Allah, the Jewish god, or Jesus Christ. The scout practice of respecting the convictions of others tends to blur the Triune God in the hearts and minds of our Christian boys as they confess a nondescript god as represented by the "great scoutmaster." In this way the Christian Church is seriously hurt, especially when they are taught to respect convictions which are a denial of the one and only Savior.

Another law is, "A scout is clean; He keeps clean in body and thought, stands for clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels in a clean crowd." Notice that this law has two ideas. The first is cleanliness of body. The other is cleanliness of thought or spirit, definitely in a religious sense... I did not realize the second implication of this law until it was pointed out to me by one member of the committee which was examining me for one of the stages of my advancement. Now, if scouting had used just the idea of cleanliness of body, no one could object. However, as the law stands there isn't even an implication of our filthy human sinfulness and defilement from which Jesus said we are "made clean by the Word which I have spoken to you." (John 15:3) Instead the scout learns as one of the 12 scout laws that "A scout *is* clean."

Notice how the Scout Law differs from our Ten Commandments. Our Commandments first of all show us that we are sinners since "through the law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Then the Law shows us as Christians how God wants us to live. The Christian obeys God's Law out of love to Him and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the Scout Law is an integral part of the scout system of advancement, and advancement is the scout method of providing the rewards taught in its doctrine of work-righteousness. Advancement is a reward for fulfilling certain requirements, which includes the obeying of the scout laws. I can recall that, before receiving an advancement, I was quizzed point for point as to whether or not I had kept the scout laws. I presume I would not have received my next step in the reward of advancement had I not professed I had obeyed them.

It is clear that we Christians by God's Grace obey God's Law out of love for Him, while scouts are induced to obey their law in order that they may earn a reward. Would it not be easy for the young unsuspecting Christian child in scouting unconsciously to by-pass teachings of his church and incorporate this un-Scriptural work-righteousness teaching into his own Christian faith? I know it is easy, because I feel that I did.

The fact that scouting has a definite and non-Christian religious doctrine is not noticeable to most people. During my years of scouting I never suspected that I was learning a religious theory. Even now I doubt if many leaders of scouting recognize that these tenets are being taught. There are no organized classes. There are no statements made and presented as doctrine. Thus, one may ask why we make such a fuss and bother over such a seemingly obscure point. The reason is that our scouting youth is being taught non-Christian theories in a most sly and deceiving manner. The scouts, their parents, scout leaders and even religious leaders do not realize the efficiency and effectiveness of these practical courses.

The mechanics of these courses is rather simple. Scouts begin by obeying the laws, going to church, and doing all their other good deeds primarily to merit praise, to earn the reward of advancement, or to better their troop's record. In this way the religious doctrines of scouting gradually become the convictions of many scouts. Their whole outward life seems based on these teachings. I cannot help but feel that such a system of spreading unsuspected non-Christian teachings bears evidence of some tampering by Satan himself, especially when this system has acquired such a prominent place in our Lutheran church.

Now, we of the Lutheran Church have been told many times that the Lutheran Scout movement was something new, something different. We have been told that scouting as provided by the Lutheran Committee on scouting is perfectly acceptable to any Lutheran, and that a Lutheran Church can have full control over its troop. When I first heard it, I accepted it "hook, line and sinker." But pretty soon I began to have my doubts. I began wondering just how this Lutheran Scout movement was so different from the whole world-wide and non-Christian scout religion? They call themselves scouts. They wear the same uniform.. They recite the same oath. They learn the same laws. They use the same handbook. They have the same system of advancement. They have scout camps. They have scout chaplains. They earn the same merit badges. The Lutheran scouts teach work-righteousness, and even seem to out-do the other scouts in this by giving a special and highly publicized badge called "Pro Deo et Patria" for doing something really good. I have seen the Lutheran scout manual and "it is the same old raven with new gravy." Lutheran scouts are encouraged to subscribe to national scout literature, especially the magazine, *Boy's Life*—an uncontrolled source of non-Christian scout doctrine. Lutheran scouts even send dues to national headquarters! How can anyone say that the Lutheran scout movement is not a part of the general scout religion.

Recently, I was told that my former pastor, who is of the Augustana Synod, once asked scouting officials if it would be required of a scout to go to a court of honor for special degrees. He was understandably worried because this court of honor is a district meeting for distributing the higher ranks and awards, and may be held in one of the many churches of the area. I went to a couple courts of honor in Congregational churches, and I think to one in a Presbyterian church. Now, my pastor was told that his boys must go if they were to receive these awards. Thus, to obtain a coveted reward, the scout attends a religious scout meeting in a church which often is not Lutheran. Does it still seem as if the Lutheran scout movement is so far apart from the general scout religion?

However, a Missouri Synod pastor just wrote me saying that he had been led to believe that scouting had undergone a reorganization in recent years, and that it is now acceptable to us. I had not heard of this reorganization, and I was quite happy to hear of it. I even wanted to find out more about it. I figured that the best place was at the Lutheran Scout Headquarters, which happens to be in Minneapolis. I even talked to the National Lutheran Scout Director, a very nice gentleman named Holstad. He knew my father, and so we were old friends immediately.

I began by asking about this reorganization in scouting. However, he did not know any more about it than I did. I am now wondering just how real this reorganization actually was.

I next asked about the difference between general scouting and the Lutheran scout movement. He immediately assured me that there was no difference, emphasizing the fact there is no such thing as a “Lutheran scout.” They are all scouts, no more, no less.

Since that question was so easily answered, we started discussing the status of a Lutheran scout troop, or should I say, a scout troop in a Lutheran church, since there is no such thing as a “Lutheran scout.” Mr. Holstad pointed out to me where scout authorities come and humbly say: “Here is a program adapted to the needs of the boy...If you find that what we offer will help you in your youth program, take it and use it as you will.” So, I naively asked, “Well, then, if we can use this program as we want, and if we do not like the oath and laws, we can always leave those things out and utilize the non-religious things such as knot tying, seamanship, camping, etc.” But, oh no! I was told that the Scout Promise and Law are the very heart of scouting. Or as the Lutheran scout manual puts it, these are the “soul of scouting, its vital principle, and its living expression.”

Pretty soon I was all in a jumble. Scouting says, and even our Lutheran church authorities say, that we may use the parts of scouting we wish. But then if we try to leave out the most objectionable aspects, we find that we cannot. Scout officials say that “there is no Boy Scout authority which supercedes the authority of the local Pastor and congregation in any phase of the program affecting the spiritual welfare of Lutheran men and boys in scouting.” However, they then turn around and will not permit a troop that may try to leave out some of the Scout’s work-righteousness doctrines. In the Lutheran scout manual, *Scouting in the Lutheran Church*. The Lutheran committee on scouting quoted scouting authorities as saying that “scouting recognizes the essential part religion must play—but for scouting to attempt to provide directly and immediately this religious element in the training of youth would be a presumptuous intrusion into the field and function of the church.” But, haven’t we seen that scouting *has* intruded into the field and function of the church by manufacturing a god, the great scoutmaster, suggesting prayers, and setting up a compulsory program of work-righteousness? Sounds like quite a mix-up, doesn’t it?

Eventually things began clearing up. It seems that scout troops in Lutheran churches are not to leave out any of this stuff. Instead, they are expected to “interpret” these things in the Lutheran way—to add something, to cover-up. It seems that Lutheran churches are expected to take this program in its entirety, and then try to say that the god mentioned in the oath and law, and other scout literature, including, I suppose, any mention of a god in *Boy’s Life*, is our Triune God. Lutheran churches are to take the religious doctrines of scouting, and by some *hocus pocus* show our youth that the work-righteousness salvation of scouting is really salvation by grace, through faith. That is, each Lutheran church is expected to supplement or cover-up, which is just like trying to varnish over dirty woodwork. It just does not work—it still is dirty.

Let us see how a Lutheran pastor fares when he even tries to tamper with the doctrines of scouting. My former pastor, the one of the Augustana Synod, recently wrote me saying: “As far

as lodge religion, including Boy Scout deism, is concerned, it no longer is even questioned among us. Most pastors take it for granted, and even train to serve the movement better. I still have no liberty to become chaplain of such world religiousness. I asked one of the Lutheran leaders in the movement if he would permit my boys, should I have a troop, to confess, 'I will do my duty to God—as revealed in Christ Jesus'? But he replied that would not be possible. You could believe that in your heart but didn't need to say it. It would destroy the purpose of scouting that respects the convictions of others. I said that I did not require that Jewish scouts, or Universalist scouts or others would have to be less respected for their convictions. They would not be forced to say anything they did not believe. All I asked was that every Christian lad, and especially our Lutheran scouts, would have enough respect for their own convictions to declare them. No, it would be impossible, I was told. The issue lies just there. It is not possible to have more than one God. If Jesus be God, let us say so. If we do not have the conviction that He is God, then let us declare it honestly and say to Jesus, 'Get down from Thy throne at the right hand of God the Father'."

In light of this experience of a Lutheran pastor with the scout program of the Lutheran church can *you* understand what our Lutheran church leaders mean when they echo the words of scout authorities: "Here is a program...take it and use it as you will"?

I wonder if the leaders of our Lutheran Church realize the inconsistencies in what they are saying? They claim that the scouts are not a religious organization, but then include and recommend many religious features of scouting. They even promote and support scout chaplains. Lutheran leaders claim that the individual church may take of scouting what it wills, when the church is not permitted to leave out some of the worst parts. In the Lutheran scout manual we are told that under proper guidance, the Boy Scout program may be successfully integrated with the program of the church; but then the church cannot even bring the name of Christ into the scout oath. In addition, Lutheran leaders have contributed to the un-Lutheran doctrines of scouting with the special "*Pro Deo et Patria*" reward. Lutheran leaders have told us that the Lutheran scout movement is something separate from the general and deistic scout religion. Lutheran Scout headquarters has a different story. Our Lutheran leaders have tried to sell us on the idea that there has been a recent reorganization in scouting. The news of this big reorganization has yet to reach the National Lutheran Scout Director. In this Lutheran scout manual, *Scouting in the Lutheran Church*, we learn that the annual fee each scout must pay, "goes to the National Office and helps defray the essential expenses of maintaining a National Service organization." Such seems reasonable, and maybe that is the impression that Lutheran leaders have tried to create. But wait. If you look in all the *general* scout literature, you will notice, as I did, that every scout, regardless of whether he is Lutheran or not, is paying not only for the administration *but also for the extension* of scouting. Has there been a deliberate attempt at covering-up something—something that may be rather distasteful to some of us? Is someone trying to hide the fact that every single scout of the more than 2500 scout troops in the Lutheran church must not only pay for the administration of scouting, *but must also help extend this deistic* religious faith? It is hard to believe that this is the product of our Lutheran church leaders.

I am not trying to pose as an authority on scouting. I know that I am not. Nor am I a theologian, which is obvious. It is only as a layman in the Lutheran church and as a former scout that I have written some of my present evaluations of the impressions I gained from scouting itself. I have tried to show the simple fact that scouting has its religion, and that we Lutherans must treat it accordingly. We ourselves would not even think of trying to belong to a non-Lutheran church and still retain our Lutheran membership. So also, it is rather illogical for our

boys to be both Scouts and Lutherans at the same time. We should teach our boys *not* to ‘two-time’ in this way, rather than encourage them as we are now doing.

My quarrel is not with the Scout program of recreation and training in self-help, resourcefulness, skills, nature-lore and social living, but with its false, Christless religious philosophy to which scouts of all faiths must subscribe. It is a compulsory religion which violates the principle of religious liberty. As the scout program is set up, it *just does not fit in the Lutheran church*. We cannot escape this fact, despite the compromising and misleading attitudes of some of our Lutheran church leaders.

How can we permit, encourage and support such an un-Lutheran organization as the Scouts? As a former scout I ask you to examine this whole question. Ask yourself, “Do the Boy Scouts really deserve a place in our Lutheran Church any more than the Masons, the Catholic church, or any other “do-good” religious group?”

Despite the many fine features of scouting, we can come to only one conclusion; namely, that our church must rid itself of this cancerous growth. As Christians we cannot be satisfied with this compromising, glossed-over scout program of the Lutheran church. We know that our Lutheran church once did not have a scout program. We know also that our Lutheran leaders have conferred over and over with scout authorities. Yet we see that these past dealings with scout officials have brought only “half-way” changes, if any at all.

We have no other choice but to cut off this growing menace and to develop our own *Christ-centered* youth program, one that is established by Lutherans, developed by Lutherans, led by Lutherans, and therefore would contain only true Lutheran theology. Surely our Lutheran church has the resources for establishing such a program. May God grant us the courage and initiative for setting up our own God-pleasing, Christ-centered, truly Lutheran youth program.

“If the trumpet give uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war”? (I Cor. 14:8)

Note: Almost all quotations concerning scouting are from *Scouting in the Lutheran Church*, the Lutheran scout manual.

Why Lutheran Pioneers? *by Pastor Richard Weeks*

A Challenging Question

“How is the lad to be trained? What is he to be?” (Judges 13:12, Moffatt). This is a question that comes from one of the oldest Books of the Old Testament, the Book of Judges. The question was addressed to the Lord by Manoah father of Samson. One might, therefore, expect such a question to be dusty with age. But we who are involved directly with the youth of our church know that such is not the case. This question is still one of the most challenging questions that confronts us today as Christian parents and as a Christian church.

“How is the lad to be trained? What is he to be?” is a question that initially concerns the husband and wife whom the Lord blesses with a child. As a father and mother gaze at their newborn child they are struck with a sense of awe and wonder, thanks and praise, joy and happiness at God’s special gift which has enriched their lives.

A Nagging Question

“But the responsibilities for new life are equally awe-inspiring, especially for us who know that we are accountable to God for the spiritual well-being of the child which He has entrusted to our care. We view the sinfulness of the world in which we live, we consider the many temptations that beset a child as he grows up in this world, and we again become overwhelmed. This time, however, what overwhelms us is not thanks, pride or joy, but the nagging question: ‘How can I possibly fulfill toward this child the awesome responsibilities that God has placed upon me?’”

“How is the lad to be trained? What is he to be?” is a question that ultimately concerns the church. The church realizes that it has a responsibility towards the children, the lambs of Christ, in its midst. The children are one of the church’s priceless possessions. They are a gift of God to His church! The psalmist declares: *“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him,”* (Psalm 127:3).

The Supreme Worth of a Child

The Word of God has some priceless statements which echo and re-echo the inestimable worth of children. This is true of the Old Testament. It is truer still of the New. Here we find Jesus sitting a child in His midst and we hear Him warning against undervaluing the child. *“See that you do not look down on one of these little ones,”* (Matthew 18:10). We find Jesus sheltering the child behind a wall of millstones, saying: *“If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea,”* (Matthew 18:6).

With these stern words Jesus was not only emphasizing the supreme importance of the child; He was also emphasizing the responsibilities of his teachers (whether in the home, church or state) in training him correctly. He was simply affirming in more impressive words that wise declaration of the Old Testament, *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it,”* (Proverbs 22:6).

A Positive Answer

“How is the lad to be trained? What is he to be?” is a question the church has sought to answer in a positive manner through the establishment of Christian day schools, Confirmation

Classes, Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, High School Bible Classes, etc. But the church has also seen a need for providing its youth with opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth within the Body of Christ through association with its own age group. For our own Wisconsin Synod that has meant various youth organizations from Young Peoples Societies to Lutheran Collegians. Many congregations within our circle have also chosen to use the Lutheran Pioneer program and thus “utilize the opportunities it offers to emphasize spiritual matters in keeping with the real purpose of the Church.” (WELS, Synod Proceedings, Floor Committee No. 20, resolution No. 2, page 306).

Lutheran Pioneers will be celebrating its 31st birthday in September of 1982. As an organization ages those currently involved in it may not realize how or why the organization was founded initially and the struggle and difficulties that were met and overcome. It is perhaps because of this that I have been asked to speak to you on the following question:

Why Lutheran Pioneers?

My association with Lutheran Pioneers began in 1968 when the congregation I was then serving, Zion Lutheran Church in Osceola, Wisconsin, organized Train #241. I have been involved with Lutheran Pioneers ever since. I had the privilege of serving as its 13th National Chaplain and at the present time its third Director of Public Relations. For seven years I have been the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Burlington, Wisconsin, the founding congregation of Lutheran Pioneers.

A Gift of God

As I began to seek answers to the question, “Why Lutheran Pioneers?” I have had the advantage of being able to personally talk to those who were directly involved in establishing Train #1 in Burlington, Wisconsin. Not only that, but Mr. Bruce Thompson, our National Commander, one of the co-founders of the Lutheran Pioneer program, is also a member of St. John's congregation in Burlington. As I began to research the beginnings of Lutheran Pioneers in St. John's congregation, I could see the guiding hand of our Lord in its beginnings. I am firmly convinced that this organization that we serve is truly a gift of God to the youth of our church.

Why do I say this? First of all, you need to know a few facts of history regarding St. John's congregation. In its 124-year history the congregation has been served by 22 pastors. If that seems like quite a few pastors for that period of time, it does for me also because this translates into a new pastor every 5.6 years. In the late 40's and early 50's the Holy Spirit guided two pastors to serve the congregation who would have a guiding influence in the history of Lutheran Pioneers. These two pastors also would play a guiding and influential role in the life of one individual in particular, a young man by the name of Bruce Thompson.

Laying the Groundwork

The pastorate of Reuben Marti, co-founder of Lutheran Pioneers, was one of the shortest, if not the shortest, in the history of St. John's congregation. He only served St. John's for approximately 14 months. Prior to Pastor Marti's coming to St. John's, George A. Barthels served the congregation. He was perhaps one of the more conservative pastors the congregation had up to that time. Pastor Barthels has since left the fellowship of our Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod and is currently a pastor in the Church of the Lutheran Confession. One of the things that Pastor Barthels did was to lay the groundwork for what was to come. He provided the congregation with solid biblical instruction and insights regarding the doctrine of fellowship and

(for a better understanding of “Why Lutheran Pioneers?”) clear warnings regarding the dangers inherent in the Scouting program.

Pastor Barthels was succeeded by Reuben Marti in August of 1950. One of the first pastoral acts of Reuben Marti (prior to his even being installed as St. John’s 18th pastor) was to officiate at the marriage of Joyce Foltz, a young woman of the congregation, and a young man by the name of Bruce Thompson, who at that time was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Prior to his marriage Bruce had begun an adult instruction class with Pastor Barthels and concluded this instruction with Pastor Marti. Bruce was confirmed at St. John’s in May of 1951. Before World War II and afterwards, Bruce had been closely associated with Scouting for ten years. Pastor Barthels’ instruction on Scouting continued to raise many questions in Bruce’s mind and eventually prompted him to ask Pastor Marti, “What’s wrong with Scouting?” To help him, Pastor Marti gave Bruce a recently published pamphlet by Paul Randolph, a laymen in the Lutheran Church in America, entitled, *The Testimony of a Former Scout*. One of the concluding statements of Paul Randolph regarding Scouting is significant to an understanding of “Why Lutheran Pioneers?” Paul Randolph writes: “We have no other choice but to cut off this growing menace (i.e. Scouting) and to develop our own *Christ*-centered youth program, one that is established by Lutherans, developed by Lutherans, led by Lutherans, and therefore would contain only true Lutheran theology. Surely our Lutheran church has the resources for establishing such a program. May God grant us the courage and initiative for setting up our own God-pleasing, Christ-centered, truly Lutheran youth program.” (parenthesis mine)

A Challenge

In May of 1951, a few weeks after reading this treatise by Paul Randolph, Pastor Marti and Bruce were sitting in the parsonage while their wives were over in the school kitchen cleaning up following a mother-daughter dinner. The discussion eventually came around to Paul Randolph’s statement that the Lutheran Church ought to develop an alternative to the Scouting program that would be distinctively Lutheran in character and theology. Bruce asked Pastor Marti, “Why doesn’t St. John’s develop some kind of program of its own?” Marti countered with a challenge to Bruce, “Why don’t *you* do something about it?” The rest is history.

Out of that conversation a seed was planted that would, by the grace of God, grow and flourish into the Lutheran Pioneers. Now you need to remember that this was the middle of May and yet these two men were ready to actually present the concept for a boys club to the congregation by the end of July in 1951. In those weeks prior to July the skeleton of the program and its purpose were quickly conceived. However, a name for the club, as a means of identification, was lacking. As Bruce recalls some 30 years later, he awoke one night with the word “Pioneer” running through his head. Unable to fall back to sleep, he looked up the word “pioneer” in a dictionary and read this definition: “A foot-soldier; one who goes before to prepare the way for others.” They now had a name for this proposed boys club. The terminology that is now so familiar to us in Lutheran Pioneers was quickly put down on paper by Bruce that same night. With very few exceptions the names, concepts and program of Lutheran Pioneers has not changed since that evening in early June, 1951.

Lutheran Pioneers is Born

In July of 1951, Pastor Marti and Bruce were ready to present their idea to the voters assembly of St. John’s. For me, the guiding hand of God in bringing several individuals together at that particular time in that particular congregation seems to me amazing. It happened, I

believe, for a purpose. That purpose, given the vantage point of time, was God moving men and a congregation to call into being a boys club called Lutheran Pioneers. At its July voters assembly St. John's granted permission to try the program, on a trial basis, for one year. The following year the program was unanimously adopted by the congregation.

One further insight seems to me to be important, if only for the sake of preserving the history of Lutheran Pioneers. In the Fall of 1951 Pastor Marti and Bruce were asked to present and explain the Lutheran Pioneer program of their congregation to the other congregations of their conference. While they were driving to Friedens Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to attend this pastoral conference, Pastor Marti handed Bruce a piece of paper which contained the Lutheran Pioneer Prayer and Hymn. He had written them the night before. A few hours later, with Bruce standing just a few feet away from a man whom he had come to love as a father, Pastor Marti was stricken with a stroke. Later that evening the Lord of the Church called His servant to be with Him. Pastor Marti was not granted the privilege of knowing that a year and a half later St. John's Lutheran Church in West Bend, Wisconsin, would adopt the Lutheran Pioneer program. Nor would he see the seed that he planted grow to its present size of 500+ chartered trains with more than 5,000 boys and 1,500 leaders. But what a wonderful gift God gave to His church when Pastor Marti challenged a young man, "Why don't *you* do something about it?" And by the grace of God what a guiding and stabilizing influence that young man has been to Lutheran Pioneers for nearly 31 years.

An Expression of Love

As I speak these words there is the danger that some may misconstrue these words and consider them a eulogy to Bruce Thompson. That is not my intent. I know that Bruce feels rather uncomfortable right now. But I think we need to remember those whom the Lord used to develop this program for our youth. Therefore I would like to share with you a portion of a sermon preached at St. John's in Burlington on February 16, 1975. The guest preacher that day was Pastor David Ponath, then Public Relations Director of Lutheran Pioneers. He provides an insight into the question, "Why Lutheran Pioneers?" and urges us to remember something about the two men who founded Lutheran Pioneers. Note the date of Pastor Ponath's sermon was two days after Valentine's Day. His meditation was entitled "*The Best Valentine of All.*" He was, of course, referring to Christ our Savior and urged the congregation to give their lives to Him in deeds of service. Apparently he was preaching for a Pioneer Sunday emphasis for he goes on to say to the members of St. John's congregation:

"It was over 25 years ago now that a young man, taught by a very patient pastor, loved by a very loving wife, found this valentine from God—a valentine that shouted out to him: 'I love you,' signed with a cross and a drop of blood. That man wanted to return that expression of love, and he looked and he searched, and he saw a number of boys in a congregation—boys for whom that Son of God had died, boys who were also to have that same valentine. And that man with his life and with his lips, bearing oftentimes scorn and mockery and laughter of people, together with that patient pastor, reached out with their valentine, and through service to these young people gave an expression of love to God in return.

"Yes, it started right here in this congregation—Lutheran Pioneers. It started not because some man had a dream of grandeur, not because he dreamed that there would be thousands upon thousands of people bearing the name Lutheran Pioneers, not because he

dreamed that some day it might become an international organization. But it started and he moved because he had received a valentine from God, and he wanted to send a valentine in return.”

Lutheran Pioneers Place in the Life of our Wisconsin Synod

In 1957, because of concerns voiced by some within our Synod that Lutheran Pioneers was an organization which was trying too hard to be a subtle substitute for the Boy Scouts of America, our Wisconsin Synod in convention instructed the Synod president to appoint a five-man committee to study the Lutheran Pioneer program.

At the 1959 convention of the Synod, this committee was ready with its report (Cf. Synod Proceedings, 1959, pages 299-305). We would like to share with you some significant statements and recommendations from that report. Perhaps it will help you to better understand the development of Lutheran Pioneers over the last 31 years and also help you to answer the question “Why Lutheran Pioneers?”

While the Pioneer movement has enjoyed steady growth among congregations of our Synod, it has never received any kind of official, synodical sanction. Tacit approval has been given by those of our Synod involved in it, as well as by the Conference of Presidents. In January of 1956, the Presidents invited the National Commander and the pastor of the Burlington congregation to explain the work of the Pioneers. “The conclusion of the Conference of Presidents was that they found nothing objectionable in the program. Many members were personally well phased with it, but the Conference made no report or recommendation to Synod at the time.” (President’s Report, Proceedings 1957, p.15.) At the suggestion of President Naumann, the Pioneer Committee was authorized by Synod to study the place of the Pioneers in the life of our Synod and report its findings to the 1959 convention. This committee suggests that, with synodical sanction, the Pioneer movement continue as it has in the past in its relation to the Church, namely, that it be an organization within the Synod but not of the Synod. We feel that it can well exist within the Synod. We recognize that it differs from organizations within the local congregation (Ladies’ Aid, Men’s Club, etc.) in that it is bound together with similar groups of other congregations to form a wider, a national organization. We suggest therefore that Synod sanction and approve the operation of the national organization within our congregations.

The purpose of any organization within the Church must remain subservient to the purpose of the Church itself. We find this organization does that, and that there is no conflict with the Church’s real purpose.

The real purpose of the Church, of course, is to preach the Gospel, to make disciples of all nations by teaching all things commanded by Christ and by administering the sacraments in conformity with His Word. The Church preaches the Gospel in a world when those who have been brought to faith in Christ must constantly be guided and encouraged in Christian living. Such guidance and encouragement are given in the Word and through the Sacraments. God has given us the means with which the Church fulfills its purpose. No organizations of the Church are essential to the fulfillment of this purpose.

Nevertheless, organizations of the Church with God-pleasing objectives may operate within the realm of Christian sanctification, Christian living. It is in this realm of Christian sanctification that the Pioneer program operates, and so it can serve a useful purpose. Its purpose is to teach good citizenship, appreciation of God's wonderful creation, First Aid, and many other useful skills. There is as much justification for the Church teaching such things through the agency of the Pioneers as there is for teaching secular subjects in our Christian schools.

The concluding paragraphs of this committee's report are significant:

We would endorse the Pioneer movement because we find it to be edifying, educational, and useful for our young boys. We believe that the congregations of our Synod will be able to use this program to advantage among the youth.

We would endorse it, furthermore, because, with its many benefits, we find nothing objectionable like unscriptural oaths, moral righteousness, omission of Christ, unionistic prayers. The movement with its program is truly Lutheran.

Therefore, we recommend that the Lutheran Pioneers be given synodical approval and sanction, with the prayer that all who use it would use it wisely, even as this applies to all organizations within the Church. In recommending such synodical sanction, we would caution against judging those congregations and pastors who choose not to use it, as though they were not fulfilling their obligation over against their youth. Let us ever remember our first obligation—to preach the Gospel. The Lutheran Pioneers are not essential to fulfill that obligation. But again, the Pioneers may well be used, and if we choose to use the program, let us know why and what we hope to accomplish. Then this organization may be a blessing for our youth, in whose hands the future of our Synod under God lies.

Floor Committee No. 20 then considered this recommendation of the Committee on Lutheran Pioneers and the following two resolutions were adopted by the Synod convention:

Resolution No. 1

Subject: Lutheran Pioneers

WHEREAS, It is not the policy of the Synod to give official sanction to organizations within the congregations of the Synod; and

WHEREAS, Many congregations of the Synod have no need for the program of the Lutheran Pioneers; and

WHEREAS, An official sanction of the Lutheran Pioneers could give the impression that those who choose not to use it are remiss in fulfilling their obligation over against their youth; therefore be it

Resolved, That we, as a Synod, refrain from giving official sanction to the Lutheran Pioneers.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS, The real purpose of the Church is to preach the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, It is the primary concern of church organizations to further this purpose; therefore be it

Resolved, That we encourage those organizations and pastors who choose to use this program to utilize the opportunities it offers to emphasize spiritual matters in keeping with the real purpose of the Church

What a joy it is to report to this generation of Pioneer leaders that our organization is alive and well. By the grace of God and under His divine guidance He has provided a wonderful ministry of service and fellowship to us and our youth. May your loving service to Lutheran Pioneers continue to be and remain an effective ministry. May it continue to provide an opportunity to many men and women in using their gifts and interests in a service of love to this youth ministry.

Scouting—Beating a Dead Horse?

As one hears how the Lutheran Pioneer program got started, you realize that it does contain some features that appear to be similar to Scouting. Similarities, yes; sameness, no! Comparisons to Scouting are inevitable. It was for that reason (and perhaps rightfully so) that Lutheran Pioneers initially received more than a little static and criticism. Many articles, pamphlets, papers have been written over the years comparing the two programs. These writings have done an excellent job in pointing out our objections to the Scouting program from the biblical viewpoint.

It has been some time since these former studies were made. We might therefore ask, “Have there been any significant changes in the Scouting program in recent years that would cause us to reevaluate any of our former objections?” In the last portion of my presentation I would like to share with you some facts that indicate that our answer to that question must be “No!” Some might feel that there is really no need for us to take yet another look at Scouting because that would be like “beating a dead horse.” I don’t believe this is true. In my opinion it is good for us to periodically review the battles that have been fought by the church in the past as it sought to preserve God’s truth and protect God’s people from error.

If you have some knowledge of our objections to Scouting, now’s the time for you to close your eyes and take a nap, because you are not going to hear anything new. For those of you who are presently napping but want information regarding our objections to Scouting, now’s the time to wake up because you may be edified and perhaps gain some insights that might help you if you are ever asked why our church body objects to membership in Scouting.

Scouting’s Definition of God

Very briefly we want to look at four of those objections. First of all, Scouting’s definition of God. Scouting insists that the “recognition of God...is necessary.” But in looking through the Boy Scout Handbook (edition 1979) and other literature, we find that Scouting is very careful not to define God very clearly. Scouting thus fails to “honor the Son” as men are to “honor the Father” (John 5:23). By refusing to define clearly the true God as being the Triune God and to honor the Triune God as the only God, Scouting perverts the clear teaching of Scripture on the subject of God. Is it just a coincidence that the designations used by Scouting for God also happens to be the favorite designations for God by all who wish to avoid the confession of the deity of Jesus Christ, such as the Masonic Lodge and other religious lodges?

Some examples of Scouting’s statements on God are:

“The Boys Scouts of America maintain that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligations to God.” (Constitution, Article III).

“The recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe, and the grateful acknowledgement of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship, and are wholesome things in the education of the growing boy.” (Constitution, Article II).

Scout Oath or Promise: “On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God...” (BSH 1979 p. 27).

The Scout Law: “A Scout is reverent toward God.” (BSH 1979 p. 32, 41).

“...To do my duty to God... Your parents and religious leaders teach you to know and love God, and the ways in which you can serve Him. By following these teachings in your daily life you do your duty to God as a Scout.” (BSH 1979 p. 28).

Scripture’s Testimony

As you read the Boy Scout Handbook, it is soon evident that Scouting does not teach that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4), the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The Scriptures testify, however, that when men reject the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, by refusing to honor the Son as they honor the Father, they are no longer worshipping God but an idol (John 5:23). Furthermore, the Scriptures testify that a refusal to confess Jesus Christ places one in the camp of those who are against Christ (1 John 4:2,3). You will not find the name of Jesus in the Boy Scout Handbook.

There is sufficient scriptural proof that the Scouting program is detrimental for Christian children and their faith in Jesus Christ. Why would Christian parents want to permit their children to belong to any organization that does not give a clear confession of their own Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scouting and Man’s Depravity

Secondly, we must continue to object to Scouting because it also declares that everybody has it in his own power to keep himself morally straight, clean in thought and word. Thus, Scouting denies the scriptural doctrine of the natural depravity of man. This is evident as you read in the Boy Scout Handbook under the Scout Law that a Scout is “morally straight.”

“And you owe it to yourself to aim to become a man of strong character. Be thoughtful of the rights of others. Be clean in speech and actions. Be faithful in your religious beliefs. Your life as a Scout will take you along the trail that leads to strong, self-reliant manhood.” (BSH 1979 p. 29)

In another place under the Scout Law, the eleventh point states that a Scout is “clean.” There we read:

“But there’s another kind of dirt that won’t come off by washing. It is the kind that enters your mind. An important part of your battle against that kind of dirt is selecting the right friends. Keep away from fellows who seem to get a kick out of swearing and telling dirty stories. Get in with a clean crowd where you will hear clean speech, find clean sportsmanship, and get a clean outlook on life.” (BSH 1979, p. 40, 41).

On page 525 in the BSH 1979 you will find several paragraphs which explain the importance of your conscience in being morally straight. Several sentences are of interest:

“It is your conscience that makes it possible for you to distinguish between right and wrong, that helps you follow the right trail through life.” (BSH 1979 p. 525)

“Your conscience speaks to you of yourself. It tells you the moral obligation you have to do to make your life count.” (ibid)

“God cannot do your life task for you. You must do it yourself, in the faith that ‘God helps them that help themselves.’” (ibid)

“Let your conscience be your guide. Know what is right. Do what is right.” (BSH 1979 p. 526).

Unfortunately, they never tell you where to learn what is right. Whenever reference is made in the BSH to obeying the Scout Law, the stress is on doing your best, “guts and determination,” conduct, living up to the Law, for example cf. pages 11, 29-30, 494, 525-526, etc.

Scripture’s Testimony

When one compares the changes in the 1979 BSH with previous editions, the only conclusion that we can draw is that there have not been any significant changes; in fact, there have been no changes in their teachings of man’s relationship to God. Scouting still contradicts the Scripture’s clear testimony that man, the descendant of Adam, is a sinner (Genesis 5:3), conceived and born in sin (Psalm 51:5); that nothing good lives in man (Romans 7:18); that “*every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood*” (Genesis 8:21); that man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God and cannot understand them because he is spiritually blind (1 Corinthians 2:14), dead in transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and God’s enemy (Romans 5:10). The verdict of the Scriptures regarding all men is, “*All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one*” (Psalm 14:3). Consequently, in the unconverted state in which man is born, he is totally corrupt and absolutely unable to do anything which pleases God.

Scouting and Man’s Duty to God, Repentance and Faith

Scouting, after denying the natural depravity of man, likewise ignores man’s duty to God, repentance and faith. Without repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, man cannot even begin to do his duty to God. Scouting teaches that a Scout (Christian or unbeliever) can do his duty to God. A Scout’s duty to God consists in active participation with the church (and church is nowhere defined in the BSH, it means simply any religious body, Christian or otherwise). A Scout’s duty to God also involves following the teachings of the particular religious body to which a boy belongs. Thus, Scouting perverts the clear teaching of the Word of God in regard to the subject, “duty to God.” Here are just a few statements from the BSH to substantiate what has just been said:

“The men and women who founded our nation held the strong conviction that all men ‘are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.’ When they signed their names to the Declaration of Independence they did this ‘with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence.’

But these courageous people recognized also that for these ‘unalienable rights’ and that ‘protection,’ they owed certain obligations and duties to the Heavenly Father of us all.

You learn what these spiritual duties are in your home and in your church or synagogue. Your spiritual leader—minister, priest, or rabbi—teaches you to know God, how to love Him, and how to serve Him. By following these teachings in your daily life, by taking part in the practices of your faith, by using your leadership ability in your religious activities, you perform your duty to God...” (BSH 1979 p. 492).

“I will do my best...to do my duty to God...Your parents and religious leaders teach you to know and love God, and the ways in which you can serve Him. By following these teachings in your daily life, you do your duty to God as a Scout.” (BSH 1979 p. 28).

A Scout is REVERENT: “A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.” (BSH 1979 p. 41).

Scripture’s Testimony

All this is, of course, is a clear denial of what the Scriptures testify concerning man’s duty to God. Man, as we have seen, is by nature totally corrupt and therefore unable to do anything which pleases God. It is the Holy Spirit who calls men to repentance (Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:15) and faith in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3) by means of the Word of God (Romans 10:17), and makes them in Christ God’s “*new creation*” (John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17); causes them to live lives which through faith in Jesus Christ are pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). Without that faith in Jesus Christ it is absolutely impossible for a person to bring forth fruit—that is good works (Ephesians 2:10; John 15:5).

Paul Randolph, mentioned previously, relates this incident in his treatise *The Testimony of a Former Scout*: “...My former pastor...asked one of the Lutheran leaders in the movement if he would permit my boys, should I have a troop, to confess, ‘I will do my duty to God—as revealed in Christ Jesus’? But he replied that would not be possible. You could believe that in your heart but didn’t need to say it. It would destroy the purpose of scouting that respects the convictions of others.”

Scouting and Good Works

We reserve our sharpest criticism for the emphasis placed on good deeds or good works, apart from faith in Jesus Christ, that is so much a part of the Scouting program. Scattered throughout the BSH are references to good deeds, your duty to God and “good turns.” Scouting very definitely admonishes a Scout to do good, good deeds, good works, good turns. They insist that the so-called good turn is to be something extra, something special, something that you would not do ordinarily, something that you do not expect to be paid for doing. Scouting refuses to recognize that “*all our righteous acts are like filthy rags* (Isaiah 64:6) is God’s verdict on the attempt to make our works the basis for dealing with God. Scouting further refuses to acknowledge the fact that only a Christian can perform deeds that God pronounces good. Without faith in Christ, man has no pleasing relationship to God no matter how many “good deeds” he does in the sight of his fellowman. It is for this reason that his works are spiritually unacceptable to God. Only God can make our civic works of righteousness spiritually acceptable, and He does so for the sake of Christ. Scouting confuses and perverts the scriptural doctrine regarding this subject. It is very obvious, while they don’t come right out and say it, that a boy who is involved in Scouting is led to believe that doing a good turn he is able to set himself

right with God without the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I will quote just a few statements from the BSH to bear this out:

“The Scout slogan is ‘Do a Good Turn Daily.’ Together, the motto (i.e., ‘Be Prepared’) and slogan spell out your ability and your willingness to serve.” (BSH 1979 p. 12).

“The Scout slogan is DO A GOOD TURN DAILY. This does not mean that you are to do *one* good turn and then stop. It means looking for chances to help throughout each day... Doing them should be an automatic, normal part of life...”

“Remember always that a Good Turn is an extra act of kindness. It is not just something you do because it is good manners. To answer the question of a driver about reaching an address is not a Good Turn. That is common courtesy. But to draw a map for him that will show him how to get to where he wants to go—that’s a Good Turn.” (BSH 1979 p. 44).

In explaining the Scout Badge on page 48 (BSH 1979), you will read these words:

“The knot at the bottom of the scroll is a reminder to ‘Do a Good Turn Daily.’”

In the section of the BSH under “Helping Other People” you will read these words:

“When you dedicated yourself to the Scout Oath, you promised to ‘help other people’—not once or twice, but all the time.

As you moved onward and upward in Scouting, your eyes have been opened to the needs of other people...And the daily Good Turn has become a habit.

To people who know about Scouting, the daily Good Turn is one of the finest features of our movement. The record of Good Turns, small and large, that have been done by Scouts since the day Scouting was founded is truly impressive.” (BSH 1979 p. 495).

Another significant statement is made in the handbook under the heading, “Living the Scout Oath”:

“What kind of person do you want to be? There is a simple way to find the answer. You do it by first answering another question: ‘What kind of person do I most admire?’...

You have made your list. There before you in black and white are the qualities you admire most in others.

Study those qualities closely. Then notice how they add up until they cover each part of the Scout Oath.

The Scout Oath Your Guide. They are bound to come out that way, because in the Scout Oath you have the qualities that make men fine and great.” (BSH 1979 p. 490-491).

Under the heading “Scout Spirit” we read another significant statement:

“You get better and better as you move upward in Scouting. You expect more and more of yourself as you follow the trail to Star, Life, and all the way up to Eagle. The kinds of service projects you take on and the leadership you give are clues. They will tell your Scout leaders what kind of boy you are. From these clues they will judge what kind of man you will become.” (BSH 1979 p. 456).

Scripture's Testimony

Now certainly the Scriptures do exhort us to do good turns and good deeds or works (Matthew 5:16). However, the Scriptures also clearly reveal that a good work is only that which a Christian thinks, says or does through faith in Christ (John 15:5) according to the Ten Commandments to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31) or for the benefit of his fellowman (Galatians 5:13). The Scriptures teach that only a Christian can do good works for without faith in Christ it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). A "good work" done by an unbeliever is civil righteousness and sin in the sight of God because it does not spring from a heart full of faith (Romans 14:23).

As one reads the 1978 Boy Scout Handbook, it is very evident that Scouting does concern itself with the relationship of its members toward God. It lays much stress on good works and does encourage its members to do a Good Turn daily. While it nowhere states that good works save you, one cannot help but get this impression, for Scouting implies that the practice of any religion leads to God, and that the most important thing in every religion is good works. That seems to suggest that by doing good works you are going to go to heaven, since, in Scouting's opinion, all religions are seeking to get you to the same place. This is work righteousness clear and simple. Thus Scouting confuses and perverts the doctrine of God through faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8, 9), who was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:4), and who as the Lamb of God sacrificed for us, took upon Himself the sins of the world (John 1:29; John 3:16). The Scriptures very clearly and unmistakably rule out the works of men from having anything to do with man's salvation (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Lest We Forget

Scouting is detrimental to Christianity and undermines the teachings of Holy Scripture. Lest we forget this, I have sought to review with you the inherent dangers of Scouting.

May we ever be thankful that in Lutheran Pioneers we have our own Christ-centered youth program, one that has been established by Lutherans, developed by Lutherans, led by Lutherans and therefore containing only biblical theology.

Conclusion

So, Lutheran Pioneer leaders, you have the joy of salvation because Jesus Christ has crossed your path and said the words of life: "Follow Me." You have the forgiveness of sins in all your failures because Jesus died foremost for you. You have the concern of the church in your heart because this was in His heart. You can serve people, particularly the youth of our church, with much blessing because you can love them with the love of God.

Under God what blessed ministries have been given to us in the church! Yes, what a blessed ministry Lutheran Pioneers can perform in our Savior's name as we use the opportunities of the future to lead our youth along that godly road which leads to Christian adulthood.

A Study of Scouting

[The foregoing paper was presented to the members of the Appleton Circuit—Fox Valley Conference—Northern Wisconsin District WELS]

by Pastor Ronald V. Ash

When an organization makes matters pertaining to religion a part of its program, when it concerns itself with the relationship of its members to God, then we are bound by the Holy Bible to inquire whether the position taken by that organization revealed in its own statements, pronouncements and practice is in agreement with the Word of God.

The Bible does give us the right, yea, commands that we make a judgement on the teachings of other bodies in the area of religion. We must compare what they teach with the Bible. If these teachings agree with the Word of God, then we can accept them. However, if they do not agree, then we must label them as false and they must be avoided.

1 John 4:1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not a God.

Romans 61:17. Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned: and *avoid them*.

2 Timothy 4:2. Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Matthew 7:15,20. Jesus said: “Beware of false prophets...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them”.

History of Scouting: The idea of Scouting originated in England and was developed by a man by the name of Lord Baden-Powell. It was brought to America in 1909 by a Mr. William Boyce who felt that this was a worthwhile program. On June 15, 1916, President Wilson signed an Act of Congress granting a Federal Charter to the Boy Scouts of America.

Aim and Purpose of Scouting: The aim and purpose of the Boy Scouts of America, as set forth in its Constitution and emphasized in its official literature is: Character-building, Citizenship, and Physical Fitness. It attempts to carry out these goals through the Scout Oath, the Scout Law and the Ideals of Service.

The Scout Oath: On my honor I will do my best (1) to do duty to God; (2) to help other people at all times; (3) to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

The Scout Law: A Scout is: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, *reverent*.

Ideals of Service: Practice of the Daily Good turn and organized service of others.

A. Scouting perverts the clear teaching of the Holy Scripture on the subject of “God.”

“The Boys Scouts of America maintain that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligation to God. This recognition of God as the ruling and leading power in the universe, and the grateful acknowledgement of his favors and blessings, are necessary to the best type of citizenship and are wholesome things in the education of the growing boy.” Constitution, ART II, III, pages 3, 4.

How does scouting define “God”? It purposely refrains from making any clearcut pronouncement on the person and nature of God for the obvious reason that its doors may be kept open to boys and men of every race, every creed, and every class.

Scouting uses such terms as: “the leading power in the universe,” the “Infinite Creator of the universe,” the “Source of Life,” and the “Great Master of all good Scouts.” Also, called “Creator” and “Heavenly Father of us all.”

Duty to God: “You learn what these spiritual duties are in your home and in your church or synagogue. Your own spiritual leader, minister, priest, or rabbi teaches you how to know God, how to love him and how to serve him. By following these teachings in your daily life, by taking part in the practices of your faith, by making use of your leadership ability in your religious activities, you are performing your duty to God as a Scout.” Boy Scout Handbook, page 381. What is your obligation to God? What is your duty to your church? To believe in God? Of course. Boy Scout Handbook, page 331. Scouting gives recognition to any and all gods. In its Oath and Law it demands “reverence” toward any and all gods. It is saying all each and any religion no matter what it is (Judaism, Unitarian, Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Buddhism, Islam, etc.) can teach you to know the God of the universe.

This statement is directly contradicted by the Bible which teaches that there are not many “gods” but only one God. That one God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. All the other gods that people have are false—they do not exist and therefore should not be served or worshiped.

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

Isaiah 44:6 I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 45:18 I am the Lord; and there is none else.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Scouting denies that the Triune God is the only true God. They deny that you are saved only through Jesus Christ. However, the Bible teaches that if you do not believe in Jesus you do not believe in God and will therefore be lost in hell.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

1 John 2:23 Whosoever, denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

2 John 9 Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath no God.

Ephesians 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the World.

John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

John 5:23 He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

B. Scouting Perverts the Clear Teaching of Holy Scripture on the Subject of the Church and How to Serve God.

Scouting says: “Your parents and religious leaders teach you to know and love God, and the way in which you can serve him. By following these teachings in your daily life, you do your duty to God as a Scout.” Boy Scout Handbook, page 36. It also says: “The Church is the divinely appointed agency through which men are helped to keep close to God and in harmony of spirit.” Handbook for Boys, page 108.

However, scouting says that any church or religious organization is correct and will be able to teach you how to know God, how to love him, how to serve him and how to be saved.

This is not true, only a Christian church which preaches the gospel and administers the sacraments according to the Lord’s command can teach you these things. All other churches teach a false god, a false hope and false teachings. For example, the Mormons, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Unitarians and any other such churches can not teach you about the true God because they deny the Trinity and deny that Christ is God.

C. Scouting Perverts the Clear Teaching of Holy Scripture on the Subject of Living a Holy Life on Earth.

Scouting rejects the Biblical teaching of original sin and man’s sinfulness before God. It teaches that people have the ability within themselves to be good people and stay away from evil. They teach that man has the power to live a clean life and to get to heaven through good works.

Scouting says: “It is your conscience that makes it possible for you to distinguish between right and wrong, that helps you follow the right trail through life. Boy Scout Handbook, page 436. “There is another kind of dirt that won’t come off by washing. It sticks. It is the kind that goes below the skin, that sinks into your mind. A boy has a hard struggle fighting that kind of dirt, keeping his thoughts clean. But if you really try, you will win. By forcing your mind to occupy itself with things that are good and true you will be able to overcome temptations and will be at peace with yourself.” Boy Scout Handbook, page 50. Or the Boy Scout oath says: “On my honor I will do my best to keep myself *morally* straight. Boy Scout Handbook, page 37. “You promise on your honor to keep yourself morally straight... You have it in your power to

make the right sort of track in your brain that will determine how you will act. Every boy can say to himself 'I will be what I want to be.'" Handbook for boys, 1951, page 25.

However, the *Bible* says that all people are born in sin and have inherited a sinful nature which makes them sin and sin more. Also it teaches that the unbeliever can do nothing in his life which has a spiritual value before the Lord. It states that only through faith in Christ can people perform "good works." That it is the gospel alone which can motive people to do that which is pleasing in God's sight. And finally it teaches that our works do not save us. We are only saved through Jesus.

Sin: Romans 3:12 There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 3:23. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

1 John 1:8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Ephesians 2:1. And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Hebrews 11:6. But without faith it is impossible to please him (God).

Matthew 15:9 In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

John 15:5 Only a Christian can perform good works for they are done out of faith in Jesus...I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Therefore: As Christian people who love Jesus and want to follow his Word, the Bible, we should not join in with nor join *any* organization which teaches false doctrine and a false way of salvation. Such avoiding is taught in Scripture.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and *avoid them*.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellow hath righteousness with unrighteousness.

1 Timothy 6:3,5 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ...from such withdraw thyself.

2 John 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Other passages: Galatians 1:9, 2 Timothy 4:2, 3, Titus 1:9, Titus 2:18, 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, Matthew 15:9, 2 Timothy 2:16, Matthew 16:6, 12, Hebrews 13:9.

False doctrine comes from Satan and is designed to draw us away from God and into hell. False teachers break the first, second and third commandments.

The Boy Scouts and the Lutheran Pioneers—A Comparison or, “Them or Us”

[DCC—1974]

by Bruce Thompson

What?...Another article on the Boy Scouts of America!

Yes...and there will probably be many more after this one. I, too, felt that the subject had been well covered at past LTC's, Conventions and DCC's. But once again we have had a request for another article dealing with a comparison between the Boy Scouts and the Lutheran Pioneers. This time however, there was a special request. They asked for an article that would be written in “dime store” English. They also asked for some practical material. Inasmuch as I am kind of an expert on “dime store” English, I volunteered to write this comparison.

I am sure that you will quickly see that a theologian I am not, nor am I an authority on scouting. But I do have some experience in the Lutheran Pioneer program and over the years I have run into the scouting problem.

The question that you seem to want answered is the one that is so often put to you...namely, “What is the difference between the Lutheran Pioneers and the Boy Scouts?” And what the person that poses the question usually means is, “Why don't we just send our kids to the scouts rather than to go through all the work of starting a Lutheran Pioneer Train and a Buckaroo unit?” It is to this question and to this underlying thought that I will address this article. And I hope to outline some points and reasoning that you in turn can use when the question is presented to you.

Before we go one word further on this question...we must lay down some ground rules! Perhaps just one ground rule...and that is that the person with whom we are discussing this question must be a Wisconsin Synod Lutheran, or someone who is in doctrinal fellowship with our church. Obviously we are going to make little headway in our argument concerning a universal God or religion with a Congregationalist. So once again, ground rule #1 has to be that we discuss this question among our own people.

On a number of occasions I have been asked by “outsiders” to tell them what is wrong with the Boy Scouts, and I have always said that I would be glad to tell them. I ask only that they do me one favor first: Take instructions in our Lutheran Church.

Now as we begin our discussion we should quickly point out that not everything about the Boy Scout program is wrong. In fact, a number of the things in the Boy Scout program are similar to the program of the Lutheran Pioneers. For example:

Their unit of scouts has a name...it is called a “troop.”

Our unit is called a “train.”

Their leader could be called a troopmaster, he happens to be called a “scoutmaster.”

Our leader is called a “trainmaster.”

Within their troop they have smaller units made up of boys. These units are called “patrols.”

The Lutheran Pioneers have the same thing and these groups are called “wagons.”

Each Boy Scout troop has an administrative group of adults, which is the governing body of the troop. This group is called the “troop committee.”

The Lutheran Pioneers has a similar group and we call them the “train council.”

The Boy Scouts have a uniform.
So do the Lutheran Pioneers.

The Boy Scouts have a number of ranks or stages or advancements.
So do the Lutheran Pioneers.

The Boy Scouts use emblems or insignia to depict these various ranks.
So do the Lutheran Pioneers.

The Boy Scouts teach outdoor subjects such as compass and knife and axe and lashing
and mapping and first aid.
So do the Lutheran Pioneers.

At first blush one could say why the Lutheran Pioneer program is copied directly from the Boy Scouts of America. After all, they were started long before the Pioneers. But this statement just wouldn't hold up if one began to check the organizational structure of groups such as 4-H, Boy's Clubs of America, Boy's Brigade and other secular and non-secular, local and national groups.

I believe that it is important to point out that the two organizations do have things that are similar. I feel that at this time it would also be good to point out that if you entered most church buildings today, and did not know the name of the congregation, looked around the church, inside and out, and even heard portions of the service it would be hard to tell the denomination. One could even hear or read about their activities: youth group meetings, Ladies Aid, Mission Societies, Saturday night services, Sunday morning services, and still not be able to tell the denomination. All these things make the various churches similar, but certainly not the same!!

The Boy Scouts and the Lutheran Pioneers are similar, but certainly not the same.

I do not intend to go into the question of the Scout Oath and Law, nor their work-righteousness idea, nor to talk about their universal God concept. I am sure that in your discussion with a fellow Lutheran they would agree that these things are wrong. Their argument usually is that if we have a Boy Scout Troop within our own congregations, made up of our own boys and run by our own Lutheran Leaders, we can control the religious facets of the BSA.

Scout is clean; he keeps his body and mind fit and clean. This is one of the Scout laws. The law says nothing about our filthy, human sinfulness. Another Scout law says that he is reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others. We can't respect idolatry or Mary worship. We can tolerate another's convictions; we can't respect them. Then there are other laws. You know them. We have the Scout Oath: On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God...

Scout headquarters was asked if the oath, for example, could be changed in a Lutheran Troop to go: I will do my duty to God...as revealed in Christ Jesus. No, the answer came back, this would destroy the purpose of Scouting that respects the convictions of others. Could the law be changed? No, no, no. Well, then, could the Oath and Law be left out of the program? No, came back the answer. You would be changing the very heart of scouting.

Okay, your fellow Lutheran says, "Let's use the Oath and Law but let's have Pastor talk about it, so that the boys understand that it is wrong." OR your fellow Lutheran says, "Let's cheat a little, and not use the Oath and Law...and Motto either and make up our own, but just not tell Scout headquarters." Then we could use the Boy Scouts and avoid all this work of starting the Lutheran Pioneer Train.

What about the uniform, you might ask him. Notice now you have him doing the defending. Don't you believe that if we wear the Scout uniform we will be identified with the Scout program? What the Scout program stands for we, by wearing the uniform, will also stand for. We can't hardly wear some kind of insignia that says, "Hey, I am a Lutheran Scout. I don't believe in their Oath and Law and their universal God. I believe in the Triune God not in the god of that Jewish Scout across the street." Okay, says your Lutheran friend, we can skip the uniform. You have already explained to him that we can't have a uniform of our own, Scout headquarters just won't go for that.

Now just one last question to your fellow Lutheran. "Hey, Bill, how much money did you give last year to support the Roman Catholic Church?" "How much?" he asks. "None, why?" "Well, then, would you be willing to pay your dues to the Boy Scouts of America so that they can get a Troop going in another denomination. In no way will the National Headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America allow your money to be earmarked for just your troop or troops of the WELS. Your dues money has to be used for scouting among the heathen, the Baptists, the Catholics, the Universalists..."

Scouting is a religion just like the Masons. It has its own doctrine. Despite scouting's many fine features, we can come to only one conclusion and that is that in no way can we hold to our religious beliefs and convictions and belong to the scouts.

We need a Christ-centered youth program. One that is established by Lutherans, is developed by Lutherans and is led by Lutherans and would contain only Lutheran theology. I feel that the Lutheran Pioneers is such a program. It is not the only way, or the only program. It is a program for our youth.

Quit spending your time and money defending a program that you know is wrong...wrong in the eyes of our Lord. Instead, help us help our youth along the godly road to adulthood in the Lutheran Pioneers.

The Purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers

[Presented at the Wildgoose District Leader's Training Clinic of the Lutheran Pioneers on
September 30, 1978]

by Pastor Martin T. Bradtke

If we would take a survey of our church members and ask them the question, "What is the purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers?" We would get some very strange answers. It is not my intention to mention all the possibilities. But there is one answer that I am sure would be right near the top of the list: "The purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers is to take the place of the Boy and Girl Scouts. If we wouldn't have the Pioneer program in our synod, we would be plagued with the evils of scouting in our churches."

This answer undoubtedly has a great deal of truth in it. It may even be the sum and substance of the matter, as far as a large number of our church members are concerned. But I hope it is not the real answer to the question. If the purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers is merely to replace scouting for our youth, then we are "missing the main point" of its existence within the church. And if that be the case, then shouldn't we ask another question: "Does an organization that has simply been borrowed from the secular realm of life have the right to exist in the Christian Church?" By now we have gone far enough with this already to make us realize that it will be worth our while this morning to do some serious thinking about: The Purpose of Lutheran Pioneers.

I

Perhaps a good way to start this presentation is by considering what the purpose of the Pioneers should not be. We have said it already in the introduction that the Pioneers should not simply be a replacement for scouting. But let's go on from there. Certainly the purpose of the Pioneers should not merely be to serve as a social organization. Arts and crafts, sports and skills, camping and outings and trips, and the like, have their place in a young people's program. If nothing else, they help to promote good Christian fellowship among our youth. They serve a wholesome purpose—provided they serve the gospel of Christ. If they do not serve the gospel, they will find it difficult to prove their right to exist within the Christian church whose main business is to preach and to teach Jesus Christ and him crucified.

One sometimes hears the argument that these social "gimmicks" or "attractions" will keep our young people close to the church and will hold them to its membership and prevent them from forsaking their confirmation vow. But all the social functions we can dream up will never be the main thing that keeps our youth within the membership of the church. God says in his word that it can't be done "by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6)

It is the Holy Spirit who builds the Church, who makes us members of it, who keeps us in it, who "preserves us in the one true faith." The gospel of Christ is the means of grace which he uses to accomplish his soul-saving purpose. Of ourselves—and by our own methods—we cannot convert a single soul, nor can we keep anybody within the walls of the church by our so-called social "attractions" or entertainments. But with the Holy Spirit working in us and through us by means of the gospel—that is the secret of successful church-work. And that should be the purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers! For "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

II

The purpose of the Pioneers is therefore closely related to the purpose of the church—or, at least, it should be. And what is that? Jesus said it very clearly when he told his disciples: “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Not far removed from this main purpose of the church is the office of the ministry. I am not talking here about the office of the pastor, but about the preaching and the teaching ministry which God has assigned to all Christians—to pastors and teachers and laymen alike. This is the ministry to which God refers in his Word when he says: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

III

And this is the purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers. As leaders, or helpers, or whatever your position might be—let your light shine! Be a good, Christian example to your children! “Show forth the praises of God!” “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Teach the youth in our Pioneer program diligently. Teach them by word and deed that Jesus Christ is their only Savior from sin and hell—that he is their one Way to eternal salvation.

Can this be done even while teaching arts and crafts and physical skills? It certainly can be—and it should be! It’s something like the teachers in our Christian day schools. They don’t only teach religion. They also teach the three ‘R’s—reading, writing and arithmetic. But even while teaching these secular subjects, they still let the light of their faith shine before the eyes of their students. And they let the light of Christ shine in their speech and conduct and all-around personality—even when teaching subjects that are of an earthly nature and which apply only to this life.

So you can do—even while guiding the Pioneers in earthly arts and crafts and skills. And as you do this, you will be carrying out the real purpose of the Lutheran Pioneers—which is: (1) serve the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) to teach “all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded “us, (3) to edify one another in the true Christian faith. To that end, may God bless each and every one of you in the work that you are doing with the youth of our church!

I Would Like to Know

[February 15, 1984]

by Pastor Paul E. Kelm

Our son is reaching the age where he could join the boy scouts. I've been informed that the Wisconsin Synod does not approve of scouting, but nobody has given me any substantial reasons. Why are we supposed to be against scouting?

It's not that we're against scouting. It's that we're for God, not a generic god who goes by a variety of names, but for the triune God. We are so for God who has revealed himself in Scripture and in the incarnate Christ that we vehemently oppose any attempt to blur God's identity with the suggestion that all gods are alike. Unfortunately, scouting presents a god so generic he's even called "the Great Master of all scouts." Scouting is for the tolerance of all religious beliefs, something God wouldn't tolerate at Mt. Sinai and Mt. Carmel and Mt. Zion.

We're for man. We're in favor of a correct understanding of man's nature, so that young people can grow up right. That means we teach original sin, the innate inability to know God and do right that necessitates regeneration. So we baptize and instruct children. And we oppose any philosophy that suggests people are morally good or neutral by nature. Unfortunately, that's what scouting does, reversing the prohibitions of God's law with the self-righteous promotions of the scout law. "A scout is reverent"...he does his duty to God. One scouting manual adds: "You may never know what your duty to God is," and goes on to promote religious evolution in place of revelation, all in the name of reverence to God.

We are for salvation, for the salvation of all who believe in Jesus, because the essence of Christianity is salvation by grace through faith, right? Then we must be opposed to any and all forms of work-righteous salvation. Unfortunately, scouting's printed explanations of the scout oath and law foster universalism (the idea that everybody's going to heaven if there is one) and work-righteousness (the notion that good deeds earn reward in the hereafter).

Maybe you've noticed that scouting is sort of religious, not just superficially religious but essentially religious. Spokesmen for scouting have regularly agreed with that assessment. Although the average scout meeting may not be a religious experience, belonging to the organization is a very visible subscription to what scouting says—about God, about man and about salvation. That's a subscription incompatible with the creed we confess each Sunday. And anything that might tend to confuse a clear understanding of sin and forgiveness in my children is just too big a risk.

By the way, we are also for woodsmanship, citizenship, craftsmanship and those good things, but in their place and not at the cost of eternal verities. I guess that's why a lot of our congregations have established Lutheran Pioneer groups. Check that out.

Scouts

by Pastor Larry I. Zessin

To begin with, scouting has features which we have no objection to, features which are even desirable—hiking, hobbies, camping, nature, lore, etc. Our youth can benefit from such activities but if such benefits can be had only at the cost of accepting the objectionable religious elements of scouting, then we are unwilling to pay that price, even though it forces us to reject the good with the bad.

Disapproval of scouting must come from conviction based on God's Word. Scouting reaches into the field of youth training. And youth training is one of the main responsibilities placed upon parents and church by God. We are to strive to keep with the Lord Jesus whose children they have become in baptism. Their faith in him must be preserved and strengthened as they grow up. "By grace are ye saved through faith" in Christ must be their confession in life and in death. Thus we must resist everything which can undermine that trust in Christ. That is why we do not want scouting to play any part in the training of our youth.

Religious Elements In Scouting

The religious elements in scouting are contained in their Oath and Law, which have never changed since the organization of scouting. They are the rules of scouting, the Scout's code without which there can be no scouting and no scout.

The Scout Oath, or Promise

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God...to keep myself morally straight." Under "duty to God" is included such things as worship, faithfulness to Almighty God's commandments, gratitude, helping others. Regarding "morally straight" the explanation is: "A morally straight Scout knows how to love and serve God in the way he wants him to."

The Twelfth Scout Law

"A Scout is reverent. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion." This is explained: "The Scout shows true reverence in two principle ways. First you pray to God, you love God and serve him. Secondly, in your daily actions you help other people because they are made by God to God's own likeness. It is your duty to respect these people for their beliefs and customs and to live your own."

The Scout Slogan—Do A Good Turn Daily

"These small good turns are the boy's first steps toward service to others. ...By encouraging the boy to replace self with service to others you aid him in fulfilling his promise 'to do my duty to God and my Country.'"

Scouting's God

Scouting places great emphasis on the Scout's relation to "God." It speaks of "GOD" in it's Oath and Law. But who is the "GOD" of scouting? His is never identified as the triune God, which is the true God. No where does it honor Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, although he says, "He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him."

The omission of the Son of God from the Scout Oath and Law is not unintentional but a deliberate policy of scouting because it welcomes also those who deny Jesus as the true God and

Savior. The “God” of scouting is, therefore, unacceptable to the Christian, who will give honor to the triune God only and who regards the worship of any other “GOD” as a sin against the first commandment. Our children are to know the Scriptural answer to the (question: Who is GOD? Scouting does not supply the answer: and failing that it provides a wrong answer and confuses the child on this all-important question.

Duty to God

Scouting requires an oath or promise that goes far beyond the “Yea, yea, nay, nay” of Scripture and is forbidden by God. It implies that the Scout can by his own ability do his “Duty to God.” It tells the Scout: “Above all you are faithful to Almighty God’s commandments. It is something to be good, but it is far better to do good.” This conflicts with the scriptural doctrines of original sin; faith and conversion. The Bible says that natural man is born in sin, is an enemy of God and cannot please God. It teaches that only he who believes in Christ can do work acceptable to God. Scouting disagrees with the central teaching of the Bible when it leaves faith in Christ completely out of the picture and then supposes that Scouts can do their “Duty to God.”

Lutheran Troops

Many congregations have tried to avoid this difference between religious elements in scouting and the doctrines of the Bible, by sponsoring their own troops. But the objectionable features of scouting cannot be removed thus. The oath and law are in the main part of scouting. No troop can receive a charter without accepting the oath and law. Nor can they be dropped from the Scout program, even though Scoutism says: “There is no Scout authority which supersedes the authority of the local congregation and pastor in any phase of the program affecting the spiritual welfare of the Lutheran men and boys.” We would be dropping something that is mandatory in scouting. About all we could possibly do is cover up the objectionable elements with our own explanations and corrections, which would only be compromising the gospel.

Our Lord has laid upon his church the duty of confession of the truth and remaining separate from error. Our Christian Testimony is undermined when we join Scouts. It is our “religious duty,” our “duty to God” to remain separate from scouting. Only thus can we be faithful to the confession we owe to the world and to our youth.

The Lutheran Pioneers
by Pastor H. Marcus Schwartz

Is the Lutheran Pioneers a Substitute?

When many think of the Lutheran Pioneer Boys' Club, they think of it only as an organization which is trying hard to be a substitute for the Boy Scouts of America. The Lutheran Pioneers is not a substitute group. As long as a Christian thinks of this boys' club as a substitute group for something that is contrary to scriptures, his thinking is basically wrong and scripturally incorrect, (and a substitute or an inferior product no one wants).

A Christian needs no substitute for something which is contrary to the Word of God. If a thing clashes with God's Word in only one of its aspects or phases and if a thing gives offense it is to be avoided by the Christian, who is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. To be sanctified means to be apart from the world by the Spirit of God, called to serve Christ and his Kingdom. Such a person needs no substitute upon which he must lean. He boldly confesses the Truth, avoids and points out error. There also is joy in his heart in so doing.

If he does not wish to follow the Word of God, avoid that which displeases God, and that in a good and honest heart, we must conclude that there is something wrong with his faith and sanctification. Either he is ignorant of the Word of God, or he just simply will not listen to God's Word when it speaks to him.

In the Lutheran Pioneers the church is not setting up a counter part for any error which for conscience sake must be avoided. It also is not setting up a substitute program in its midst with certain objectional features removed.

Then how are we to look upon the Lutheran Pioneers? We all agree that it is the church's sole business to preach the gospel, which Jesus has given us...in season and out of season...to preach to the male and female, the married or single, to the old and middle-aged, yes, and also to the children...to administer the Sacraments...to instruct...all this is the work of the church.

This is the obligation that our Lord and Savior has placed upon his church. Is the church going contrary to God's Word then by permitting special organizations to function in her midst? Is the establishing of various societies establishing cliques within the church? If such an organization would in any way try to control or govern the Church; if it believed that in any it were substituting itself for the power of the Word of God, if such an organization is a closed society, open only to a choice few, then such an organization would be running counter to God's Word and would be out of order.

There simply is no substitute for the Word of God and the power that Word has over the hearts of man.

I don't think any would claim that an organized choir takes the place of the sermon or Word of God in any way. If the ladies aid were to think that they are the pillars upholding the church with their support, they certainly are thinking wrong. If the young people's society is an organization to hold the young people to church, where the Word of God does not work faith and fruits in their hearts, I doubt if they have the right reason for their existence and if they are doing the church a service. If the men's club exists merely to keep a man from falling away from the church and joining a lodge, such a man is already lost.

If any organization believes it is substituting anything for the power of the Word of God, which is the only power of God unto salvation, it is in error, for there is no substitute for the power of the Word of God working faith and fruits in man's heart.

On the other hand, no one would call an open group out of order when it meets to edify and be edified, to show its love to its Savior in a special way. Must it immediately be branded as pharisaical or having an attitude of "holier than thou"? It seems Our Lord Jesus did not condemn special favors from people or individuals.

Scriptures do not forbid a group in the church, which dedicates itself in a proper Christian manner to the Lord and in no way tries to be a substitute for anything in any way. That is Christian liberty in a church if it wishes to have these organizations or not.

We place much stress on the education of our children. We go to much expense in providing a special school for them. Yet no one would say of the children that attend our Christian day schools that they are attending a substitute school. We are not sending them to the parochial school to substitute it for the church. Without going into the subjects, which deal with religion, we also emphasize that a child should be taught the subjects as art, arithmetic, spelling and civics from a Christian viewpoint.

We can then argue why not teach a child the other things which he can use in life from a Christian viewpoint; those things which he does not receive in school, neither do we expect the school to handle them with their loaded schedules.

We emphasize that the boy be well cared for during the school hours. Why not stress importance of the child's time after school hours, where perhaps he can get into more mischief than under the supervision in school? Why not help him in the time he spends outside of school hours, which hours are also formative in his development? We in no way wish to substitute a boys' club for religious training any more than we would try to substitute drawing or arithmetic for it. We simply are adding an extra way in which the boy can learn first aid, camping or other useful knowledge which he does not receive in the school or in the home.

As a wise parent desires the welfare of a child in all matters, not only in church and school, but also in work, play, hobbies and other group participation. For this reason we organize a boys' club. To give the boy the things which the parent has not time for at home and which the school cannot fit into its already crowded schedule. Such a group is in no way trying to substitute anything but simply adding something to the child's fuller enjoyment of life as a Christian.

Again we ask, Is such a program necessary for the child's salvation. And we again answer, indeed not. But again we ask, is it food for a child and I would say, "Yes." Is it necessary to the child's salvation to play ball, to read good books, to have a hobby, to have diversions or recreation of some sort or other? The expression is time-tested: Idle hands are the workshop of the devil. We try to keep the children busy. This is another reason for a boys' club.

Perhaps the home should do this. We say the home has the responsibility to provide. What better things could the parent provide than a club for the boy in which he works with others in gaining knowledge of rope tying, junior Red Cross, where he plays ball with a group of his own age and kind. When camping he must learn to get along with other boys. This is practical lesson of civics, of which he learns the theory at school.

In such a club he must learn to cooperate with others. And if his side does win the ball game, we do not think he will go around half-cocked with "a better than thou attitude." If he receives recognition for passing certain tests, it is no different from receiving a good grade on his report card in school. It does not have to turn the boy's head to receive a merit. If it does in an organization such as a boys' club, *such an attitude would soon be corrected when under Christian leadership.*

In the Lutheran Pioneers we have such an organization. An organization which gives the boys extras and that from a Christian stand. This is the reason for our boys' club. We hold that it

is not a substitute for religion, the Boy Scouts or anything else, but a wholesome program for our boys. This program is what we make it.

We have a good program. Let's make it work. I have tried to outline what would be out of order in such a program, and what the advantages could be. Again, as I started out, let us not think of them as a substitute for anything and especially the Boy Scouts, for the Scouts are the substitute group. They are the ones who would substitute their program, their laws, their word, etc., for the Word of God. (They substitute Boy Scouts for religion and a religious training.)

Although, as we have seen, a Christian needs no substitute for something which is contrary to God's word, the Lutheran Pioneers does present godly substitutes for the unwholesome offerings of the Boy Scouts.

1. A false God for the triune God.
2. Work righteousness for Christ's righteousness. (Ask a scout who does not know his Savior if he will be saved...and how.)
3. Man's power for regeneration through the Holy Ghost. Upon my honor—the Scout Oath states.
4. Law for gospel.
5. Unionism for separation. (Twelve Scout laws—touch not the unclean things.)
6. Reward for grace.
7. Man's word—for God's Word

The Errors of the Boy Scouts

Introduction: It is our God given duty to hold to the truth and reject all error which might lead us away from God into hell.

- I. Belief in any god is satisfactory
 - A. Who is the god of the Scouts?
 - B. Such a belief leads away from the triune God.

- II. There is a natural goodness and honor in man
 - A. "On my honor."
 - B. "To do my duty."

- III. Good works can be developed through the law

- IV. I can work my way into heaven
 - A. No need for repentance.
 - B. No need for Christ.

- V. Any church body is divinely appointed
 - A. "Scouting knows no race or creed."
 - B. Purpose of the church.
 - C. No reason for us to do mission work.

Conclusion: Can a "good" Boy Scout be saved?

Discussion Questions

True or False

1. All men are religious to some extent.
2. There is no such thing as an atheist.
3. It is a sin for an unbeliever to go for a walk in the woods.
4. Man by nature is dead, blind, corrupt and at enmity with God.
5. I can do nothing at all to be saved.
6. The Holy Ghost offers me forgiveness and gives me the ability to accept it.
7. The Holy Ghost moves me to do good works.
8. I can be positive that one day I will be in heaven.

Check the better of the two statements. *Both may be correct.*

Our salvation is complete.

Our redemption is complete.

I am saved because I believe in Jesus Christ.

I am saved because Jesus Christ died on the cross for me.

Thought question: What is the difference between the merit badges of the Boy Scouts and the badges of the Lutheran Pioneers?

Can I Join the Boy Scouts?

Jamie was ten years old and lived in the small town of Bear Creek. The town received this name, many years ago, because of all the bears in the area. The bears were still around, but there were not as many as there used to be. Jamie liked the town of Bear Creek. It was just the right size town for him. He knew all of the children in his school, not at all like some of the schools he had heard about, where you didn't know half of the children. He was glad he lived in a small town and not a real large city.

Jamie also liked the woods, in his backyard, and the small creek, which ran through his dad's property. He especially enjoyed the summer time, when he could catch a trout, every now and then, out of the stream. Jamie loved the outdoors and wished that his father could take him camping overnight. But he knew that was impossible. His father had lost both of his legs, in the war and camping was out of the question. Sometimes, at night Jamie would look out of his bedroom window and dream of sleeping beneath the stars. He imagined what it would be like to eat breakfast outside, with the fire burning away, or to canoe through wilderness lakes. But then Jamie would remember that he would have to wait until he grew up and could go by himself. If there was one thing Jamie wanted more than anything else, it was to go camping.

One morning Jamie got up, out of bed, washed, dressed and hurried downstairs to the breakfast table. After eating his egg and bacon he raced off to school. He was glad today was Friday. School went alright in the morning except for spelling. He always had trouble with spelling. It was during the noon hour as he was eating his lunch that he heard what he thought was the greatest news he had ever heard. Tom, his best friend, was telling him about a new club his church was starting. Tom said, "It's called the Boy Scouts. You learn to make things, and how to take care of yourself in the woods, and all about camping." It sounded great to Jamie. He couldn't wait until he got home that evening.

When Dad and Mom and he were sitting around the supper table, Jamie brought it up. "Mom and Dad, I heard the greatest news at school today. Tom told me about a new club his church is starting. It's called the Boy Scouts and they teach you all about camping and the woods and everything like that. Can I join too?"

Dad looked at Mother with what Jamie thought was a different kind of look. But he knew what that look meant. It meant, "No, we're sorry, but you can't." Dad started talking, "Jamie," he said "You know that Tom doesn't belong to our church. There is a big difference between his church and yours. In his church there is nothing wrong with joining the Boy Scouts, but in our church there is."

"But, Dad," Jamie interrupted, "It's just what I want to do. I've always wanted to go camping and learn about the outdoors. Why does our church have to be so strict? I don't think it's fair. Almost all my friends are going to join. What am I supposed to do, just sit around here while they are having all the fun?"

"Now, Jamie," Mother chimed in, "You know it isn't that our church is so strict, it's what God wills us to do in the Bible, that we have to listen to."

"But, Mom," Jamie asked, "Doesn't God want us to have any fun?"

"I've got an idea," Dad suggested, "Tomorrow is Saturday. Let's go down and talk to Pastor Miller. Maybe he can tell us more about the Boy Scouts." With that the subject was dropped for the night.

Jamie could hardly sleep that night. He kept thinking about what Pastor Miller would say. He knew that Pastor Miller would probably be against the Boy Scouts. Jamie was so mixed up.

“If God doesn’t want me to join the Boy Scouts, I suppose I had better not,” he thought. “But it would be so much fun. And besides that, where does God say in the Bible that I shouldn’t join the Boy Scouts? What could be so terrible about going camping and having a good time?”

When Jamie woke up the sun was already up. He hurried downstairs to eat and help his mother with the dishes. While they were doing the dishes his father moved his wheel chair out to the garage and started up the car. Jamie was always amazed at how the factory had built a special car for his father. It was all controlled by hand levers. He remembered how happy his father had been the day they delivered the car, and he could drive wherever he wanted to.

“Let’s go,” Dad called. It was only a short drive, to the parsonage, and before Jamie knew it, they were sitting in Pastor Miller’s office. “I’d like to join the Boy Scouts,” popped up Jamie.

“We’ve tried to explain to Jamie that God tells us, in the Bible, that it’s wrong to join the Boy Scouts,” Dad said.

“We thought you could explain it better,” added Mother.

“Yes, I’ve heard that they were starting a Boy Scout troop at the church,” said Pastor Miller. “Jamie, let me ask you a question. Would you join Tom’s church?”

“Why, no,” answered Jamie.

“Why not?” asked Pastor Miller.

“Because,” said Jamie, “Tom’s church doesn’t always teach the Word of God. His church teaches that people can get to heaven by doing good works. The Bible says that we are going to heaven because Jesus died for us and not because we do something.”

“I’m glad to hear you say that,” said Pastor Miller. “But, did you know that the same thing is true with the Boy Scouts? They do many fine things like teaching young boys about the world and nature. They go camping and learn how to build fires without burning down the woods. They learn how to work with a knife and axe. But, they still are a religion just like Tom’s church is a religion. “You see,” said Pastor Miller, settling back in his chair, “The Boy Scout religion teaches that if you do enough good works or deeds, then God will be happy with you. But God tells us that no one can do enough good works. In the Boy Scouts, you have to promise to try and do your duty to God. God says that we are to be perfect, and never do a single thing wrong if we want to do our duty to him.”

“That’s impossible,” said Jamie. “All of us do something wrong at some time or another.”

“You’re so right,” answered Pastor Miller. “And so, when we teach someone else that they can please God by doing what is right, we are leading them away from their Savior Jesus Christ and into hell.”

“I never looked at it that way before,” said Jamie. “I sure wouldn’t want to do that.”

On the way home no one said a word. When they sat down in the living room after dinner Dad said, “Jamie, you heard what Pastor Miller said about the Boy Scouts. I know how much you want to join the Boy Scouts with Tom and your other friends. I only wish that I could take you camping, but you know that’s impossible. What I want to say, Jamie, is this. If you want to join the Boy Scouts, it’s up to you. Your mother and I don’t want you to. God doesn’t want you to. But you have to make this decision yourself. What are you going to do?”

Aim: We don’t join the Boy Scouts, because it is against God’s Word. (Not because our church won’t let us join it.)

Should Jamie have joined the Boy Scouts? Why not? Point out that Boy Scouts is a false religion, which teaches contrary to the Bible. (On my honor, original sin; only one true God, can't work way into heaven.)

Does God want us to have fun? Show boys that what isn't God pleasing isn't really fun. Point out God pleasing ways to have fun.

What is the difference between the Boy Scouts and the Lutheran Pioneers?

The main difference is that Christ is the head of the Lutheran Pioneers.

Why Lutheran Pioneers?

by Members of Train 58, St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, Hales Corners, Wisconsin

You are a Lutheran Pioneer. There are probably a lot of things you like about being a Pioneer. Maybe your favorite part of Pioneers is the skills you learn that will help you when you go camping. Or maybe you enjoy learning to identify different animals, birds and plants. You might look forward to the projects you make, or the special activities and outings your train or wagon has. These are all exciting and important parts of Lutheran Pioneers.

But someone may have told you that Boy Scouts have the same kind of activities and teach the same kinds of skills. Do you ever wonder why we have Lutheran Pioneers, and don't join the Boy Scouts? Let's look at the differences between scouting and Pioneers.

Pioneers believe that Jesus is their Lord and pray only in his name. This is what Jesus wants us to do. He tells us, "I tell you the truth My Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 16:23). That's why the Pioneer Prayer begins, "Jesus, help our eyes to see our salvation earned by thee..." Jesus wants us to make it clear to all people that he is true God and the only Savior. He promises, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven." (Matthew 10:32)

Scouting does not teach this. Instead of talking about Jesus and about the true triune God, scouting talks about the "Great Scoutmaster," the "Leading Power," the "Source of Life," etc. They do this because there are many scouts who do not believe that Jesus is God, because they are Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist or some other unchristian religion.

Each scout must also promise to keep the Scout Law and keep himself morally straight. But the Bible shows us that no man can do this. Even St. Paul had to admit, "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do" (Romans 7:18,19). No Christian should ever take God's name in vain by promising to do something as impossible as leading a perfectly moral life!

A Pioneer knows that man has a right to believe what he wants. This is part of his religious freedom. But a Pioneer also knows that what the Bible says is the truth—and the only truth—about God. As a Christian, a Pioneer will love all men and seek to teach them the truth. He cannot and will not respect the false beliefs of others. A Pioneer cannot respect the teachings of the Jews and Modernists who teach that Jesus is not God. Jesus did not tolerate religious lies, nor did Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah or St. Paul. They all spoke out strongly against false teaching. St. Paul wrote, "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8)

But the *Scout Manual* says, "It is your duty to respect these people for their beliefs." This says that all religions are good and equal. Scouts would have to believe that Baal worship is just as good as worshipping Jesus. They would have to say that the Pharisees were just as right about religion as Jesus was! This is contrary to the Bible. A Christian will always defend the truth—even when it means losing his friends or his life.

Pioneers know that Jesus died for them. No doubt you have heard in countless Pioneer devotions about your Savior's atonement for your sins. You know that you could never earn heaven. You know, as every Pioneer knows, that only faith in Jesus saves. You don't do good because you are trying to please God. You do good because you are grateful for what God has done for you.

Scouting says it is okay to worship *any* god, as long as you worship *some* god. This is not what God says in the First Commandment: “I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Scouting doesn't mention Jesus in its Scout Oath, Benediction, or Law. How can a Christian forget about Jesus in oaths, blessings and laws when he knows that “every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God”? (1 John 4:3)

The Pioneer train you belong to does not make you take needless or wrong oaths. Your leaders respect what God has said about swearing when no oath is necessary: “Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else” (James 5:12). Jesus wants us to be honest and sincere in everything we say, so that we don't have to take an oath every time we say something. He tells us, “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37).

Scouting, on the other hand, tells Scouts to make an oath and pledge: “On my honor, I promise...” Is this oath necessary? No!

But Pioneers know that sometimes Christians should take oaths—for example, in court or in very important matters. Both Jesus and St. Paul took oaths (Matthew 26:63, 64; 2 Corinthians 1:23). But a Pioneer will never make an oath that he cannot keep. That would be misusing God's name!

Scouts must make an oath that is impossible to keep. Each Scout must promise that he will try to do his duty to God. This oath makes Scouts think they *can* try to do their duty, even if they don't believe in Jesus.

But the Bible says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). This part of the oath is false for all Scouts who do not believe in Jesus. A Pioneer knows he can't do his duty to God without Jesus.

Scouting does not teach this. Scouts are told, “Do a good turn daily,” not because they love God, but because “God will be pleased with the life we have built.” It is part of the Scout's *duty* to his god or God. The *Scout Manual* says, “The Scout is morally straight and knows how to love and serve God in the way he wants him to.” “Above all you are faithful to Almighty God's Commandments.” If it would be possible to serve God the way he wants and to be faithful to the commandments, why did Jesus have to die on the cross for our sins?

That is why Pioneers like you believe what the Bible teaches about salvation: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). A Pioneer is sorry for his sins and happy that Jesus forgives him. Because he is forgiven by Jesus, a Pioneer tries to do what Jesus wants him to do, but he knows that he will never be perfect, during his entire earthly life.

Be thankful that you are a Lutheran Pioneer. You have all the wonderful training and skills that any Scout could have. But you have more!

You have the truth of God's Word taught to you by believing leaders. These leaders are willing to give up their time and talents out of love for their Savior to make this program possible for you. Wear your uniform proudly, for with this uniform you are confessing Christ. You are telling the world you belong only to Jesus who redeemed you and made you his own. Always be ready to tell the world why you are a Lutheran Pioneer!

To God alone be glory—forevermore!