

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA WORKING GROUP
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Narrative to the

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the United Church of Christ
And
The Boy Scouts of America

Brian M .Conn on behalf of the Working Group

2/19/2014

This Narrative provides background information related to the Boy Scouts of America, its membership policy and subsequent change, and information related to the Memorandum of Understanding proposed by the Working Group of the United Church of Christ to be executed with the Boy Scouts of America.

Contents

Background 2

Purpose of this Narrative 2

Working Group Members 3

Fundamentals of the Boy Scouts of America Organization 7

Membership Policy and History of Exclusion Due to Sexual Orientation 10

Intent of Working Group and this MOU 11

Limitations to the MOU 11

MOU Narrative..... 12

 MOU Lines 1..4..... 13

 MOU Lines 5..9..... 14

 MOU Lines 10..11..... 15

 MOU Lines 12..14..... 16

 MOU Lines 15..28..... 18

 MOU Lines 29..32..... 19

 MOU Lines 33..35..... 20

 MOU Lines 36..38..... 21

 MOU Lines 39..42..... 22

 MOU Lines 43..46..... 23

 MOU Lines 47..48..... 24

 MOU Lines 49..51..... 25

 MOU Lines 52..53..... 26

 MOU Lines 54..57..... 27

 MOU Lines 58..61..... 28

 MOU Lines 62..64..... 29

 MOU Lines 67..68..... 31

Appendix A, Membership Policy Resolution of the Boy Scouts of America 32

Appendix B, Annual Charter Agreement..... 34

Appendix C, Aims and Methods of the Boy Scouts of America 35

Appendix D, BSA Panel of Experts on Youth Protection 36

Background

BSA has executed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with many of its chartered partners, and many of these MOUs are published on-line. Although most of the MOUs simply mutually affirm the value of the BSA programs and the value of the chartered partner delivering the programs, several of the MOUs carve out rights for the chartered partner to conduct the program according to the values of the chartered partner or its congregations. Because BSA has previously given allowances to its chartered partners, we believe that BSA should be receptive to UCC values of inclusion and extravagant welcome.

At the October, 2013, national meeting of the Boy Scouts of America, Gene Butler, the BSA employee assigned to business development, asked Rev. Levering Reynolds and Brian Conn to request from the UCC national office a Memorandum of Understanding between the UCC and the BSA.

Purpose of this Narrative

This narrative is intended to provide background information related to the Boy Scouts of America, the membership policy issue, the Working Group of the UCC focused on BSA issues, and the Memorandum of Understanding. This narrative provides a clause-by-clause analysis of the facts presented by the working group, including a discussion of the significance of the clause and related supporting documentation.

This narrative includes several appendices that include key documents from the Boy Scouts of America.

Working Group Members

Rolf G. Asphaug

Residence: Centennial, Colorado

UCC Affiliation: First Plymouth Congregational Church, Englewood, Colorado. Sunday School teacher, liturgist, God and Me (BSA religious medal) Counselor

BSA Affiliation: Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 457, Greenwood Village, Colorado; and Webelos Den Leader for Pack 559, Centennial, Colorado. Previously Pack Committee Chair for Pack 559. Merit badge counselor in several subjects.

BSA Youth Experience: Eagle Scout, 1975; Order of the Arrow (Brotherhood), 1975

Occupation: Deputy General Counsel for Regional Transportation District for past 24 years. Formerly with Sierra Club Legal Defense Club, Denver, CO; and Baker Botts, Houston, TX

Education: J.D. from Columbia University School of Law 1983; B.A. from Rice University 1980

Brian M. Conn

Residence: Broomfield, Colorado

UCC Affiliation: Broomfield United Church of Christ; Past Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer

BSA Affiliation: Registered Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 767, Broomfield, CO and elected as Charter Organization Representative for Troop 511, Broomfield United Church of Christ. BSA Climbing Instructor for Denver Area Council and Pike's Peak Council. Merit Badge Counselor.

BSA Youth Experience: Eagle Scout, 1984; Order of the Arrow (Brotherhood), 1983.

Occupation: Engineering Manager, Implantable Medical Devices.

Education: BS Engineering, Northern Arizona University, 1989; MBA, University of Denver, 2006

Working Group Members, Continued

Matt Mirmak

Residence: Irvine, California

UCC Affiliation: Irvine United Congregational Church

BSA Affiliation: Chartered Organization Representative and Interim Cubmaster and Scoutmaster, Cub pack 602 and Troop 602. National Eagle Scout Association member.

BSA Youth Experience: Eagle Scout, 1986, Brotherhood Order of the Arrow 1984

Occupation: Mortgage Loan Underwriter, Carrington Mortgage Services

Education: BA, Augsburg College, 1992

Rev. Levering (“Lev”) Reynolds, III

Residence: Belleville, Illinois

UCC Affiliation: St. Paul United Church of Christ. Ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, 1965. Pastor of three UCC congregations over 17 years. Served in interim ministry and conference roles. Served a CHISIM Agency.

BSA Affiliation: Served as Scoutmaster, Commissioner (Unit, District and Council). Served on Board of Directors for three different councils. Current member of the Religious Relationships Task Force, a national committee of the BSA, as the UCC representative.

BSA Youth Experience: Cub scout, Boy Scout, Explorer and Sea Scout.

Occupation: Retired.

Education: Stanford University; Yale Divinity School.

Working Group Members, Continued

David ("Dave") A. Rice

Residence: Petaluma, California

UCC Affiliation: United Church of Christ in Petaluma, two terms on Mission and Outreach Commission

BSA Affiliation: 59 years in Scouting: Cub, Scout, Explorer; district Scout executive 1953-71; Scoutmaster or assistant SM in Petaluma Troop 74 for 25 years; denied registration in 1998 (in 2000 the BSA's attorney told the US Supreme Court I was not a Scout leader, probably to devalue my testimony in three court cases). Vigil Honor, Order of the Arrow; Woodbadge; Silver Beaver; six Jamborees (two on Jamboree staff, four on National Park Service staff)

BSA Youth Experience: Cub scout; Boy scout.

Occupation: Retired: US Army 1951-53, professional Scouter 1953-71, elementary teacher 1972-86, National Park Service 1986-94 (secretary, ranger, public affairs, editor (equal opportunity chair))

Education: AB University of California, Berkeley, 1951, many postgraduate courses

Rev. Michael D. Schuenemeyer

Residence: Cleveland, OH

UCC Affiliation: Member, Archwood United Church of Christ

BSA Affiliation: None.

BSA Youth Experience: Cub Scout, Webelos, Boy Scout-Life, Order of the Arrow

Occupation: Clergy, Executive for Health and Wholeness Advocacy, United Church of Christ

Education: BA-Music: University of Missouri-Kansas City, MDiv: Eden Theological Seminary-St. Louis, MO

M. Arthur ("Art") Williams

Residence: Mechanicsburg, PA

UCC Affiliation: Member, St Paul's UCC, Mechanicsburg, PA

BSA Affiliation: Council Commissioner, New Birth of Freedom Council. 20 year scout volunteer. Silver Beaver recipient.

BSA Youth Experience: None.

Occupation: Project Management Consultant

Education: BA Albion College, Michigan

Fundamentals of the Boy Scouts of America Organization

i. **History**

The scouting movement was founded by Lord Robert Baden-Powell in England in 1908. William D. Boyce, an American businessman, met with Baden-Powell in England, and subsequently brought the scouting movement to the United States. BSA was founded in 1910 with W.D. Boyce as founder, Ernest Thompson Seton as Chief Scout, James E. West as Chief Scout Executive, and William Howard Taft as the honorary President. James E. West served as chief scout executive from 1911 through 1943. Prior to joining the national BSA executive staff, [James E. West was a member of the congregation that is now the Westmorland Congregational UCC \(Bethesda, MD\), an “Open and Affirming” church.](#)

ii. **Mission and Vision of Boy Scouts of America**

Mission Statement

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Vision Statement

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

iii. **Aims of Scouting**

Boy Scouting works toward three aims. One is growth in moral strength and character. Character can be defined as the collection of core values by an individual that leads to moral commitment and action, and encompasses a boy’s personal qualities, values, and outlook.

A second aim is participating citizenship. Used broadly, citizenship means the boy’s relationship to others. He comes to learn of his obligations to other people, to the society he lives in, and to the government that presides over that society.

A third aim of Boy Scouting is development of physical, mental, and emotional fitness. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), and the emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect).

Refer to “Aims and Methods of Scouting,” BSA publication 521-042.

iv. **Operating Units (National/Regions/Councils/Districts)**

Boy Scouts of America national office is located in Irving, Texas. Boy Scouts is divided into four administrative regions: North Eastern; Southern; Western; and Central. Each division is subsequently divided into councils. Councils, which are typically centered in major metropolitan areas, are the primary operating unit of the BSA administration. BSA presently chartered 278 Councils. Councils are granted annual charters by BSA. Councils then grant annual charters to individual congregations, citizen groups, veterans groups, and other groups or corporations to organize units, such as Boy Scout troops or Cub Scout packs. Councils are further divided into districts.

v. Chartered Organization Model

a. Council Duties and Responsibilities

Council duties and responsibilities are outlined in the Annual Charter Agreement, issued between the Council on behalf of BSA and the chartering organization, for example a UCC congregation. In brief summary, the Council provides program related materials (uniforms, merit badge books), staffed camps, and administrative services. Councils also provide administrative support to the organizations chartering troops. The Council provides liability insurance to the Chartering organization and its officers.

b. Chartered Organization Responsibilities

Chartered organization responsibilities are also outlined in the Annual Charter Agreement issued between the Council and on behalf of BSA and the chartering organization. The Chartered organization is responsible for selecting its unit's leaders and ensuring that the BSA program is conducted safely and according to BSA policies.

vi. Scout Oath, Law, and Outdoor Code

Scout Oath

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 other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to:
Be clean in my outdoor manners.

Be careful with fire.
Be considerate in the outdoors.
Be conservation minded.

vii. UCC history with BSA (troops chartered over time)

Presently UCC congregations, including ONA congregations, charter 1191 BSA units. In 2005, UCC congregations chartered 1424 units. The overall trend in units chartered is decreasing. It should be noted that almost all chartering organizations are seeing an overall decrease in units chartered.

Membership Policy and History of Exclusion Due to Sexual Orientation

i. **History**

BSA's membership policy to exclude persons according to their sexual orientation culminated with the Dale vs BSA decision of the United States Supreme court in 1999. A summary of the key facts presented in the case and the subsequent decision can be found at:

http://www.oyez.org/cases/1990-1999/1999/1999_99_699

In a 5-4 decision, the United States Supreme Court sided with BSA, and allowed that New Jersey public accommodation laws violated Boy Scouts First Amendment right of expressive association.

ii. **UCC Response**

In 2003, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a resolution calling on BSA to end its membership policy exclusion of LGBT youth and adults. In 2013, Rev. Geoffrey Black sent a letter to Wayne Brock, Chief Scout Executive, supporting the end to BSA's membership policy exclusion of LGBT youth and adults.

iii. **Recent Cases: Ryan Andressen**

In October, 2012, Ryan Andressen had completed all requirements to advance to the rank of Eagle. His scoutmaster refused to approve his Eagle rank application, and he denied Ryan further membership in the troop.

This case was widely published. According to information shared between BSA and the LCMS, this case caused significant internal debate over the membership policy as applied to youth.

“BSA leaders stated to LCMS representatives that turmoil within the BSA, rather than outside pressures, led to the change in the membership standard. Internal debate heightened as the result of a California incident in which Ryan Andresen, who had completed the requirements for the Eagle Scout Award, was removed from Scouting after admitting that he was homosexual. Reaction to that specific BSA decision on the basis of sexual orientation alone was strongly negative within Scouting.”

Refer to <https://www.lcms.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=726&DocID=2582>

iv. **Change to BSA Position**

With the membership policy resolution of May, 2013, BSA now states that it “does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation”.

Intent of Working Group and this MOU

Considering the variety of faiths, Christian denominations, civic groups and veteran's groups that charter BSA units, a variety of positions on the membership policy issue are expected. This MOU seeks to secure for the congregations of the United Church of Christ that choose to charter BSA units the right to establish membership within their units according to the values of the congregations and according to the UCC values of inclusion and extravagant welcome, and without discrimination.

Although a substantial amount of BSA policy information and statements are provided in the MOU, this information is provided to establish that the UCC's position is consistent with BSA values, BSA policies, and with positions previously allowed to other chartered organizations.

Limitations to the MOU

This MOU represents only chartered organizations affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

MOU Narrative

MOU Lines 1..4

Whereas, The United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have worked together to provide leadership and character development programs to serve the needs of boys, young adults, and their families through the member congregations of the United Church of Christ chartering more than one thousand units over more than one hundred years; and

Significance of Clause

This clause is important for two reasons: first, the UCC and BSA have a long history of association. Second, the youth and adult volunteers registered with UCC troops represent a significant revenue source for BSA and its affiliated councils and camp facilities. Considering membership dues and camp fees collected for youth and adult members of UCC sponsored units, UCC sponsored units likely represent more than \$1M in revenue to BSA.

Supporting information

The earliest known troop chartered by a congregation now affiliated with the UCC as identified by Rev. Lev Reynolds began its charter concurrently with the inception of BSA, more than 110 years ago. Presently UCC congregations charter more than 1000 troops per BSA.

Name of Organization	Total Units	Total Youth
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*	37,856	430,557
United Methodist Church*	10,868	363,876
Catholic Church *	8,397	273,648
Presbyterian Church *	3,597	125,523
Lutheran Church *	3,827	116,417
Baptist Churches	3,981	108,353
Episcopal Church *	1,179	41,407
United Church of Christ, Congregational Church	1,191	38,225
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	1,165	33,941

Refer to: http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/operating_orgs.aspx. The table, above, was downloaded from the URL, above, on January 20, 2014.

MOU Lines 5..9

Whereas, The Declaration of Religious Principle of the Boy Scouts of America has stated since 1911: “The Boy Scouts of America, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and the organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life”; and

Significance of Clause

From its inception, BSA has recognized that it must respect all religious traditions, including traditions that conflict with its policies.

Supporting information

Declaration of Religious Principle

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and organization or group with which a member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. Only persons willing to subscribe to this Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of membership.

Refer to:

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/Relationships/ManualforChaplainsandAides.aspx>

The Declaration of Religious Principle was downloaded from the URL, above, on January 20, 2014.

MOU Lines 10..11

Whereas, the twelfth point of the Scout Law teaches, “A Scout is reverent. ... He respects the beliefs of others,” and

Significance of Clause

From its inception, BSA has recognized that it must teach respect for all religious traditions, including traditions that conflict with its policies.

Supporting information

The twelfth point of the scout law is

“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.**” Handbook for Boys, 1911, p. 16.

The language of the 1st edition has been updated in the 12th edition, but the essence of the 12th point of the scout law remains unchanged.

“A scout is reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. **He respects the beliefs of others.**” Boy Scout Handbook, 12th edition, p. 25.

MOU Lines 12..14

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America is a non-sectarian organization that welcomes people of all faiths, and that prescribes no specific moral code but rather leaves to parents and faith-based organizations the responsibility to teach morality to youth; and

Significance of Clause

This clause establishes that BSA has no specific moral code on which it is based. BSA does not adhere to, nor does it promote any specific faith or religious tradition. Rather, BSA develops educational materials for use by its chartered partners according to the chartered partner's teachings on morality. Further, because BSA teaches no specific moral code, BSA has no standing based on morality to exclude members on the basis of sexual orientation.

Supporting Information

It is clear from the Declaration of Religious principle that BSA is absolutely non-sectarian. It is further clear that BSA leaves the teaching of religion, faith and religious principles to the parents of the youth and to the faith to which the family subscribes.

It is further clear that the BSA program teaches values as defined in the scout oath and law. However, these values are universal values, appreciated by people of all faiths, and independent of specific moral codes taught by the various faiths or denominations. One question I often pose to scouts during the Board of Review is "Why isn't 'Honest' one of the points of the scout law?" Honesty is part of the moral code prescribed by religions (e.g., Judaism and Christianity via the Ten Commandments), but is not taught by BSA. Clearly one must be honest to be Trustworthy (the first point of the scout law), but, again, teaching morality is left to the family and the family's faith.

One can further assert that BSA is a secular organization, in the same way that the US government is a secular organization yet still acknowledges God in, for example, the Declaration of Independence or the Pledge of Allegiance. At the most fundamental level, BSA is an educational program that provides a template for its programs to be delivered by faith-based organizations, community groups and veteran's groups according to values, aims, and objectives of those groups.

"Boy Scouts of America is not in the business of running a youth program." Duane Rieker, BSA Senior District Executive, January 18, 2014. This quote illustrates the fact that chartered organizations, in fact, run the youth program according to their own values and according to the educational template provided by BSA. BSA is in the business of providing educational material, providing uniforms and printed materials, staffing facilities, and staffing camps.

“The Boy Scouts of America is an educational resource program. It charters community or religious organizations or groups to use Scouting as part of their service to their own members, as well as the community at large.

The BSA local council provides the support service necessary to help the chartered organization succeed in their use of the program. The responsibilities of both the BSA local council and the chartered group are described below.” Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010. Refer also to Appendix B.

MOU Lines 15..28

Whereas, the mission of the United Church of Christ is grounded in scripture, joins faith and action, and serves God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world; the Church's core values are to participate in and give witness to the continuing testament of the still-speaking God, extend extravagant welcome to all, without discrimination, no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, and to change lives through the power of God's love and by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, many members of the United Church of Christ live their faith with actions for justice and peace, bringing positive change to their communities, their country, and the world, and have demonstrated the UCC's values of welcome and inclusion by ordaining ministers without discrimination since 1972; by the General Synod's adoption of the "Open and Affirming" resolution (1985) which encourages its member congregations to be designated "Open and Affirming" through a study process and by adopting non-discrimination policies for all aspects of their ministries and use of church facilities; and by the UCC's motto, "that they may all be one" (John 17:21), and

Significance of Clause

These clauses establishes the long history of extravagant welcome and Christian fellowship offered by UCC congregations to all persons seeking a closer relationship with God. This clause also establishes that "extravagant welcome" and non-discrimination are core UCC values, indeed part of the UCC moral code.

As previously agreed with the LCMS, BSA acknowledged the moral and spiritual responsibility of the pastor and congregation that charter BSA units. BSA further acknowledged that it has no authority greater than the pastor and congregation. Given this authority and the UCC values of non-discrimination and extravagant welcome, it follows that UCC congregations that charter BSA units should be given the authority to choose membership according to the congregation's values and according to BSA standards and policies to protect the health and safety of youth and adult members.

Supporting Information

These statements stand on their own.

MOU Lines 29..32

Whereas, it is the mission and vision of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law; and

Significance of Clause

This clause establishes that BSA's mission and vision have nothing to do with discrimination on the basis of sexual.

Supporting Information

Mission & Vision

Mission Statement

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Scout Oath

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 other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is:

Trustworthy	Obedient
Loyal	Cheerful
Helpful	Thrifty
Friendly	Brave
Courteous	Clean
Kind	Reverent

Vision Statement

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

Refer to: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/mission.aspx>. The mission and vision statements of BSA were taken from the URL, above, on January 20, 2014.

MOU Lines 33..35

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America provides family-centered programs related to leadership and character development for youth where the programs are delivered through and according to the values, aims, and objectives of chartered organizations; and

Significance of Clause

This clause establishes two points: first that BSA is not, itself, a youth organization. Rather it is a developer of educational materials to be used in programs delivered by its chartered partners. Second, the program is intended by BSA to be delivered according to the values, aims and objectives of the chartered partner. The terms “aims” and “objectives” come verbatim from the BSA’s language in the Annual Charter Agreement, referenced below. The term “values” is inferred from the Annual Charter Agreement language: it is not conceivable that an organization would conduct a program as part of its overall offering to families and youth in any manner other than in accordance with its values.

Supporting Information

“The chartered organization agrees to

- Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America.
 - Include Scouting as part of its overall program for youth and families. Consider organizing a program to meet the developmental needs for every age level served.”
- Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010.*

“The council agrees to

- Respect the aims and objectives of the organization and offer the resources of Scouting to help in meeting those objectives.
- Make available year-round training, service, and program resources to the organization and its unit(s).

Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010.

The aims of scouting are character development, teaching citizenship, and developing physical, mental and emotional fitness. Refer to “The Aims and Methods of Boy Scouting,” Reference 523-042, 2011. Refer also to Appendix C.

MOU Lines 36..38

Whereas, membership criteria for adults in Boy Scouts of America units appropriately includes certain background information reviews to protect the health and safety of the youth and adult members of the units; and

Significance of Clause

With this clause we appreciate, acknowledge, and affirm the membership criteria related to the health and safety of youth and adult members of BSA units chartered by UCC congregations.

Supporting Information

The adult application includes character references supplied by the applicant and authorization for the local Council to perform a criminal background check. Refer to the Adult application, Reference 524-101, which may be downloaded at:

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>.

MOU Lines 39..42

Whereas, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting; and

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation; and

Significance of Clause

With these clauses we appreciate, acknowledge, and affirm these specific BSA clauses from the membership policy resolution of May 2013.

Supporting Information

This language is taken from the membership policy resolution of BSA. Refer to: http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/membership/pdf/Unit_Implementation_FAQ.pdf

The membership policy resolution may also be found in Appendix A.

MOU Lines 43..46

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that chartered organizations be responsible for the selection of adult leaders according to the chartered organizations' values, policies, and guidelines, and the Boy Scouts of America's standards, with at least one adult leader for a unit being a member of the chartered organization for such unit; and

Significance of Clause

The language of the Annual Charter Agreement further reinforces that it is the chartered partner that is responsible for selecting the leaders of its units according to its values, policies and guidelines as well as those of BSA. Note that BSA maintains no right to choose any unit's leaders.

Supporting Information

“The chartered organization agrees to

- Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America.

- [deleted from this quote]

- Appoint a chartered organization representative who is a member of the organization and will coordinate all unit operations within it. He or she will represent the organization to the Scouting district and serve as a voting member of the local council. **(The chartered organization head or chartered organization representative must approve all leader applications and verify that personal references and any previous experience working with youth in other organizations have been checked before submitting the application to the local council.)**

- Select a unit committee of parents and members of the chartered organization (minimum of three) who will screen and select unit leaders who meet the organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the BSA. **(The committee chair must sign all leadership applications before submitting them to the chartered organization for approval.)”**

Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010. Refer also to Appendix B.

MOU Lines 47..48

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that each chartered organization subscribe to a policy of nondiscrimination as specified in the Unit Renewal Application Instructions; and

Significance of Clause

BSA specifies that units shall not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnic background. We know as well that BSA maintains non-discrimination policies on the basis of religion, physical or mental ability. Resolving that UCC units be free from discrimination including sexual orientation is already aligned with core BSA values.

Supporting Information

“POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America is open to all boys and young adults who meet the joining requirements.

Membership in Scouting, advancement, and achievement of leadership in Scouting units are open to all youths without regard to race or ethnic background and are based entirely upon individual merit.” Refer to “Unit Renewal Application Instructions”, Reference 524-420, 2013.

It should be appreciated that the given in the policy is not all-inclusive. BSA’s non-discrimination policy includes as well religion, physical abilities, mental abilities, and now, for youth, sexual orientation.

MOU Lines 49..51

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America requires that each chartered organization “Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America;” and

Significance of Clause

This clause further supports that BSA units shall be conducted according to the policies, guidelines, and therefore, values of the chartered partner.

Supporting Information

“The chartered organization agrees to

- Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America.”

Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010. Refer also to Appendix B.

MOU Lines 52..53

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America agrees “to respect the aims and objectives of the [chartered] organization” in the Annual Charter Agreement; and

Significance of Clause

BSA language states that it will respect the aims and objectives of its chartered partners. Based on this and BSA’s teaching that all religious values should be respected, BSA must respect UCC values of extravagant welcome and non-discrimination.

Supporting Information

“The council agrees to

- Respect the aims and objectives of the organization and offer the resources of Scouting to help in meeting those objectives.

- Make available year-round training, service, and program resources to the organization and its unit(s).

Taken from the “Annual Charter Agreement.” Reference 524-182, 2010. Refer also to Appendix B.

MOU Lines 54..57

Whereas, the aims and objectives of the United Church of Christ include providing a safe and welcoming environment to all persons without discrimination, including families with youth, to develop their relationship with God; to learn the teachings of Scripture; and especially for youth, to develop physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, and spiritually; and

Significance of Clause

BSA language states that it will respect the aims and objectives of its chartered partners. Based on this and BSA's teaching that all religious values should be respected, BSA must respect UCC values of extravagant welcome and non-discrimination.

Supporting Information

This statement stands on its own. If other language is required, we should frame the language in terms of the aims and objectives of the UCC.

MOU Lines 58..61

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America's own panel of experts in the fields of psychiatry, criminal justice, education, and child abuse prevention in a recent report concluded that sexual orientation of youth and adults has no effect on the mental, emotional, sexual orientation, and physical well-being of youth under their care; and

Significance of Clause

BSA cannot justify discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation due to youth protection.

Supporting Information

Refer to "Boy Scouts of America Membership Standards Review", pages 43-46, which may be downloaded at: http://www.scouting.org/filestore/MembershipStandards/310-561_WB.pdf

The above referenced excerpt of "Boy Scouts of America Membership Standards Review" may be found in Appendix D.

MOU Lines 62..64

Whereas, several local councils of the Boy Scouts of America have adopted non-discrimination policies, including non-discrimination with respect to sexual orientation, of its members, leaders, and employees; and

Significance of Clause

A significant number of councils across the country have established non-discrimination policies. The resolution of this MOU that BSA shall not employ discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for adult members of units chartered by UCC congregations complies with these existing policies. Additionally, this resolution, as established by the clauses of this MOU, is aligned BSA teachings, BSA values, and BSA agreement with the chartered partners.

Supporting Information

Greater New York Councils

<http://www.bsa-gnyc.org/about-us/non-discrimination-statement/52229>

Los Angeles Area Council

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/los-angeles-area-council-announces-234517406.html>

Western Los Angeles Council

<http://www.kcet.org/news/stories/western-la-council-boy-scout-policy-on-gays-doesnt-go-far-enough.html>

Mt Diablo/Silverado Council (CA)

<http://www.ktvu.com/news/news/local-govt-politics/local-boy-scout-council-first-endorse-dropping-ban/nWyqs/>

Boston Minuteman Council

http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/blogs/bostonspirit/2012/12/new_england_boy_scout_troopils_f.html

Green Mountain Council (VT)

<http://www.scoutingvermont.org/Council/Leadership/GMCNonDiscrimination>

Knox Trail Council (MA)

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20130412/NEWS/104129808/1242/mobile&TEMPLATE=MOBILE>

Nashua Valley Council

http://www.lowellsun.com/rss/ci_22880561

Northern Star Council (Minneapolis/St. Paul)

<http://www.startribune.com/local/west/162817346.html>

Connecticut Yankee Council & Greenwich Council

<http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Boy-Scouts-vote-to-allow-openly-gay-Scouts-state-4542879.php>

Connecticut Rivers Council

<http://www.ctrivers.org/Council/ElectronicScouter/ConnecticutRiversCouncilPolicyofNon-Discrimination>

Baltimore Area Council

www.baltimorebsa.org/OrgHeaders/749/Policy%20on%20Inclusion.pdf

MOU Lines 65..66

Whereas, Boy Scouts of America policies prohibit any parent of any registered youth from being excluded from unit, district, council, or national activities; and

Significance of Clause

Although BSA has excluded parents from membership due to sexual orientation, in fact, BSA policies prohibit any parent from being excluded from any aspect of the program, including meetings, events, and outings.

Supporting Information

Barriers to Abuse Within Scouting

The BSA has developed and adopted the following policies to provide additional security for our members.

...

- **No secret organizations.** The Boy Scouts of America does not allow any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

The text above was downloaded from the following URL on January 24, 2014.

http://www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/bsayouthprotection/policies_and_training/barriers_to_abuse_within_scouting.aspx

MOU Lines 67..68

Whereas, the Boy Scouts of America encourages all parents to register as adult volunteers and leaders in their child's unit;

Significance of Clause

BSA encourages all parents to register as leaders. The UCC value of extravagant welcome is well aligned with this policy. We believe that encouraging all parents to register further achieves BSA's objective to train all adults who supervise youth in BSA programs in youth protection.

Supporting Information

In the past, BSA encouraged parents who did not register as leaders to register as "ScoutParents". This program was ended in July 2013. BSA now encourages all parents to register as unit leaders or as Unit Reserve Scouter (91U).

"Councils should encourage current "ScoutParents" to now officially register as paid adult volunteers or leaders if they are not already so registered."

This text was downloaded from the following URL on January 24, 2014.
http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/commissioners/newsletter/bsa_news/04_2013_scoutparents.aspx.

Appendix A, Membership Policy Resolution of the Boy Scouts of America

(<http://www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/membershipstandards/resolution/resolution.aspx>)

Membership Standards Resolution

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law:

Scout Oath

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 other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
Mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is:
Trustworthy Obedient
Loyal Cheerful
Helpful Thrifty
Friendly Brave
Courteous Clean
Kind Reverent

AND WHEREAS, duty to God, duty to country, duty to others, and duty to oneself are each a core value and immutable tenet of the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, the Scout Oath begins with duty to God and the Scout Law ends with a Scout's obligation to be reverent, and that will always remain a core value of the Boy Scouts of America, and the values set forth in the Scout Oath and Law are fundamental to the BSA and central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, the vision of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law; and

WHEREAS, for more than 103 years, programs of the Boy Scouts of America have been delivered to youth members through cooperation with chartered organizations that select adult leaders who meet the organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, numerous independent experts have recognized that the programs protecting Scouts today, which include effective screening, education and training, and clear policies to protect youth and provide for their privacy, are among the best in the youth-serving community; and

WHEREAS, the current adult leadership standard of the Boy Scouts of America states:

The applicant must possess the moral, educational, and emotional qualities that the Boy Scouts of America deems necessary to afford positive leadership to youth. The applicant must also be the correct age, subscribe to the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and abide by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

While the BSA does not proactively inquire about sexual orientation of employees, volunteers, or members, we do not grant membership to individuals who are open or avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the BSA.

AND WHEREAS, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting; and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation, and resolving this complex issue is not the role of the organization, nor may any member use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political position or agenda; and

WHEREAS, youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to live a moral life; and

WHEREAS, America needs Scouting, and the organization's policies must be based on what is in the best interest of its young people, and the organization will work to stay focused on that which unites us, and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America will maintain the current membership policy for all adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The following membership standard for youth members of the Boy Scouts of America is hereby adopted and approved, effective Jan. 1, 2014:

Youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America is open to all youth who meet the specific membership requirements to join the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Sea Scout, and Venturing programs. Membership in any program of the Boy Scouts of America requires the youth member to (a) subscribe to and abide by the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, (b) subscribe to and abide by the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and (c) demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and is consistent at all times with the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

Appendix B, Annual Charter Agreement

THE ANNUAL CHARTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN:

_____ and the _____ Council, BSA
Name of organization

Pack Troop Team Crew Ship No. _____

The Boy Scouts of America is an educational resource program. It charters community or religious organizations or groups to use Scouting as part of their service to their own members, as well as the community at large.

The BSA local council provides the support service necessary to help the chartered organization succeed in their use of the program. The responsibilities of both the BSA local council and the chartered group are described below.

The chartered organization agrees to

- Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Include Scouting as part of its overall program for youth and families. Consider organizing a program to meet the developmental needs for every age level served.
- Appoint a chartered organization representative who is a member of the organization and will coordinate all unit operations within it. He or she will represent the organization to the Scouting district and serve as a voting member of the local council. (The chartered organization head or chartered organization representative must approve all leader applications and verify that personal references and any previous experience working with youth in other organizations have been checked before submitting the application to the local council.)
- Select a unit committee of parents and members of the chartered organization (minimum of three) who will screen and select unit leaders who meet the organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the BSA. (The committee chair must sign all leadership applications before submitting them to the chartered organization for approval.)
- Provide adequate facilities for the Scouting unit(s) to meet on a regular schedule with time and place reserved.
- Encourage the unit to participate in outdoor experiences, which are vital elements of Scouting.

The council agrees to

- Respect the aims and objectives of the organization and offer the resources of Scouting to help in meeting those objectives.
- Make available year-round training, service, and program resources to the organization and its unit(s).
- Make available training and support for the chartered organization representative as the primary communication link between the organization and the BSA.
- Make available techniques and methods for selecting quality unit leaders.
- Provide primary general liability insurance to cover the chartered organization, its board, officers, chartered organization representative, employees and volunteers currently registered with Boy Scouts of America. Coverage is provided with respect to the claims arising out of an official Scouting activity with the exception that the coverage is excess over any insurance which may be available to the volunteer for loss arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle or watercraft. This insurance is only available while the vehicle or watercraft is in the actual use of a Scouting unit and being used for an official Scouting activity.
- The insurance provided unregistered Scouting volunteers through the BSA general liability insurance program is excess over any other insurance the volunteer might have to his or her benefit, usually a homeowner's, personal liability, or auto liability insurance.
- Provide camping facilities, a service center, and a full-time professional staff to assist the organization in every way possible.

Signed _____
For the chartered organization

Signed _____
For the BSA local council

Date _____

See other side for discussion guide.

Goldenrod—Chartered organization; White—Council



Appendix C, Aims and Methods of the Boy Scouts of America



CHARACTER

Boy Scouting works toward three aims. One is growth in *moral strength and character*. Character can be defined as the collection of core values by an individual that leads to moral commitment and action, and encompasses a boy's personal qualities, values, and outlook.

CITIZENSHIP

A second aim is *participating citizenship*. Used broadly, citizenship means the boy's relationship to others. He comes to learn of his obligations to other people, to the society he lives in, and to the government that presides over that society.

FITNESS

A third aim of Boy Scouting is development of *physical, mental, and emotional fitness*. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), and the emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect).

METHODS

The methods are designed to accomplish the aims. Thus it is important that you know and use the methods of Boy Scouting. Other methods are good, but they may bring different results—results quite different than we are seeking.

IDEALS

The ideals of Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath and Law, motto, and slogan. The Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them, he has some control over what he becomes. "Show Scout spirit," a requirement for rank advancement, means living up to these ideals.

PATROLS

The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places a certain amount of responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to act in small groups where they can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through their elected representatives.

OUTDOORS

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoors that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with each other. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Scouts gain an appreciation for God's handiwork and humankind's place in it. The outdoors is the laboratory for Scouts to learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

ADVANCEMENT

Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps to overcome them through the advancement method. The Scout plans his advancement and, by participating in the troop program, progresses as he overcomes each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help him grow in self-reliance and the ability to help others.

ADULT ASSOCIATION

Boys learn from the example set by their adult leaders. An association with adults of high character is encouraged at this stage of a young man's development.

PERSONAL GROWTH

As Scouts plan their activity and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others.

There probably is no device so successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn.

The religious emblems program is also a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Boy Scouting encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership roles of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

UNIFORM

The uniform makes the Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.

The uniform is practical attire for Scout activities, and provides a way for Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

Appendix D, BSA Panel of Experts on Youth Protection

In addressing issues related to youth protection for the membership standards study, the Boy Scouts of America tasked its director of Youth Protection, Michael V. Johnson, to consult with leading experts in the field of youth protection and child sexual abuse prevention. David Finkelhor, Ph.D.; W. Walter Menninger, M.D., psychiatry; Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D.; and Victor Vieth, J.D.; all provided input and insight. The following is a summary of their findings on key issues and concerns in the BSA's membership standards discussion.

BIOGRAPHIES OF YOUTH PROTECTION EXPERTS

David Finkelhor, Ph.D., is director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center, professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire, and a nationally recognized expert in the field of child abuse. www.unh.edu/ccrc

W. Walter Menninger, M.D., psychiatry, is past chairman, Board of Visitors, Menninger Foundation and Menninger Clinic, an international specialty psychiatric center providing treatment, research, and education. Menninger is an advisor to the BSA's Youth Protection and Health and Safety committees.

Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D., is professor of educational leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University and has been studying equity in schools for more than 25 years, documenting gendered practice in the classroom and in school administration. She is an internationally recognized researcher in the area of gender patterns in educational delivery and classroom interactions. www.soe.vcu.edu/faculty-staff-member/charol-shakeshaft/

Victor Vieth, J.D., is executive director of the National Child Protection Training Center at Winona State University and an expert on child abuse investigation, prosecution, and prevention. He has authored numerous articles and has been a contributing writer to several publications related to child maltreatment. <http://bit.ly/16erDKg>

YOUTH PROTECTION AND CHILD SAFETY

Definitions

The terminology used in the area of child sexual abuse is often confusing and can even be misleading. We can begin to address that problem by defining some basic terms. *Pedophilia* and *child molestation* are used in different ways, even by professionals.

- **Pedophilia** usually refers to an adult psychological disorder characterized by a preference for prepubescent children as sexual partners; this preference may or may not be acted upon.
- **Hebephilia** is sometimes used to describe adult sexual attraction to adolescents or children who have reached puberty.
- **Child sexual abuse** describes actual sexual contact between an adult and someone who has not reached the legal age of consent. In this context, the latter individual is referred to as a *child*, even though he or she may be a teenager.

Although the terms are not always applied consistently, it is useful to distinguish between pedophiles/hebephiles and child molesters/abusers. Pedophilia and hebephilia are diagnostic labels that refer to psychological attractions. Not all pedophiles and hebephiles actually molest children; an adult can be attracted to children or adolescents without ever actually engaging in sexual contact with them.

Note: Information provided by David Finkelhor, Ph.D. Source: University of California Davis, Psychology Department, http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_molestation.html

The Prevalence and Incidence of Sexual Abuse

Prevalence and Incidence of Sexual Abuse David Finkelhor, Ph.D.

- There are an estimated 1.6 million contact sexual offenses against juveniles ages 0–17 annually (*National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence*, 2011).
- The best and most up-to-date estimate is that about 20 percent of girls and 5 percent of boys are being sexually abused over the course of childhood. But that includes much abuse by peers. The rate in the most recent national study of abuse by adults is 12 percent for girls and 1 percent for boys.
- Thus, girls are victims more often than boys by 4-to-1 or even more than 10-to-1.
- Ninety-five percent of the offenders are males. Clearly, most victimization occurs between male offenders and female victims. There are no statistics on the relative rate of abusing by homosexuals vs. heterosexuals. The nearly universal opinion among sexual abuse authorities is that same-sex sexual interest or same-sex sexual experience, either in adults or youth, is NOT a risk factor for sexually abusing children.

Homosexuality and Child Molestation Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D.

Reflecting the results of these and other studies, the mainstream view among researchers and professionals who work in the area of child sexual abuse is that homosexual and bisexual men do not pose any special threat to children. For example, in one review of the scientific literature, noted authority Dr. A. Nicholas Groth wrote:

Are homosexual adults in general sexually attracted to children and are preadolescent children at greater risk of molestation from homosexual adults than from heterosexual adults? There is no reason to believe so. The research to date all points to there being no significant relationship between a homosexual lifestyle and child molestation. There appears to be practically no reportage of sexual molestation of girls by lesbian adults, and the adult male who sexually molests young boys is not likely to be homosexual (Groth & Gary, 1982, p. 147).

In a more recent literature review, Dr. Nathaniel McConaghy (1998) similarly cautioned against confusing homosexuality with pedophilia. He noted, "The man who offends against prepubertal or immediately postpubertal boys is typically not sexually interested in older men or in women" (p. 259).

Homosexuality and Child Molestation Victor Vieth, J.D.

First, there is no evidence to suggest that homosexuals are more likely to molest children than heterosexuals. This conclusion is based not only on the available research,¹ but on 25 years of practice as a child abuse prosecutor and a consultant to child abuse prosecutors throughout the United States. A child molester can be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or have no adult sexual interests.² The only common denominator is that the offender has a sexual attraction to children.³ As one recent example, Jerry Sandusky was a married heterosexual man who also happened to be a serial child molester.⁴

¹ See, e.g., Jenny, C., Roesler, T.A., and Poyer, K. L., *Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? Pediatrics*, 94(1). (This study examined cases of child abuse in a Denver medical facility and of the 269 child sexual abuse victims studied, only two were victimized by someone the researchers could identify as gay or lesbian.)

² See generally, Anna Salter, *Predators: Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders* (2003).

³ For example, the DSM-IV criteria for pedophilia is the offender must be at least 16, must be at least 5 years older than the victim and, over a period of at least six months, has "recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally 13 years or younger)" (APA 1994).

⁴ Victor I. Vieth, et al, *Lessons from Penn State: A Call to Implement a New Pattern of Training for Mandated Reporters and Child Protection Professionals CENTERPIECE* Volume 3, issue 3 and 4 (2012).

Child Sex Abuse and Gay Parents American Psychological Association

Are children raised by gay parents more likely to be sexually abused by a parent or by a parent's friends or acquaintances? There is no scientific support for fears about children of lesbian or gay parents being sexually abused by their parents or their parents' gay, lesbian, or bisexual friends or acquaintances.

Source: American Psychological Association (2008). *Answers to your questions: For a better understanding of sexual orientation and homosexuality*. Washington, D.C.: Author. (Retrieved from www.apa.org/topics/orientation.pdf.)

Modeling

Parent Modeling Charol Shakeshaft, Ph.D.

The research on lesbian/gay parents and their children is relevant to this discussion because many studies have shown that the strongest role modeling occurs in parent-child situations. Research shows that measures of children's gender development are generally unrelated to parental sexual orientation (Gartrell, Bos, and Goldberg, 2011; Fulcher, Sutfin, Patterson, 2007; Patterson, 2006; Golombok and Tasker, 1996; Green, 1978). More than two decades of research has failed to find any significant differences in the adjustment or development of children or adolescents raised by same-sex couples as compared to those children raised by heterosexual couples (Patterson, 2006). Nor are there differences in the sexual identity definitions between children raised by heterosexual parents vs. those raised by homosexual parents.

Modeling Influences David Finkelhor, Ph.D.

Most of the research on the effect on children of associating with self-identified homosexual adults has been done about homosexual parents. The clear conclusion from this research is that there appear to be no effects on children's adjustment, mental health, or sexual orientation.

There is no research on the effect on children of having a homosexual as a leader or coach. Nonetheless, even though the development of sexual behavior is not fully understood, it is generally thought by researchers that modeling plays no role in sexual orientation. Most of those who become attracted to same-sex partners grow up in homes and communities where the modeling is exclusively heterosexual.

BSA Membership Policy—Potential Change Challenges W. Walter Menninger, M.D., Psychiatry

The proposal for a change in the formal position of the Boy Scouts of America with regard to individuals with an openly acknowledged homosexual identification has provoked significant discussion as well as a myriad of emotions. With the issue of sexuality, it is important to acknowledge the degree to which underlying emotion can influence consideration of policy and action. The primary challenge in discussing this issue is to clarify/distinguish fact from fiction, and to identify and defuse as much as possible emotional aspects that color/influence the reactions to the proposed change.

Normal personality growth and development, for all individuals, progresses from an infantile, self-centered orientation to childhood awareness and affiliation with others like oneself, to—for the vast majority of persons—an adolescent interest in and adult affiliation with a member of the opposite sex. While that search for pleasure can be a powerful motivating force, most persons limit their sexual activity to socially acceptable situations.

In exploring issues of sexual identification and behavior, both adults and youth have been known to manifest unsettling and problematic sexual behavior. Indeed, the BSA program for Youth Protection was developed to protect youth from circumstances where they might be subject to abuse by adults.

Concern for a formal change in BSA policy has to do with the degree to which an acceptance of individuals with an openly stated homosexual orientation will compromise the values associated with the Scouting movement and jeopardize other participants in the program. Will BSA acceptance of homosexuals increase the likelihood of sexual molestation of youth? An extensive review of the literature, completed by Gregory M. Herek, Ph.D. (professor of psychology, University of California, Davis), suggests no. His extensive review of "Facts About Homosexuality and Child Molestation" is found at http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_molestation.html. His conclusion: "The empirical research does *not* show that gay or bisexual men are any more likely than heterosexual men to molest children."

Another inquiry has been: Will BSA acceptance of homosexuals increase the likelihood of sexual exploration or experimentation between youth members? Inevitably, as part of normal adolescence, youth will engage in sexual exploration or experimentation. Such experimentation is unlikely to increase or decrease with a change in BSA policy.

With regard to a “threat” to other Scouts, or the impact on dissimilar units, there would be little likelihood of any inappropriate or abusive behavior—any more than may already occur in such situations. The ultimate outcome will reflect the degree to which unit leadership recognizes and addresses any potential problem in a reasonable and appropriate manner. One of the strengths of the Boy Scout program has been a platform that has respected differing perspectives, as long as one commits to the values outlined in the Scout Oath and Law. There are those who clearly feel the homosexual lifestyle does not do that, although many individuals with either an open or closeted commitment to that lifestyle would disagree. Most persons committed to either a heterosexual or homosexual lifestyle are not predatory in their search for sexual satisfaction. To imply an open acceptance of individuals with a primary homosexual orientation will greatly increase the likelihood of sexual abuse in Scouting is purely speculative and not based in any solid scientific data.