

BOY SCOUT UNITS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN UNITS CHARTED BY THE
CHURCH of JESUS CHRIST of LATTER-DAY SAINTS (LDS) AND NON-LDS
PARTNERS

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To the Doctoral Candidate Review Board

I am submitting herewith a Dissertation by Paul D. Kraus, entitled "Boy Scout Units: A comparison between units chartered by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and non-LDS Partners." I have examined the final copy of this report for format and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.


Hulic Ratterree

We have read this Dissertation

And recommend its acceptance

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to establish a better understanding of how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is organized in comparison to non-LDS units. The information was obtained from personal experiences of the function of the organization as well from leaders of the Church. Information was also obtained from BSA Membership/Relations Committee Guide, Irving, TX. BSA 1991. Information also was obtained from the Scouting Handbook from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In general this information was obtained to give non-LDS Units and Leaders a better understanding of how the LDS Units in their Council and Districts function and operate. It also gives insight why the LDS Units run their units the way they do. The conclusion of this research is that all will have a better understanding of how LDS Units are organized and function.

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INTRODUCTION

Section Three of the Federal Charter for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) states that, "The purpose of this corporation will be to promote, through organization and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others to train them in scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in common use by the Boy Scouts."¹ In so doing the BSA desires to provide, through its chartered organizations, a program for boys, young men, and young women designed to encourage them to be faithful in their religious duties, build desirable qualities of character. Train and involve them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop their personal fitness. Special emphasis will be placed in assisting the home, religious groups, and schools in achieving success in the development of abiding values in the lives of young people.

The Thirteenth Article of Faith for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints states that."We believe in being honest, true chaste benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul-

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We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."²

Thus we see that the aims of both the Boy Scouts of America and the LDS Church are comparable and compatible. "The ideals of scouting-to foster good citizenship, physical fitness, and moral integrity, all based on a firm belief in God-are in harmony with the objective of the church."³

BACKGROUND

THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The Boy Scout movement began in England under the guidance of Lord Robert Baden-Powell in 1909. It appeared in the United States early in 1910 as the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), where a variety of churches used its programs as part of their ministries of youth and families. BSA has a federal charter which was established by Congress in 1916. The national headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America is currently located in Irving, Texas, and organizationally under the national headquarters there are scout councils established worldwide. Each council establishes geographical districts within which local units are organized.

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These local units are organized by either age or function.

Basically there are five types of local units:

- Tiger Cub Groups- A school-year program for first-grade (or 7-year-old) boys and their adult partners that stresses simplicity, shared leadership, learning about the community, and family understanding. Each boy/adult teams meet for Tiger Cub Group activities. LDS units do not sponsor Tiger Groups or activities.
- Cub Scout Packs- A family and home-centered program for boys in the second through fifth grade (or 8, 9, and 10 year old in the case of LDS Cub Packs).
- Boy Scout Troops- A program for boys 11-17 (11-13 in the case of LDS units) designed to achieve the aims of Scouting through a vigorous Outdoor program and peer group leadership with the counsel of an adult Scoutmaster, (Boys also may become Boy Scouts if they have earned the Arrow of Light as a Cub Scout or have completed the fifth grade). Boy Scouts in a troop focus on basic scout skills including camping, hiking, service to the community, and outdoor activities. Within troops, the youth are further divided into "patrols" of about eight boys each.
- Adventure Teams- An active, exciting program for young

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men 14 through 18, who are not attracted to standard Boy Scouting activities. This program is built around five program fields of emphasis: advancement, high adventure, personal development, service, and special programs and events. Normally the program is focused on adventure or sports programs. In the LDS Church, this program for boys between the ages of 14 and 15, and normally focuses on scout advancement and high adventure activities.

- Explorer Posts- Designed for young men and women ages 14 (who have completed the eighth grade) through 20 to gain insight into a variety of programs that offer leadership training, fitness, outdoor, service, and career hands-on experiences. Exploring promotes the conditions necessary for the growth and the development of adolescent youth. Within the LDS Church-sponsored units Explorer Posts are limited to young men (no women) ages 16-18.

Local scouting units must be sponsored by community-based organizations, and as such the organizations receive national charters from the BSA in order to use the scouting program as part of their own youth. These chartered organizations, which include religious, educational, civic, fraternal, business, labor

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organizations, governmental bodies, corporations, professional associations, and citizens' groups have goals compatible with those of the BSA. One such organization that embraced the partnership or the Boy Scout movement with its own program is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) or "Mormons." In fact, the LDS Church was the first religious body to adopt Scouting as part of their youth program. Only two and one-half years after scouting came to America, it was made official part of the program of the Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church)

The LDS Church was officially organized in 1830 under the direction of its first President, Joseph Smith, Headquartered in Salt Lake City Utah, the LDS Church, like the Boy Scouts of America, has a geographically oriented structure. The primary subdivisions of the Church are wards (local congregations), stakes (consisting of several wards), and areas. At each level of administration, Church leaders support and train those individuals over whom they preside. Area Presidencies train and support stake presidencies (a president and two counselors). Bishops preside over the local Church organizations, and each bishop or branch president will have a supporting staff for each functional area within the ward or branch. For example, there

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will be several adults called to serve in the Sunday School Organization, the Young Women's Organization (young women between the ages of 12 and 18); the Young Mens Organization (young men between the ages' 12 and 18); and the Primary Organization (children under the age of 12). Much of the organizations within in the LDS Church is structured around age, maturity, and accountability. Once a child reaches 8-years old (the age of accountability), he or she is baptized. At the age of twelve children leave the Primary Organization, and move into the Young Men's or Young Women's Organizations. At this age, worthy young men receive the Aaronic Priesthood and or ordained Deacons in the Church. Assuming that they remain worthy, the young men will be ordained to the office of Teacher and Priest shortly after their 14th and 16th birthdays respectively. Once a young man reaches the age of 18, he leaves the Young Mens Organization, and is considered a prospective Elder in the Church, and he is then to receive the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Elder George Albert Smith stated, "Every boy of twelve years of age is eligible for the Boy Scout Organization which has become a part of the MIA program. Here he does, under specially select leadership, what scouts do elsewhere. At this time when babies are most easily formed, he learns to be God fearing, obedient to authority, considerate of others, honorable in his conduct, in short, to lay

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a foundation upon which worthy manhood may be built. Scout work in this Church is not different from that of other communities, except that it is correlated with the duties of the Deacons' quorum, to which every properly trained boy of twelve is expected to belong."⁴

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the BSA membership/Relationships Committee guide it states: "The chartered organization agrees to conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the BSA."⁵ There are several differences in the policies and guidelines between the way the LDS Church, as a chartered organization, operates its scouting organization as compared to the non-LDS chartered organizations. Some of the differences may create an environment in which the management of a scout unit cannot be effective; the unit is poorly run, poorly organized, and poorly staffed. Furthermore, in some cases the boys may be unchallenged, improperly guided, or even advance without achieving the aims and goals of the Boy Scouts of America.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to serve others by helping to instill values in young people and, in other ways, to prepare them to make ethical choices over their lifetime in achieving their full potential. The values we strive to instill are based on those found in 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 others 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.

As evident, the objective of the Boy Scouts of America emphasizes character building and citizenship. In their 1995 study, Louis and Associates contend that, "The American society is in a state of flux and change. Throughout every racial, cultural, and an economic segment, we are experiencing continuing and significant changes in our communities, our family

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structures, and most important, in our parent-child relationships. For years, sociologists have been telling us of a destructive trend weaving its way through each of these vital social elements . . . The final outcome is manifested by deteriorating values, feeling of alienation, and often antisocial behavior.”⁶

Reflecting the cultural expectations of adult males in American society, BSA stresses that boys should learn to be brave and self-reliant; they should be achievers, leaders, and responsible citizens; they should be active participants in the public sphere of society. The expressed goal of the Boy Scouts of America, is to provide an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop personal fitness. The basic approach reflects these goals through several key features: 1) camping is a core experience because it dramatizes taking care of yourself; 2) individual achievement is encouraged and recognized through working for badges and high rank in an “advancement system”; 3) leadership is a skill that boys learn systematically by participating in troop social organization and holding roles as Patrol Leader. This will help in the development of American citizens who:

- Are physically, mentally, and emotional fit.

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- Have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness.
- Have personal and stable values firmly based on religious concepts
- Have the desire and the skills to help others
- Understand the principles of the American social, economic and Governmental system.
- Are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand America's role in the world.
- Have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people.
- Are prepared to fulfill the varied responsibilities of participating in giving leadership to American society and in the forums of the world.

The LDS Church was operating a program similar to Boy Scouts prior to BSA'S incorporation in 1916. After investigating the new scout movement, the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) of the LDS Church organized the Men's Mutual Improvement (MIA) Scouts on November 29, 1911, with the intent to provide worthwhile leisure time and athletic activities for its young

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men. When the BSA was first organized, certain religious principles were defined as the keystone of the organization, including: 1) belief in God, 2) reverence for God, 3) fulfilment of religious duties, and 4) respect for beliefs of others. Because these principles have remained at the heart of the scouting, the LDS Church embraced and promoted scouting as a major part of the program for young men. On May 21, 1913, the MIA Scouts, upon invitation of the National Council, became part of the BSA, and in 1928 Church leaders designated scouting as the activity program for the deacons and teachers of the Aaronic Priesthood and transferred its administration to the Presiding Bishopric in Salt Lake City. In that same year the Vanguard program was developed by the Church for young men older than the Boy Scout age.

In 1949 Cub Scouting was officially adopted by the Church, and the Primary Organization was asked to administer scouting for boys less than twelve years of age, with boys eight to ten as cub scouts and eleven-year-old boys as Boy Scouts of the Blazer Patrol (now the eleven year old scouts). Finally, in 1959 the Vanguard program was replaced by the Explorer Scout program, designated by the church for older boys and later adopted by the BSA for use throughout the United States. Over time the Church's scouting was divided into the Explorer program, for young men

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sixteen through eighteen, and the Adventure program for those fourteen and fifteen.

Ezra Taft Benson, 13th President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and distinguished scout leader on the local, national, and international levels states: "Scouting is dedicated to a fourfold program; first, it teaches the boys his duty to God, reverence, observance of the Sabbath, and the maintenance of spiritual standards and ideals of the church. Second, it teaches duty to country-true patriotism a love for the Constitution, for free institutions, and for our American way of live. Third, it teaches the Value of service to others-willing, unselfish service, and that the greatest among them must be the servant of all symbolized by the 'good turn.' Fourth, it teaches duty to self-that they must keep themselves physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. They must be prepared for anything, eventuality to serve themselves, their church, and their country. As a movement, Scouting is a program or a method, its way of doing something. Its purpose is fivefold: character building-to help to fill the need for men of shining honor; citizenship training-to help young men to develop an uncompromising love for America and its great concepts and institutions, to develop a strong attitude and determination of Self-reliance, leader development to help answer the great need

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of leaders of capacity with high ideals; physical fitness-to help to beat down the tendency, if there is one, of physical deterioration; spiritual growth-American foundations and spiritual perpetuation of America are assured.”⁷

As can be seen by this historical dialogue, the LDS Church is one of the few partnering organizations that takes an active role in their relationship with their local units. The BSA and the LDS Church have forged a close working relationship. In partnership with the Church, the BSA, provides the program, facilities, support, and training. The Church, in turn provides youth, youth leaders, financial support, and the promotion of implicit values. This relationship has flourished because scouting continues to support wholesome leisure-time activities, to provide a spiritual view of life that is compatible with the Church’s teachings, and to encourage boys and leaders to be loyal to the Church. Accordingly, there have been some differences adopted by the Church’s program than that of a “traditional” BSA program. However, some of these differences may detract from the effective scout program.

In a traditional scout unit, a Cub Scout unit or “Pack” is divided into smaller units called Dens. Each of the Dens are homogeneously grouped by the school grade which the boys attend. Specifically, all 2nd-grade boys are in a Wolf den and they are

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working toward their Wolf Award; 3rd grade boys are in a Bear Den and are working toward their Bear Award; and the Webelos program is a two-year program for 4th and 5th grade boys. Normally, boys stay in their respective dens and graduate together as they complete a school grade.

In the LDS Cub Scout unit, the organization is similar except the homogeneous grouping is by age as opposed to grade level. All members of the Wolf Den are 8-years old, Bears are 9-years old, and Webelos are 10. Note that another difference is that the Webelos program is only one year as opposed to a two in the traditional scouting program. The LDS Cub Scouts do not graduate together, rather they move from one den to the next as they celebrate their birthday. The BSA Cub Scout Program used to operate the same way until 1987 when they adopted the grade level program which facilitated the orderly progression of Cub Scout Leader development.

Most of the volunteer Scout Leaders are involved in the scouting program because their sons are scouts. Consequently, Den Leaders want to be involved in the same den as their son. To keep some degree of continuity in the program, a Den Leader will normally (in a traditional unit) move to the next level with his or her son.

Accomplishing this transfer only once a year was in the best

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interest of all parties concerned. An LDS Den Leader is continually frustrated in his or her attempt to plan and conduct an annual program which will lead a boy through the advancement process. As a boy reaches his birthday, he is moved into the next den. Hopefully, he has completed his rank advancement, but that is not a prerequisite to changing of dens.

It's been said that the only difference between a Boy Scout Troop and the Army was "adult supervision." In traditional scout units, leaders volunteer their time and talents in the scouting movement. These individuals tend to be better skilled in scout craft, have more incentive, and are more highly motivated. Consequently, they are more likely to receive additional training, be active at their District level, and be in a position to be better guide their boys and units.

On the other hand, scout leaders in the LDS units are "called" to their position by their ward bishop or branch president. In essence, the church leader will survey the needs of their particular congregation. He will then ask particular members to serve in positions throughout the church including positions within the church's scouting programs. These callings are periodically reviewed, and members are "released" from an existing calling and extended a calling to another position for spiritual growth. Therefore, many LDS Scout leaders only serves

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as such for a year or less. In fact, the more successful an individual is as a scout leader, the more attractive he or she is for positions of greater responsibility. The program continuity suffers each time scout leaders are changed, BSA recognized the necessity to have depth in scout units. Two-deep leadership is required at all functions for the protection of both the youth and adults.

Additionally, while not required, the BSA rewards scout units that have redundant leadership at all levels of their organization with a designation as an Honor unit. Therefore most traditional Cub Scout units have a Cub Master and an Assistant Cub Master (responsible for the functioning of the pack), and each den will have a Den Leader and an Assistant Den Leader. This redundancy is manpower intensive, but provides a buffer should a leader not be able to fulfill his or her obligations.

In many LDS units, the manpower requirement is too much to absorb within a single ward or branch without doubling up on callings. As a result, assistants are normally not found. Therefore, when a leader is released from his or her position, the turbulence that results from the new leader's program unfamiliarity and the associated learning curve can be dramatic.

I have already discussed the problem associated with leadership availability, but I feel that the difference in social

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interaction between a small unit and a large is significant. BSA has recommended that an ideal den size within a Cub Scout Pack is eight boys and within a Boy Scout Troop, each Patrol should also have eight young men. Additionally, in a pamphlet published by the Boy Scouts of America entitled, "Are We Delivering the Promise," BSA suggests that units with fewer than 21 youth will not be able to capitalize on the program features of the scouting program. This number of youth maximizes leadership opportunities and social interaction while, at the same time, provides a manageable group for adult supervision.

As just mentioned, in larger units, one important opportunity that multiple dens and patrols create is intra-pack or troop competition between dens and patrols. The teaming process can be worked to conclusion and the results will be more apparent when compared to equally sized units. Unfortunately, as small as LDS units tend to be, Cub Scout Dens may only have a couple of youth and different ranks may even be combined, i.e., Wolves and Bears together. This further complicates the leader's role by trying to advance his or her boys through different requirements.

An LDS Boy Scout Troop may have only one patrol and all the boys are either 12 or 13 years old. Although this simplifies the adult role in managing the troop, program opportunities that may

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require a larger body of youth will be lost. In a traditional troop, normally one of the more senior boys will either be elected to the position or assigned the responsibility of the Senior Patrol Leader.

Ideally, the Boy Scout program is planned and orchestrated by the boys while the adults simply provide oversight and guidance. This boy-run program is dependent upon the youth leadership and maturity. The Senior Patrol Leader is personally responsible for the daily operation of the Troop. Each patrol also has a youth leader, and the Senior Patrol Leader is responsible for coordinating with each of the subordinate Patrol Leaders the activities and assignments of their respective patrols. Normally this leadership body, referred to as the Patrol Leader Council (PLC), meets monthly to iron out the detailed plans of upcoming meetings and activities. In an LDS Boy Scout Troop, where only one patrol may exist, the personal growth through this leadership is short changed. Additionally, it is being accomplished by a much junior individual (12 or 13 years old) who have not had the opportunity to see youth leadership in action by the mature scouts who are enrolled in either the Adventure Team or Explorer Post.

When coupled by the factors above (irregular program continuity, inadequate adult supervision, inadequately trained

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adults, and immature youth in leadership positions), the obvious question that needs be asked is whether or not the boys in LDS-SPONSORED units are victims of poorly run, poorly organized, and poorly staffed Boy Scout units. Are they in fact unchallenged, improperly guided, or ultimately advanced without achieving the aims and goals of the Boy Scouts of America? Most all of the young men who register and participate in scouting embraces its values and principles while adhering to their own religious and moral code. They are encouraged to earn the Eagle Award (or its international equivalent).

In fact, in his book, A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, LeGrand Richards, a former member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reported that, "In the United States, 1.5 percent of registered Scouts obtain their Eagle Award. Among the Latter-day Saints it is 4 percent."⁸

The standards of conduct required of youth in the LDS Church are so comparable to the ideals of scouting that LDS boys, unlike other youth who do not have the same social and moral upbringing, make attaining the BSA's highest award relatively simple.

Services to the community, individual responsibility, and focused attention on "Choosing the Right" are tenants or hallmarks of the LDS faith.

In the LDS Church dues are not collected in their units. The

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funding of all youth activities, including Cub Scout and Boy Scouts comes from budget allowance of the ward or branch. Registration for Unit Chartering and Scout registration for youth and leaders is payed from the Stake general checking account. Camping and other activities, "Wards should pay from budget allowances for all camps and activities other than one annual camp. Personal equipment and uniforms are the responsibility of each young man. Bishops should be aware of the financial abilities of young men in their wards and should make sure financial constrains do not prohibit a young man from fully participating in activities. The Young Men may participate in the cost of one annual camp or major activity by individually earning their own money. If budget allowance funds are insufficient and Young Men are unable to individually raise enough, they may hold group fund-raising activities."⁹

Another difference in the LDS units is the majority of leaders are not sufficiently trained. This is due to the rate at which leaders are called to different callings and the leaders don't have sufficient time to get properly trained, or other meetings interfere with training. Sometimes, of course, it can be bad if you get someone who is not motivated, but it is a lot easier to replace an appointed leader than a volunteer.

LDS units tend to be smaller than traditional units. By the

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units being small you have no inter-patrol competition as you do in large units. In the LDS units that are small and have only patrol, each boy would compete against each other, or divided into equal teams for competition. Patrol Leaders Council in the LDS Church generally takes place in the Bishop's Youth Council which is held monthly. It is here where all the activities are approved and where combined activities with the Young Women are planned as well.

It has been a concern in some non LDS troops why the LDS troops don't participate on Sundays. The reason for the LDS troops not doing activities on Sundays is that they have priesthood responsibilities that require their being at their church activities on Sundays. The LDS Church encourages its youth to honor and keep the Sabbath day holy and by doing scouting activities on Sundays is not considering in keeping the Sabbath day holy.

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Conclusion

"The principles upon which the Church was established are divine and they have been clearly outlined, but the means of embracing and putting into operation those principles, the Lord has left very largely up to us to work out and plan. So we organized Primaries, Sunday School, and Young Mens and Young Women Associations. We adopted the Boy Scout program as part of the Church. We are constantly seeking to improve the program for the youth of the Church, and scouting has been adopted because it helps to enrich and strengthen our youth program for young boys and men of the Church."¹⁰ There are differences of how the LDS Troops and Packs function in relationship to the Boy Scout Troops and Packs of Non-LDS units but these differences don't affect the program as outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. As long as the Boy Scouts of America goes along with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the Church will continue to support the Boy Scout movement and be apart of the Charter Organization of the Boy Scouts of America. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands firm in its commitment to youth, to the families they themselves will one day form, and to every program and effort that seek to build and strengthen and enrich and enable youth....We've remained strong and firm in our support of this

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great movement for boys and the Oath and the Law which are at its center....It is our understanding and belief that Scouting is still strongly centered in these duties and principles, and that there is a determination in its present leadership to strengthen them further. This being true, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the continued support of Scouting and will seek to provide leadership which will help boys keep close to their families and close to the Church as they develop the qualities of citizenship and character and fitness which Scouting represents."¹¹

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