

LUTHERAN PIONEERS - WISCONSIN'S BOY SCOUTS?  
An Evaluation of the Protestant  
View of This Organization.

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For approximately sixty years the Protestant Conference has made it their policy to proclaim through their periodical, Faith-Life, that the Wisconsin Synod has come under God's judgment of hardening. It is their contention that this judgment becomes obvious from a careful observation of history. The Protestants like to say that within the history of the Wisconsin Synod, there was a golden blessing which arose from the Wauwatosa Theology. The keystone of this was firm reliance on the historical-exegetical study and application of Scripture. This theological basis was developed and practiced by certain of the Synod's theologians during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But during the same span the Protestants allege that due to the efforts of Synodical leaders and some pastors, this Wauwatosa theology was ignored and not applied in various intra-Synodical and intra-congregational conflicts. Instead, the Protestants charge that a high-handed legalism was imposed by those of the Synodical 'officialdom'. This attitude resulted in various suspensions of fellowship which culminated in the 1920's and 1930's. The Protestants point to these events as evidence that the Wauwatosa theology and the spirit of the Gospel departed from the Synod. In its place was left a "slipshod and dogmatistical application to life...(and a) resistance to earnest warnings" (1) which the Protestants say has characterized the theology and practice of the Synod ever since.

This background lends us some insight that will serve us as we consider the Protestant allegations about Lutheran Pioneers. The following quotation serves to show where the Protestant attack proceeds from and what their false presupposition is:

It is not our purpose to prove that the synod is under judgment. That would be as futile as undertaking to prove the Gospel. Both matters belong to the realm of faith. We

can only undertake to point to the signs of the times and call attention to the laws of history which God has laid down and which he points out in Scripture...There is some specific sin in the history of God's people that determines that judgment...Synod sinned in its day against the Wauwatosa Seminary and the Wauwatosa Theology. God punished the Synod by bringing about the degradation of the Seminary and through it, of the Synod itself. Synod itself has been living a lie for many years and like the Seminary, will go from bad to worse (2).

Note their line of reasoning. Judgment cannot be proved. But judgment can be seen. Specific sin brings about judgment. Synod is charged with a specific sin. The punishment for this sin is degradation. That degradation is living a lie for many years. The expected result of such delusion is progressive deterioration. They would call that progressive deterioration "an 'away movement' from the deepest thoughts of the Gospel" (3). This is a Jonah-like subjectivism. There is a keen watching, from a distance, of all the movements of history. It seems to be their ingrained belief that only a span of time which yields the correct corporate actions will yield the determination as to whether the Wisconsin Synod has truly repented of her sins of the past against the Protestants or not. As we shall see in our examination of their writings against Lutheran Pioneers, the development of this organization during the particular years (1950's) in question stands forward for the Protestants as one more indication that the Wisconsin Synod is under God's judgment of hardening.

Before and during the time in which Pioneers was developing, the turbulent issues troubling the Synodical Conference were being addressed. The Missouri Synod's stances on prayer, lodges, the chaplaincy, cooperation with other church bodies and scouting were all issues which the Protestants knew were causing turmoil within the Wisconsin Synod. This turmoil, the Protestants believed, was

history proving them right. They did not have to prove they were right. History would do that for them.

We grieve for our Brothers in trouble and yet we rejoice and feel a satisfaction. Their chickens are coming home to roost. Their brutality in the Protestant Controversy is paying dividends...They are getting what they asked for. Now for a change they are bewildered, be-deviled and embattled in a long fight (4).

The Protestants entered that fight in a certain way with numerous articles about the above mentioned issues confronting the Synodical Conference. In 1950, they began to address scouting with two major articles written by Protestant men. These articles were followed by various blurbs and reprints from various sources over the next few years. In these articles, Wisconsin and Missouri were scolded for their positions on scouting. The following quotations typify the Protestant objections to scouting. They point to the underlying basis from which scouting proceeds. But they are also intended to show that some of the same elements which they rightly say had infiltrated Missouri were also to a lesser degree affecting Wisconsin. "Scoutism is rooted in the same deistic-rationalistic philosophy which characterizes all lodge work" (5). "The world's conception of love for country or citizenship in its larger sense, has its roots in the same deistic-materialistic view of life" (6). The threat of these philosophies, says the author, is that they feed the work-righteous tendency of man. Scouting arises from this deistic-rationalistic-materialistic base and so threatens Biblical justification and sanctification. The author correctly identifies the problem. The outward aspects of scouting are not the difficulty. It is the underlying attitudes of those who promote scouting that is the danger to those who get involved with scouting.

We have no quarrel with the practical programs...(but this is)

bait to fascinate and hold in bonds the boy's undeveloped intellectual capacities until the time the crumbs of higher erudition can ostentatiously be meted out to him (7).

And the specific "higher erudition" which the author contends is to be transmitted to the boy is the inculcation of an ungodly brand of "Americanism which has possessed our nation for two score and ten years (1900-1950) particularly these last 30" (8). It is the authors contention that blind patriotic fervor has asserted itself to such a degree as to replace loyalty to God and conscience, or at least switch around the priorities. From this arises the unionistic practices. From this arises the work-righteous behavior. Missouri has much shame to bear because she lets her children be directly fed these sorts of things and even encourages this assimilation of wrong attitudes. Wisconsin comes up for charges too. Wisconsin has attempted to handle the situation, but has proceeded from the wrong attitudes. This is because of the hardening.

Perhaps another Protestant author states their case more clearly: "Are we sanctifying the boys and girls, men and women of our congregations through the truth" (9)? The expected answer is no. The truth is being suppressed so that "by an even greater degree does the Missouri Synod's indifference and dishonesty open the gates wide to let the world flood the churches" (10). How does this information apply to our present topic about Pioneers. ~~Let it be noted~~ that where Missouri is at this point, the Protestants will later assert is where Wisconsin has been led by Pioneers.

But at this point, the charge against Wisconsin is legalism in dealing with erring members; the same kind of legalism which the Protestants contend was at work back in the 1930's. The implication that is made and the conclusion that is expected to be drawn is that

the method of cure (Synodical legalism) leads to attitudes as bad as what it is trying to rebuke. Synod's stance on Scouts is evaluated:

Such legalism will even do her (the mother) and the child great harm, for by keeping her child aloof, in compliance with the church laws, she is only again strengthened in her good deed-ism. She did a good deed by keeping her child out of scouting (11).

The author is referring to District and Synodical resolutions urging congregations not to get involved in scouting. It also refers to the actions of various pastors in an effort to curb any members that were either involved or were tempted to get involved from doing so. These actions are viewed by the Protestants as examples of God's judgment of hardening. "Rum, oder raus! Leave scouting or get out of the church" (12) is the summation of the author on all the actions which had been taken by Wisconsin. Is this an accurate summary? Is it reflective of all or a few? The author does not provide any documentation. It is just asserted as a tru-ism because he is convinced that the Wisconsin Synod is under the judgement of hardening.

However, in a few short years (1954-1958) the tenor of the articles and editorial comments about the Wisconsin Synod would take on an even harder edge. A notice for an organizational meeting was reprinted in the March, 1954 edition of Faith-Life. It was from a congregation in Racine, Wisconsin; First Evangelical, a Wisconsin Synod church. The notice laid out a summary of the Lutheran Pioneer program. It drew in part, directly from Lutheran Pioneer materials of that time and was accurate. The editor of Faith-Life appended only one comment: "It has the ring of Jeroboam's expedient" (13). Jeroboam was made king of the northern ten tribes of Israel following Solomon's death. Jeroboam was not the rightful king, but an usurper. He found it expedient to establish two golden calf shrines along the borders of Israel. This was a clever move on his part in an

attempt to secure his power against any undue influence from Judah. The people would have no need to travel to Jerusalem if they could worship closer to home. They would be less likely to follow any old inklings of nationalistic pride if they remained separate from contact with David's descendant. The golden calves were the expedient means to accomplish this goal of division.

We must ask? Does this remark by the editor assert that Lutheran Pioneers is a golden calf? Pioneers, with this veiled reference, is being set up slowly by Faith-Life as one of those signs of the times referred to earlier by a Protestant writer. In fact, during the period of 1954-1961, this is only one of seven items in Faith-Life which deal with Lutheran Pioneers. The items are few, but they build with intensity.

Mt. Calvary in La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1955 was celebrating their fourth anniversary of having a Pioneer Train. This occasioned a LaCrosse Tribune article which Faith-Life reprinted. The article was the work of a secular writer. The article dwelt on the boys and activities of the Train. No mention of any religious element was made. Only the proper names of the church and the organization would give any indication as to anything spiritual about its nature. Yet from this secular article came this editorial heading of Faith-life: "Wisconsin Synod now in Saginaw to make an issue of Boy Scouts; 'Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite"(14). Is not the implication obvious? Pioneers is being labeled as being another Boy Scouts group, although not in so many words. Whether the editors had done any investigation into Pioneers beyond these two less than authoritaritive resources, we cannot determine. If they had, they were not being honest in their journalistic endeavors.

Why not bring out all the guns, instead of taking pot-shots, based on hearsay?

Nearly three years elapsed before the Protestants chose to fire their next salvo. In this combination article reprint and editorial reply, they came out more clearly with their real opinions. The article was from the Northwestern Lutheran. Two things were highlighted by the editor. One was the phrase: "It contains Lutheran Theology" (15). This phrase was italicized and asterisked. Then this phrase was placed in a position to be a section heading also. However, the placement was totally out of context. It appeared thus:

(Lutheran Theology!?!?)

The activities are keyed to boys of nine years and older. Three stages of advancement are possible: recruit, pioneer and frontiersman. To attain these, the boys must pass examinations on various phases of pioneer training (various manual and related intellectual skills)... Emblems are available to denote each boys progress (16).

In a blatant attempt to characterize Wisconsin theology as foolish and debased (recall what was said earlier in this paper about Protestant presuppositions) the editor totally distorts the clear sense of what the article reported about Pioneers. What he wanted to make of this became clear in his eager editorial reply:

The Wisconsin Synod's quasi-espousal of the Lutheran Pioneers as a substitute for Boy Scouts smacks of me-too-ism... It is a direct harking back to the beggarly elements of the world from which Christ set us free...(He redeemed) them that are under the law of works and rewards, of merits and advancement, of badges and distinctions...Why then train our sons in that distinctive sort of theology"(17)?

There is only one way that this fellow could have gotten the sense he did from these words. He ignored the simple sense and instead made them say what he wanted them to say. One must ask: Who is hardened? If this is how he works to distinguish himself; if this is his example of thoughtful exegesis in the tradition of J.P. Koehler then the editor is deceiving only himself and any others who are



likewise inclined to embrace and hold fast the bitterness of the past.

As the quotation from the Northwestern Lutheran correctly points out, Lutheran Pioneers does have a series of advancements. But these advancements are merely meant as a tool by which each boy may visibly (thus also tangibly) measure his personal progress in the exercise and development of related skills. Yes, a feeling of accomplishment will result in a boy who learns new skills and is able to demonstrate them. Does not the same feelings arise in any elementary school student who demonstrates his grasp of a particular subject and receives an 'A' or 'B'? The distinctive feature of Pioneers is that all instruction is planned to be presented in such a way as to teach the boy to develop and maintain a sense of thanks to God for his abilities. Consider the perspective this stanza of a Trainmaster's prayer directs the leader to:

Hold Thou my hand as I hold theirs (the boys),  
And so guide me that I may guide;  
Teach me, Lord, that I may teach,  
and keep me free from foolish pride. (18).

Does this encourage a 'hearking back to the beggarly elements of the world' (19)? It is most obvious that these harsh critics, who maintain a watchdog surveillance, have not really looked at what they warn about.

More of the Protestants presuppositional bias is highlighted in the September, 1958 issue of Faith-Life. First they make the plainly spelled out assertion that Pioneers equals Scouts; "Wisconsin which...wants to keep its sheep in its own confessional pastures (has) initiated its own Boy Scouts; call them Lutheran Pioneers" (20). They follow this equation with this:

The above mentioned program and promotional aspects of 'church life' are not faith-life, because they are not

grounded in the only positive power over life, death, sin and Satan, namely, God's righteousness, which is God's gift to man in Christ. It is a man-made synthetic righteousness which in the end promotes the Anti-Christ (21).

The Protestants accuse the Wisconsin Synod of "dogmaticism in the nature of legalism and ecclesiasticism" (22). They claim the spirit of the Wauwatosa theology flows among them. They do not use passages as mere proof texts to support their opinions; so they say. They claim the Wisconsin Synod does rely on such proof passage exegesis. But look at what the Protestants have been doing in their contention against Lutheran Pioneers. They set forth a passage or two, supplement it with a few comments about the historical setting and then seem to say: "Isn't this so obvious. How can anyone fail to see that it speaks about the Wisconsin Synod".

But let Israel turn from her wicked way (Jeremiah 32) and like the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah 'the second time' (Ch. 33), so let our Wisconsin brethren who are ready to give their children to a "Wisconsin Molech", heed the word of the Ephesians commentator which is calling to them a second time (23).

The fault finding and finger pointing that characterizes the Protestant position gets wearisome. So smug did they become in this vein, that in their reprinting of an article from the Milwaukee Journal, they don't even bother to throw in one of their usual barbs. It would appear that silence is the tool to make the case about this particular point. The Journal article was a summary report of the proceedings of the 1959 Synod Convention, held in Saginaw, Michigan. The particular feature which applies to our topic is the report of a specially appointed Synodical committee which was directed to study Lutheran Pioneers. The reporter wrote as follows: "There are no 'scripturally objectional' features in the Lutheran Pioneers which were organized as the Wisconsin Synod's answer to the Boy Scouts of America" (24). Remember, much of the

'substance' on which the Protéstants had based their conclusions about Pioneers was on the basis of such second-hand sources as this Journal article. This article which reported that the Synod had officially given it's stamp of approval was apparently seen by the Protéstants as a clear testimony of history. To them Pioneers was part of the deluding and hardening influence which God was sending upon the Synod. However, what the Journal article did not say could have shed some special light on the issue before us. We quote from the Proceedings of the 35th Biennial Convention: (The committee) "tacitly countenanced and...positively encouraged the opportunities it (Pioneers) offered for developing Christian attitudes toward the Creator" (25). Here we see a simple statement which catches the essence of the "Lutheran Theology" (26) encouraged by Pioneers.

In an interview with some active Lutheran Pioneer leaders the following observations were made:

The Word of God is central to our program. It and it alone shapes our attitudes and the boys attitudes toward the world around us.

What we see and study in nature cannot be fully appreciated without grasping how it came to be there - the hand of God - and that God declared that His creation is "good".

The real and practical aspects of life can be for us living object lessons to help make the Word of God speak in a special and meaningful way to the boys that just might otherwise be heard only woodenly. (27)..

Lutheran Pioneers has developed many personal devotional aids which contain a special focus on Pioneering and it's application in the light of Biblical principles. "Correlated Studies in God's Word" is a series that is coordinated with each chapter of the Boy Pioneer Handbook. Each chapter contains enough devotional material to outfit the leader with the 'gear' from God's Word that will easily give him daily devotional opportunities day by day as he prepares himself to teach the appropriate subject in the light of

the Scriptures. "Nature Studies" is another preparatory book that carefully emphasizes God's handiwork in creation and preservation. The boy's "Handbook" begins each chapter with a brief but pointed application of a pertinent Scripture passage that helps focus the boy on the lesson to be considered. Every Pioneer meeting is begun with a devotion and prayer. Each meeting is closed with prayer. These are not mere formalities. These are the means to help all involved fix their hearts and minds on the "one thing needful" which gives form and substance to the Pioneer program.

Shall the Pioneer's activities be completely divorced from the religious program of the church, or should hymn singing, praying and the study of the Scriptures be the only purpose of the Pioneer meeting? There should be a golden middle road. If we do not seek to draw our boys closer to the Triune God through the Pioneers, then we have failed miserably and have missed a glorious opportunity to preach the Gospel. On the other hand, if all the boys do is sing hymns, pray and read the Bible in Pioneers, we do not need the Pioneer movement. Our Pioneer meetings are not there to supplant the Sunday service (28).

It should be obvious from these statements, gathered from official Pioneer sources, that the spiritual goals of Lutheran Pioneers are meant to supplement in a very special way the overall mission of Christ's church; that of building up and strengthening God's saints. Pioneers does this by diligently translating Scriptural principles into instruction, action and real life settings.

One Protestant writer offered what amounts to an alternative to Lutheran Pioneers. He said that children and parents need "something more tangible, of a more practical nature... We will not lose our children to the Boy Scouts, (etc.)...if we drop the Pioneer plan and concentrate more determinately on cultivating what God has layed into our laps" (29). What the writer is refering to by "what God has layed into our laps" is to seek the revelation of "peace and truth" (30). The writer says that this can be found and will

result "from a restudy of the theology the Lord has planted in Wisconsin's garden and which Faith-Life is now presenting to Wisconsin the 'second time'" (31). To this course of comprehensive study as presented in various articles contained in Faith-Life, the author suggests: "There is, for instance, the whole area of hymnology where we could turn to wholesome food for our souls at grass-roots level" (32). The author's suggestion seems to suggest that the believer will make sure that there is a predominate spiritual emphasis in his or her life. That is a good suggestion. Lutheran Pioneers, as we have seen, also has the very same concern: "Our Pioneer meetings are not there to supplant the Sunday service... draw our boys closer to the Triune God through Pioneers...there should be a golden middle road" (33). For the Protèstants the 'golden middle road', according to the above section of Protèstant quotations, is to focus on the issues of Wisconsin's sin against the Wauwatosa theology and the Protèstants (34). The 'road' suggested by the Protèstant author is to concentrate only on spiritual devotion; the reading, singing and prayer.

The Apostle Paul said: "Physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the life to come and the present life" (I Thessalonians 4:8). Paul emphasized priorities; first the spiritual, but also the physical. He did not say that physical training is useless, but does have it's place. The teaching and the actions of Lutheran Pioneers show that this issue is one which they strive to help their young people to learn to properly balance. We must ask: After an examination of Pioneers, can we in any way conclude that the Pioneer program and the Pioneer participants are only hollow shells, hypocrites who masquerade with nice words and actions, but are underneath, evil?

We can answer affirmatively only if we have approached this examination with certain presuppositions.

The July/August, 1960 issue of Faith-Life contained a letter written to a Wisconsin Synod pastor. In this reprint, the man who wrote the letter offered these evaluations of Pioneers:

While the purpose of Pioneers as listed in your materials sounds innocent enough, the very fact that a need was felt for such an organization is a sign that the devil has won a victory (35).

The Lutheran Pioneers being patterned after the Boy Scouts cannot help but give our youth the feeling of church-given personal merit and workrighteousness...It is evil because it feeds the flesh under the guise of feeding the spirit(36).

This man's evaluation had turned the anti-Pioneer sentiment up one more notch. Following his line of reasoning, any inclination of the flesh is to be denied. We could extend this to ridiculous extremes by pointing out that hunger, sexual urges within marriage, happiness and the like are all inclinations and responses of the flesh. But that would not address the issue any more than does this man's line of reasoning. Rather the issue is; can the church establish various forms of ministry and service to the assembled body of believers? The appointing of deacons and deaconesses; the appointing of elders and administrators all point to the freedom which the New Testament church has to appoint and establish different forms of ministry and service. Because a group of believers sees a need amongst the youth and endeavors to meet that need does not mean in the least that: "the very fact that a need was felt for such an organization is a sign that the devil has won a victory" (37). Boy Scouts and Pioneers, as we have demonstrated, are not siamese twins.

It is ironic to note that the seventh and last mention of Pioneers by Faith-Life is the one issue which offers their readers a full and comprehensive summary of the Pioneer programs. Four pages

are set aside to reprint a tenth year anniversary article on both Boy and Girl Pioneers. (38; see footnotes for a complete copy of this article listed under: Appendix I). This article deals with the history and goals of Pioneers in accurate detail. But what bitter and vindictive comments pour forth from the pen of the Faith-Life editor. He comments:

Pioneers are Christ-centered as little as the lable tied to the spoke of a wheel could be considered to be the axle of the wagon...This article is being reprinted full length to show how this spirit is reaching out like an octopus, devouring the self-righteous Boy Scout-shunning orthodoxists (39).

So blind have the Protestants made themselves towards the Pioneer movement that even with a clear report in front of them, they will not address the simple sense of the text. All they want to perceive is a spirit of hardening and judgment. And so they do. From the above quotation we witness how the Protestant assertions about Lutheran Pioneers finished their course. Initially their comments were short, veiled and snide. Their comments grew in intensity and clarity, but continued with the same derision. Finally in this seventh and last estimation, they have reached their peak. They are firmly convinced that "the chickens are coming home to roost" (40). What they saw and decried in Boy Scouting, they have come to believe they see in Pioneers.

The scout...with yellow 'kerchief, navy blouse and hat of 1918 vintage, with cockiness and native cunning, like Armstrong Jack's, the All-American boy, with swaggering gait and metamorphosed gaze, charmed by the hero's of his admiration and phantoms of his dreams (cowboys, thugs, and daggereyed detectives of 'funny' story books) he parades about town, the man of the town, the idol of his generation (41).

This is fast becoming Wisconsin's theology not only - a theology of stages of advancement, of badges and emblems and red neckerchiefs - but constitutes her "pure doctrine" reply to Missouri's espousal of Boy Scoutism (42).

These years of 1954-1961 constitute the Protéstants Faith-Life presentation of the issue they have tried to make of Pioneers. After this there has been silence in their periodical. Why this was the last mention that Faith-Life has made about Lutheran Pioneers, we are unable to determine. Perhaps the breakup of the Synodical Conference which occurred the next year proved to be an even greater source of historical testimony to God's judgment of hardening on the Wisconsin Synod. Perhaps for this reason the Lutheran Pioneers faded from Protéstant limelight. But on this we can only speculate.

The Protéstant assaults on the theological soundness of Pioneers and on the practical benefits of Pioneers stands as loud testimony to the foolishness of their approach. The Protéstants began their examination, wanting to find fault - They made sure that they did. Jesus taught his disciples to judge on the basis of what is said (and written). But he also warned them against judging on the basis of their presuppositions.. An analysis of the methods used by the Protéstants to attack Pioneers has shown that they are judging from presuppositions. This is wrong and a sin. Would an analysis of each issue of criticism which the Protéstants raise against the Wisconsin Synod yield similiar conclusions about their methods of determing what to criticize? Based on what we have examined, it would seem to be the case.

As we noted in the opening pages of this paper (43) the Protéstants stated purpose is to testify that the Wisconsin Synod is under God's judgment of hardening. May their presuppositional attitudes be broken so that such attitudes do not serve to harden the Protéstants against the Gospel. May God turn their hearts from bitterness and resentment to a Christ-like spirit which ceases



to promote unnecessary dissension. That Christ-like spirit is reflected in the words of the Pioneer Prayer which is prayed at the close of Pioneer meetings. May it serve as a specific balm for their troubled souls.

Jesus, help our eyes to see our salvation earned by thee.  
Jesus, help our ears to hear calls for help from far and near.  
Jesus, help our feet to go in the way that thou wilt show.  
Jesus, help our hands to do all things loving, kind and true.  
Jesus, may we helpful be, growing every day like thee.  
Amen (44).

QUOTE .....*The Badger Lutheran*, 3/2/'61

LUTHERAN PIONEERS BEGIN 10TH YEAR

5 Missouri Synod Churches in Nation Have Youth Groups

By Lorraine Radtke

There are a total of 195 groups of Lutheran Pioneers a Christ-centered youth organization, which originated in the Wisconsin synod. Of the total 195, there are 112 trains (groups) for boys and 83 caravans for girls. For the most part, these are located in Wisconsin synod churches with the majority of them in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan.

However, of the total number of churches in which the Lutheran Pioneers have been organized, five Missouri synod churches have groups. These include Our Savior's church, Corpus Christi, Tex.; Redford church, Detroit, Mich.; St. John's church, Racine, Wis.; St. Paul's church, West Allis, Wis.; and St. John's church, Glendale, Wis.

While there are 35 boy trains in Wisconsin, there are 33 girl caravans. Boy and girl Pioneer groups are not only found in the above mentioned states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Texas, but also in Ohio, Illinois, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, California, Arizona and Colorado.

In addition to the groups of boys organized at St. Paul's, West Allis, and St. John's, Glendale, Missouri synod churches, the Wisconsin synod churches in the Greater Milwaukee area which have Lutheran (Boy) Pioneer trains are the following: St. John's (Wauwatosa), Gloria Dei, Calvary, Divine Savior, St. Matthew, Garden Homes, Bethel, Parkside, North Trinity, St. Marcus, Saron, and St. Paul's at Tess Corners.

Lutheran Girl Pioneer caravans are found at St. John's church (Glendale) in the Missouri synod, and in the Greater Milwaukee area in the following Wisconsin synod churches: St. John's (Wauwatosa), Divine Savior, Calvary, Garden Homes, Gloria Dei, North Trinity, St. Matthew, and Trinity church at Caledonia.

The Pioneers are divided into boy and girl organizations, which are very similar in over-all functioning, and while their general purpose is exactly the same, the methods and general procedures do differ somewhat. The membership in both the girl and the boy Pioneers is restricted to girls (8 years and older) and boys (9 years and older) who are members of the Lutheran church of the Wisconsin synod or a Lutheran church which is in doctrinal fellowship with that synod, and any boy or girl subject to the approval of the pastor.

For the boys, there is a junior group from age 6 to 9, known as the Buckaroos.

*Boy Pioneers Began in '51*

The Lutheran Pioneers, for boys, began in 1951 as an outgrowth of the summer semi-annual meeting of St. John's church in Burlington, Wis. Rev. Reuben O. Marti, then pastor of St. John's and Mr. Bruce Thompson, one of his laymen (who today is the National Commander), presented the Pioneer program to the congregation and asked them to try it for a period of one year. When the year was over, the congregation voted unanimously to keep it.

A year and a half later a group from St. John's church in West Bend organized a Pioneer train. Today there are 112 trains and 2,600 boys enrolled in the Pioneer program.

**Will the Lutheran Pioneers Steal the Blessing  
From the Pagan Boy Scouts?**

• **'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.'**

**'The Pioneers are Christ-centered as little as the label tied to the spoke of a wheel could be considered to be the axle of the wagon. (Note: "A boy becomes a recruit after he has learned . . . his wagon's name and its yell.")**

**Whom are they trying to fool? 'Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam. Why feignest thou thyself to be another? For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings' (1 Kings 14:6).**

See also earlier discussions of the Pioneers in *FAITH-LIFE*, Feb., 1958, p. 15; March, 1958, p. 13; and a violent synodical reaction to this criticism in April, 1960, p. 16; a further *FAITH-LIFE* discussion in July-August, 1960, p. 25.

**The following item is being reprinted full length in order to show how this spirit is reaching out like an octopus, devouring the self-righteous, Boy-Scout-shunning orthodoxists.**

On Feb. 3, 1960, the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of the State of Wisconsin. In April of 1960, at the 7th annual convention, the delegates adopted By-Laws and ratified the Articles.

From its beginning, the program has contained six points, according to Official Handbook:

1. It contains only Lutheran theology.
2. It gives the boys the great outdoors.
3. It develops leadership.
4. It builds citizenship.
5. It teaches safety.
6. It gives the boys something to do.

Excerpts from the Articles of Incorporation reveal that the purpose includes: "To provide youth of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran synod, or of Lutheran churches in doctrinal fellowship with that synod a program in keeping with the purpose of the church . . . Scripture-based teachings of skills and crafts . . . to keep said youth within the companionship of their own Lutheran youth from early age.

The Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., is described in its literature as "an organization with a Christ-centered youth program, established by Lutherans, developed by Lutherans, and led by Lutherans."

The purpose of the Pioneers is to provide youth with a program in keeping with the purpose of the church, a program which is Scripturally-based in its teachings and applications under the direction of pastor and congregation.

The program aims at teaching good citizenship; a knowledge of the great outdoors and beauty of God's creation; first aid and its application; skills and crafts to help the youth grow into adulthood.

The governing body of the Lutheran Pioneers, Inc., is called the National Council and is made up of 9 voting members who are elected by the delegates at the annual conventions. Each year a pastor is appointed by the National Council as National Chaplain. He assists the council in keeping the program Scripturally based and applied. The National Commander is the general director of the activities of the associated trains and acts in an advisory capacity to all trains. He issues directives and regulations which "shall be binding upon these trains."

#### Organized in Trains

Each unit in the Pioneers organization is called a "Train." The local pastor is the "train chaplain" and has the same responsibilities in the train as the National Chaplain has in the National Council. The operation of the train is divided into administration and program parts. The administration is the obligation of the Train Council; for example, obtaining leaders, obtaining meeting rooms and other facilities, financing, advising and helping the trainmaster.

The program which involves working with boys, is directed by the trainmaster, who usually has one or more assistants called Senior Train Leaders. The boys in the train are divided into small groups of 5 to 8 members, called Wagons. Each wagon has a boy leader called Wagon Leader and an assistant leader called a Wagon Driver.

Throughout the year, the boys are taught useful skills and crafts interesting to the adolescent. Among these are: Flag history, knots, first aid, fire building, outdoor cooking, compass, safety, knife and axe skill, swimming, hiking, measuring and camping. During the

fall of each year, much of the meeting night time is spent on handicrafts. This is also part of the summer camp program.

When a boy joins, after his 9th birthday, he is taught the basic organizational structure of the Pioneers and flag history, and becomes a Recruit. To become a Pioneer, he must gain a basic knowledge of the outdoors. Through further study of these skills he becomes a Camper and then a Frontiersman. "These skills," according to the Pioneer promotional literature, "are all taught from a Christian viewpoint."

The junior group, known as the Buckaroos, has been established for the boys in the first three grades of school. This program consists primarily of handicraft, games and Christian fellowship.

Mr. Bruce Thompson of Burlington, Wis., is the National Commander. Men in the Greater Milwaukee area who are active in the National Council are Mr. Henry Kahrs of Garden Homes church, Milwaukee, who is the district commander; and Mr. George Guhr of St. Paul's church, Tess Corners, is a member of the National Council.

#### Uniform Described

According to the Lutheran Pioneer literature it is pointed out that "neither a train nor an individual member of a train is required to wear the uniform. However, if a train or member of a train chooses to wear a uniform, then it must be the uniform of the Lutheran Pioneers, Inc. This would also hold true in the wearing of insignia."

The literature continues that the "uniform and insignia has a very practical background. It was not adopted as an adornment, but rather to: uniform the dress of each boy, and to assist the leaders in recognizing the proven abilities, shown by the insignia, of train members."

The uniform consists of shirt, pants and hat of a durable silver-gray material. "The practical red neckerchief, used often in first aid work, should be worn neatly and fastened in front with a neckerchief slide. There is no standard neckerchief slide; most trains make these slides as part of their handicraft program. . . . When the neckerchief is worn, the top button of the shirt is left unbuttoned. The dress tie may be worn in place of the neckerchief by trainmasters, senior train leaders, junior train leaders and wagonmasters. The belt is an adjustable web style, blue in color."

For each of the 3 stages of advancement in the Lutheran Pioneer program there is an emblem. The Recruit emblem is a yellow and red circular emblem showing a covered wagon. This emblem is worn centered on the right shirt pocket. The Pioneer emblem is a bronze medal that shows a covered wagon between the upraised wings of an eagle. This medal is worn centered on the left shirt pocket. The Frontiersman emblem is a medal like the Pioneer medal except that it is sterling silver and has a red ribbon. It is worn centered just above the left shirt pocket.

#### Other Emblems

Other emblems include Camper insignia, Honor camper, Honor Wagon pin, Attendance star, 3-Year Service star, Train numerals, Quartermaster-Recorder, Officer's insignia, Trainmaster's Key—Adult Leader's key, and District Commander insignia.

Optional uniform and insignia include dress and parade uniform, lapel pins and tie clasp-cuff links.

An example of how these emblems can be obtained

is the case of the Pioneer Camper. "Any boy," the literature reads, "who has completed the Pioneer requirements, shall be eligible for the Camper emblem upon completion of all of the following Frontiersman requirements:

1. Advanced First Aid
2. Advanced Knots
3. Cooking
4. Fire Building
5. Nature Study
6. Knife and Axe
7. Camping

A program is suggested by the National Council for 1961, however, it is not required that the program be followed. But it is emphasized that the program should be planned in advance. The suggested program for instance for the month of March includes the following:

"Hike of the Month":—Show the Way hike; mix a compass hike with a signs hike. Give each wagon their instructions and see which one comes closest to the finish point.

"Nature Study": Weather—March is a good month for the study of weather. Have the boys make weather charts for the month.

"Month's Project": Kites—recheck pamphlets on types of kites.

"Movie, Guest Speaker": Weather—good movies on weather may be obtained through the local library.

"General Instruction": Basic knots.

"Special Activity": Kite flying derby.

"Special Days": Holy Week.

The Official Handbook of the Pioneers includes instruction on the rules for proper display of and respect to the Flag of the United States; the tying of different types of knots; the use of knife and axe; fire building; outdoor cooking; hiking; camping; compass; measuring; mapping; swimming; signalling; stalking; safety; nature study and first aid.

The Prayer and Song of the Pioneers were written by Rev. Reuben O. Marti. The Prayer reads as follows:

"Jesus, help our eyes to see  
Our salvation earned by thee.  
Jesus, help our ears to hear  
Calls for help from far and near.  
Jesus, help our feet to go  
In the way that Thou wilt show.  
Jesus, help our hands to do  
All things, loving kind, and true.  
Jesus, may we helpful be,  
Growing every day like Thee. . . .  
Amen."

The Song is as follows:

Ho, Ho, away we go—  
We're Lutheran Pioneers.  
We lead the way  
By night and day.  
We fill the air with cheers.

Ho, Ho, away we go—  
We've learned our lessons well.  
We play the game,  
We know the name  
Of bird and fish and fowl.

Ho, Ho, away we go—  
We pitch our tents like this.  
We tie our knots,  
Unfold our cots,  
And sleep in perfect bliss.

Ho, Ho, away we go—  
We're Lutheran Pioneers.  
We love our Church,  
Our school as much,  
And to our flag give cheers.

*Badger Lutheran, UNQUOTE*

## GIRL PIONEERS

On the page facing this ten-year report are four large pictures of Lutheran (Boy) Pioneers and Girl Pioneers in various activities as taught by their leaders. The text then tells of how the Girl Pioneers began in 1954 being organized in Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church in La Crosse, Wis. Members accepted the bracelet with a disk as the Achievement for Travelers. (The term "Award" seems to be studiously avoided.) New charms were then added, such as the Bonnet as the Trail Blazer charm and the Spinning Wheel as the Homesteader charm. There are now 83 girl groups known as "caravans."

The following paragraphs are quoted verbatim from the *Badger Lutheran*:

The motto of the Lutheran Girl Pioneers is "Loyal to Christ." The purpose of the group is to provide supervised and constructive recreation preparing the Lutheran Girl Pioneers in the ways of good citizenship with their motto "Loyal to Christ" ever before them.

Each group of Girl Pioneers is known as a caravan. Each caravan is divided into groups of about 6, called Wagons, with a Driver and 5 girls. Each girl is known as a Traveler, Trail Blazer or a Homesteader, "Depending on her own personal achievements."

The uniform of the Girl Pioneer is a white short-sleeved sport blouse, tan-gored skirt, triangular brown neckerchief lettered with L.G.P. and a tan overseas cap piped in brown with the L.G.P. emblem. The colors are brown and white.

The charm bracelet is available to the Girl Pioneers after they have passed their Travelers requirements. "This bracelet and charm," the L.G.P. handbook reads, "are an achievement a Lutheran Girl Pioneer has accomplished with the talents and gifts God has given her. Out of love for her free gift of salvation and for the glory of God she has accomplished the stated requirements."

The meaning of the emblem, the spinning wheel, is that it symbolizes pioneer life. It reflects the purpose of Lutheran Girl Pioneers—to train girls in the basic principles of life. The circle around the spinning wheel indicates the unity of those who are true to the motto "Loyal to Christ."

The requirements for the various ranks of achievement in the Lutheran Girl Pioneers are in summary the following:

*Traveler*: Includes handicraft, knowledge of the National and Church flags, outdoors, homemaking, first aid, caravan organization, and etiquette.

**Trail Blazer:** Complete the Traveler requirements, handicraft, flag, outdoors, first aid, etiquette, baby-sitting, homemaking.

**Homesteader:** Complete Trail Blazer requirements; take complete charge of one meeting; present one new game and one new song; arrange one outing; know the American creed and complete 3 of the special achievements, which include Red Cross Swimmers test and Red Cross certificate, dramatics, nature, handicraft, cooking, homemaking, first aid, citizenship and music.

The Constitution of the Girl Pioneers states: "Be it resolved that we give our Lutheran girls a complete and workable program that is by the girls, of the girls, and for the girls, yet under the direction of the church and the supervision of the pastor."

The purpose is elaborated as the following:

"While being good Lutherans, we would also teach our girls:

1. Good citizenship, including the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. and Church flags.
2. A knowledge of the great outdoors and the beauties of God's creation.
3. First Aid and its application.
4. Skills and crafts to help fit our girls for future life and leadership in their community.
5. Hiking, swimming, life-saving, nature study, baby-sitting, cooking, homemaking, etiquette and many other useful skills interesting to girls. . . .

**Proper Methods.** The Chapter on the Outdoors in the handbook includes proper methods of laying and lighting an outdoor fire; birds and identification; trees, wild flowers, wild plants, garden flowers; water safety rules; hiking safety rules; an overnight.

The chapter on Homemaking includes table setting, bed making, home etiquette, church etiquette, school etiquette; how to properly introduce a stranger; a thank you note; an invitation to party.

The Handbook also includes prayers before church begins, at the close of the service, before meals. There is also a series of Bible verses, entitled "Scriptural Gems" including Eph. 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," and 1 Cor. 10:31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

The Hymn of the Lutheran Girl Pioneers is sung to the Music of Hymn 501 in the *Lutheran Hymnal*. It reads as follows:

We are Lutheran Girl Pioneers  
Blazing paths of fellowship  
May God bestow on us His grace,  
'Till we meet Him face to face.

Jesus, let my living be  
Filled with services for Thee  
Jesus, ever keep Thy light  
In my heart and burning bright.

If my eyes should ere behold  
Someone wandering from Thy fold,  
Let my feet accompany  
Theirs returning Lord to Thee.

Keep my ears alert to hear  
Cry for help from far and near.  
Help me teach them to rejoice  
In the blessing of Thy voice.

Let me be to fellow men  
As a good Samaritan.  
Teach my hands and lips to move  
In the goodness of my love.

Jesus, let my living be  
Filled with thankfulness to Thee  
Let me ever keep Thy light  
Through my living burning bright.

—UNQUOTE.

## FOOTNOTES

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2. Quote, XL:1 (January/February, 1967), 14.
3. Koehler, XXIII:8 (August, 1950), 9.
4. Quote, XXXI:6 (June, 1958), 4.
5. Koehler, XXIII:7 (July, 1950), 8.
6. Koehler, XXIII:8 (August, 1950), 8.
7. Koehler, XXIII:7 (July, 1950), 12.
8. Koehler, p. 12.
9. M.A. Zimmermann, Faith-Life, XXIII:10 (October, 1950), 6.
10. Zimmermann, p. 8.
11. Zimmermann, p. 6.
12. Zimmermann, p. 6.
13. Quote, XXVII:3 (March, 1954), 15.
14. Quote, XXVIII:8 (August, 1955), 11.
15. Quote, XXXI:2, (February, 1958), 15.
16. Quote, p. 16.
17. Quote, XXXI:3, (March, 1958), 13.
18. Pioneer Leaders Handbook, p. 601-5-79.
19. Quote, XXXI:3 (March, 1958), 13.
20. Quote, XXXI:9 (September, 1958), 6.
21. Quote, p.6.
22. Koehler, XXIII:8 (August, 1950), 8.
23. Quote, XXXI:3 (March, 1958), 13.
24. Quote, XXXII:8 (August, 1958), 16.
25. Proceedings of the Thirty-Fifth Biennial Convention (August, 1959), R. 86; Committee "20.
26. Quote, XXXI:2 (February, 1950), 15.
27. Interview with Train 244 leaders, Mt. Lebanon Boy Pioneers.
28. Pioneers Leaders Handbook, p. 601-2-79.

29. Quote, XXXI:3 (March, 1958), 13.
30. Quote, p. 13.
31. Quote, p. 13.
32. Quote, p. 13.
33. Pioneer Leaders Handbook, p. 601-2-79.
34. Quote, XL:1 (January/February), 14.
35. R.G. Anderson, "The Issues of the Controversy Do Extend Into this Generation," Faith-Life, XXXIII:7&8 (July/August, 1960), 25.
36. Anderson, p. 25.
37. Anderson, p. 25.
38. Quote, XXXIV:6 (June, 1961), 8.
39. Quote, p. 8.
40. Quote XXXI:6, (June, 1958), 4.
41. Koehler, XXIII:7 (July, 1950), 12.
42. Quote, XXXI:2 (February, 1958), 16.
43. Quote, XL:1 (January/February, 1967), 14.
44. Bruce Thompson, Handbook for Boys, 250.

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