



(1 Cor. 5:10,11)

We are in this world, although not belonging to it, so that we might "shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life"(Phil. 2:15,16) and "let (y)our light shine before men, that they may see (y)our good deeds and praise (y)our Father in heaven".(Matt. 5:16); also having "a good reputation with outsiders"(specifically applied to spiritual overseers in their reputations in the community so that they are not disgraced and led into the devil's trap (1 Tim. 3:7). This can certainly pertain to the kinds of matters upon which we choose to contend with the world as well as the way in which we conduct our dispute. With all our hearts we want to attract and not repel the unbelieving world to Christ. That means taking a clear, strong, and lovely stand on and for the truth of God...and may sometimes mean we take care to not needlessly expose God, His word, and His people to ridicule.

One of the areas that has caused us some difficulty in the past is the subject of Scouting. Most of us at one time or another have felt a barb or two directed at us over our position. One of our men, whom I respect very much as a rock-solid, faithful shepherd of Christ, upon hearing about the topic of this particular paper, said, "If there is any way you can make the Scouts echt, it sure would be wonderful!" Here in the outlying areas of the WELS world, the position of the LCMS is viewed by at least the Scout leaders as extremist. You can understand why not a few are at least somewhat surprised to hear that not only do we have some reservations about the Scouts, but that we won't have anything to do with them, period.

Because, after all, we are opposed to Scouting. That was clearly stated in the title of Tract Number 7 (Our Position Against Scouting) in the "Continuing in His Word" series issued by the Conference of Presidents, The Ev. Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States in 1954.

So why is there any question about Scouting today? Apparently even our church body has sensed some restiveness ---as indicated by the appointment of a committee by the Conference of Presidents to look into the Scouting question again. By the way, that committee (whose leader is Prof. Westerhaus) met for the first time last week. Our conference assignment committee's title for this paper, "a FRESH look at Scouting" may also have a few implications. Perhaps there exists the feeling that our current look is stale. That may mean the information is old and we want an up-date, or it may mean that the old look is no longer adequately satisfying the committee, perhaps failing to take into consideration new factors that have entered the picture since the last formal stand has been taken. Maybe something has changed...the world perhaps, or (hopefully) perhaps Scouting has changed. Among other possibilities could be the sense that our

position, so often stated in Northwestern Lutheran articles, seminary PT courses, and by leaders of the Pioneers, may not be just dated, but not big enough, not complete enough, or possibly even inaccurate...portraying a jaundiced viewpoint rather than honestly looking at the facts.

Could we change...if some circumstances were to change?

#### VIEWPOINTS SOMETIMES CHANGE

Yes. We could. Back in 1931, there was nothing said about Scouting...but quite a bit on other subjects. For example,

(on Trades-Unions)"Since the unions are composed, for the greater part, of unregenerate and worldly-minded people, it not infrequently happens that their demands...are exorbitant...they resort to violence... they usurp rights properly belonging to their employers....(therefore) The orthodox Church should exhort her Christians to have no fellowship with the works of darkness...She should counsel her Christians, on account of the great dangers that threaten their souls in the unions, to keep out of the unions, if they possibly can...(although the Church) cannot forbid her members to belong to a union." (pp. 136,137 -- "Questions on Christian Topics", Carl Manthey-Zorn. 1931. NPH. Milwaukee, WI.)

(on life insurance--but not mutual life insurance companies)"But tell me, servant of Christ, are you willing to lend your money to these servants of Mammon and let them handle it for you that you or your heirs may profit by their dealings? Did God give your money to you for such a purpose? Think this matter over in a Christian way. We have nothing more to say. And--we leave the matter to your conscience."(p. 152)

(concerning the Theater) "...both the writers and the performers, or actors, devote their art almost entirely to the service of fleshly lusts. Theater managers will not have it any other way. ...The general public goes to the theater to gratify its fleshly lust....as a general thing it calls for filth....But...to them (that have the spirit of the children of God dwelling in them) let it be known that the ordinary theaters, no matter what names they may go by, do never offer the people anything but filth....let us tell them what the theater is---and the Christians will shun the theater." (pp. 209,210)

(On Dancing) "In what does the modern dance consist? In this, that young men and young women embrace one another and move along to the strains of music; now gracefully gliding, now hopping and leaping. There

is great variety of these dances...How strange! In the so-called better classes of society a man dare not speak to a woman, much less dare he touch her, without being acquainted with her, or without having received a formal introduction to her. But let them have the slightest acquaintance, or let that introduction take place and any woman will, at a ball, let any man embrace her, will return such embrace and will glide and whirl away with him. Such is the power of custom. Who originated that custom? In two classes of society the women, when dancing, greatly expose their shoulders, arms, chests and backs, and at the present day the whole style of dress is such as to reveal the wearer's form. What two classes of society are these? The very highest class and then the very lowest, the class to which the public harlots belong. In the middle class the same style prevails, but not to such a disgusting degree. This is the modern way of dancing. Have we exaggerated matters in the least? We have merely told the plain, unvarnished truth. How ought we to regard such dancing? It excites and nourishes unclean lust; it wrecks a woman's natural modesty; it makes men forgetful of showing women the esteem that is their due; it should be shunned by the children of God. (pp. 211, 212)

There appears to be a great deal of truth and some good advice in the above matters. Yet it is doubtful that any of us have lately strongly condemned such things, much less excommunicated a "saloon" owner (p. 215).

What has changed? Is it the nature or actions of the above things. Perhaps a bit. I doubt if there has been a substantial change in anything except perhaps the unions. But we admit to owning life insurance...even to the point that some churches use member policies to set up endowments. Most of our youth have had some experience in dancing--and the gyrations of today would have caused brother Manthey-Zorn apoplexy or worse. I don't want to dwell on these things...just to point out that perhaps applications of Biblical principles do legitimately change as the nature of the world worsens (or perhaps, as in the case of smoking or abuse of the environment, the world's view actually improves and the Church responds with stronger applications), or perhaps the Church sees that its own cultural upbringing and weltanschauung have predisposed and colored its understanding of things. What may have been the right and proper application of principles of godliness in the days of violence-prone unions may now support the need for God's underpaid people of the South to endorse them. Or an approach that preconditioned young men to excited feelings of lust as they drove within 10 miles of a dance hall (and I remember the feeling of "something's wrong" back in the days of our off-campus senior bombastic ball) may now have been softened

because there isn't necessarily an invitation to fornication behind every swivel of that girl's hip (at least one of our prep schools sponsors youth dances today).

Perhaps our "fortress mentality", as some have called it, which vests us with the responsibility for discovering, exposing, and rooting out all error in doctrine and practice, has caused us always to be on the lookout for "something wrong". Sometime back Parade magazine discovered in a poll that people who were critical were perceived by others to be more intelligent than those who were not so critical---even though the critical ones were average or below average in actual intelligence. One of the things that causes a person much anxiety when he attempts to do some original thinking or to put forth a view not held by the majority is the amount of criticism it will elicit. While we may rightly respond to that fear with the thought, "Good...that is what keeps our WELS faithful to scripture", because there is a rightful place for constructive and God-pleasing criticism, if we wish to rightfully handle the Truth. But I wonder also how much harm that ugly thing identified as a negative, critical spirit does to us...how many good things have not been heard, how many of our prospective members never got to adult class because they heard our critical training come through in our initial visit (case in point: the missionary whose prospects always seemed somehow to get him on the subject of women suffrage in the Church; others who spend so much time explaining close communion that a clear, wonderful, and simple witness about Jesus Christ remains undone). Tied to that is our ingrained need to be "right" all the time. While our wives and children may catch the brunt of this most of the time (Ich bin der Herr von diesem Hause), our people also see it in us. While that serves us excellently when we are faithfully maintaining the truth and purity of God's word, it does not sit so well either with our Lord nor with others when we defend some minute interpretation simply because we've staked out our stand and we'll defend it (and our pride) to the last drop of saliva. I still remember a particular class more than 25 years ago in which the professor asked, "Does anyone know how the camel can go so long without drinking water?" Having just read something on that about the animal's peculiar ability to carry something like triple its normal water content in its bloodstream coupled with the fact that it doesn't sweat, I explained what I had read. To which the professor replied, "No. Everybody knows the camel carries extra water in its hump", as he laughed me into embarrassment, my protestations to the contrary notwithstanding. Sometimes an attitude of "But we've always thought this way" serves us ill.

The world's idea of the truth hasn't changed any since the days of Adam and Eve. To Eve and Pilate, as well as to the children of darkness, the truth is always the opposite of God's truth, or actual truth. And that isn't so pleasant a

thing to point out. To challenge a popular lie means that you are "negative", "strict", "provincial", "not understanding Christian liberty"...and all the other things our "competitors" in the religious field have used effectively against us (including some of those 'other' Lutherans). At a recent public election held in our facility, the precinct elections official happened to be the wife of our local TV anchorman. She seemed to have some kind of entertainment background because as I was on the way past the election area I noticed she was giving the election workers a dancing lesson (the polls were quite slow). One of the older ladies watching all this said (not knowing I was standing there), "Is this a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church?" When asked why, she explained that they were the "strict" ones..and there certainly could be "no dancing in one of their churches." Of course, she harks back to an earlier day. But obviously she had learned to know LCMS well way back then and had never forgotten the stereotype. When I spoke with several BSA officials, explaining that I was a Lutheran pastor, they quickly asked me if I was LCMS, because they obviously had to handle them differently than the looser ones. They were not relieved to learn that I was WELS.

#### THE BEGINNING OF BOY SCOUTS IN AMERICA (BSA)

But they were all gracious. Scouting teaches a person to be like that. As a matter of fact,

One day in 1909 in London, England, an American visitor, William D. Boyce, lost his way in a dense fog. He stopped under a street lamp and tried to figure out where he was. A boy approached him and asked if he could be of help.

"You certainly can," said Boyce. He told the boy that he wanted to find a certain business office in the center of the city.

"I'll take you there," said the boy.

When they got to the destination, Mr. Boyce reached into pocket for a tip. But the boy stopped him.

"No, thank you, sir. I am a Scout. I won't take anything for helping."

"A Scout? And what might that be?" asked Boyce.

The boy told the American about himself and his brother Scouts. Boyce became very interested. After finishing his errand, he had the boy take him to the British Scouting office.

At the office, Boyce met Lord Robert Baden-Powell,

the famous British general who had founded the Scouting movement in Great Britain. Boyce was so impressed with what he learned that he decided to bring Scouting home with him.

On February 8, 1910, Boyce and a group of outstanding leaders founded the Boy Scouts of America. From that day forth, Scouts have celebrated February 8 as the birthday of Scouting in the United States.

What happened to the boy who helped Mr. Boyce find his way in the fog? No one knows. He had neither asked for money nor given his name, but he will never be forgotten. His Good Turn helped bring the Scouting movement to our country.

In the British Scout Training Center at Gilwell Park, England, Scouts from the United States erected a statue of an American Buffalo in honor of this unknown Scout. One Good Turn to one man became a Good Turn to millions of American boys. Such is the power of a Good Turn. (pp. 579-580 Boy Scout Handbook, 10th Edition. 1990.BSA)

By the way, the Girl Scouts of America were founded by Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia in 1912. In 1955, the WELS Standing Committee on Union Matters produced a resolution that began, "We fail to see any essential difference between the basic principles of Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts" (p. 291, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, v. 52, Oct. 1955)

#### THE WELS AND THE BSA

I wrote to our Seminary in Mequon, requesting their Scouting materials and received some old manuals and a paper and a copy of Prof. Lawrenz's WLQ article (which shall be referred to later), but nothing from anything earlier than 1954. Although Professor Westerhaus did mention (in his paper of October, 1979) an article by Prof. J.P. Meyer in the Jan. 1931 Theologische Quaralschrift, (Vol. 28, #1), I am sorry to say that I did not receive it from the seminary and therefore did not have an opportunity to include it with these materials. Pastor Daniel Giesden's paper (no date - somewhere in mid-1970's) mentioned a booklet by Erhard E. Pankow/NWP 1946, entitled "scouting in the Light of Holy Scripture".

In 1931 Manthey-Zorn's "Questions on Christian Topics" was published and there was not a word about Scouting, although the above-mentioned articles and a number of others were covered.

In an interesting conversation with Professor Fredrich from our Seminary, I learned that the reason we don't find much in

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print was the "Argument from Silence" (a valid point)...that everyone was agreed that the Boy Scouts were, in the words of one veteran of those struggles, "the religion of the Pharisee". The Meyer article (1931) seems to have borne this out with a remark made in reaction to a suggestion by Theodore Graebner in St. Louis

...that Lutheran congregations borrow activities from the Boy Scouts...(he commented) that if Lutheran Christians appreciate the wonders of God's creation and the wonderful, widely varying skills God has implanted in us as we should, we will have more than enough to show and tell our youth and provide them with sound activities without having to borrow from elsewhere. (p. 24, "An Evaluation of Popular American Youth Organizations From a Confessional Lutheran Perspective". Oct. 22-23, 1979. Martin O. Westerhaus. Ohio Pastors' Conference. Michigan Dist.)

(One pastor with whom I spoke mentioned that later, when the Pioneers was founded and advocated, our men were told not to say that it was just a "cleaned-up version of the Scouts", lest anybody think we had had any bad influence in the development of the group.)

That remark, considered in the context of its time, gives us some good insights into understanding many other positions... some of which are just now changing with regard to the use of materials put out by others instead of insisting on using just our own, whether inferior or not. (Witness: our NPH catalogue). As we look back at the result (a church body that remained faithful to God's word when even our staunchest sister began to evidence signs of slippage), we thank God for such resolute men. Their example can be a model for us even in these days, providing we understand the issues in the context of our times---may God keep us grounded in His word!

Some other things changed, however. One of those things was the position of our sister Synod of the time, the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. Apparently because of their earlier switching to the English language (as Professor Westerhaus indicated) and, I think, also because of their greater representation in the East where the early development of the BSA took place, the LCMS adopted an official policy in their 1944 national convention held in Saginaw, Michigan, that said, "It is a matter for the local congregation to decide". In fact, that was a sort of green light to those LCMS congregations that had been permitting Scouting within their membership. One LCMS vice president said, "We just got sick and tired of saying 'no' all the time", according to Prof. Fredrich. The result of that changed policy was that we felt pressure to go along with our sister.



But the pressure increased when members of those congregations ended up in WELS churches or forming the nuclei of WELS missions. In speaking with a retired veteran who had had considerable experience with the LCMS influence, I understood that, at least in some areas of our WELS, the Scouts were a not uncommon thing. This veteran still does not think it was such an important issue, because he found that by the time they reached confirmation age, the young people had outgrown it and there was no more problem. He said that in his experience, he never encountered a problem with work righteousness. This well-respected servant of the Lord mentioned that he felt that there was some problem in those days with the "rugged individualists" who seemed to find "negative aspects" in many things. We need to understand that those were difficult times....when there was a clear sense that some things needed sorting out in our doctrinal and fellowship positions. And like a parent or a teacher with a child that has developed a history of trouble, one tends to use even every marginal issue to find something to argue about. Apparently those "rugged individualists" were respected and influential and persuasive --and, I think, Scripture-centered--enough to gain the floor in the Northwestern Lutheran and other forums.

For some, it became a rather large issue. In one of our Wisconsin congregations, for instance, a new pastor found Scoutism rampant. The person who remembered the event and thought it significant felt that our man may have been a bit tactless...at least that was the impression from the news report. But in a personal conversation with him, it seemed to me that he approached things quite well (according to the way he explained the story).

He came to the congregation in December of 1949. Upon finding the heavy concentration of Scoutism, he "excused" Scouts from confirmation classes. Then he told me he went from family to family throughout the congregation, explaining how BSA was the "Pharisee's religion" and carefully and fully went through the Scriptures, pointing out how BSA differed from God's word. He told me that he lost only two families....but that the real problem was an attorney within the congregation (a convert) whose real agenda was to kill the Christian Day School...and in order to do that had to discredit the pastor.

The attorney apparently went to the press with the issue and the national wire services picked it up and the name of the WELS (still officially called Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States) was publicly besmirched. There is an interesting follow-up story to this. The pastor involved in all this said that he received more than 150 letters, with about 70% in full support of his position! The Milwaukee Sentinel sent a writer out to check out the church services...who came back for a second visit at worship and ended up giving our good pastor an excellent write-up in the

paper! The attorney died an early death, as well as the husbands of the two families that left! The pastor advised that "if one is faced with this kind of problem, that one "should keep it quiet...go to the family and show them what the BSA really is".

In those late 1940's and early 1950's, the Scout issue was considered "unfinished business" by our men, as more and more LCMS congregations set up their own troops. When we started to really speak strongly against the scouts, there were some who asked why other organizations such as AA and YMCA were not also being included. The answer they received was, "You are just adding to our burden." Some of those who were leading the opposition to scouts also ended up separating from our WELS and becoming some of the leaders in the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Apparently there is something either very stubborn or else very chameleon-like about the Scouts...that the question of its legitimacy just doesn't go away. Or maybe there is still another reason.....

#### THE NATURAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Of the nearly one dozen WELS articles and papers on the Scouts, the one that seems to me to have the best grasp of the obvious and underlying issues is Prof. Lawrenz's WLQ article in the 1972 Vol. 69, No. 2 edition, entitled, "Natural Law, Natural Knowledge of God, Civic Righteousness, and their Application to the Boy Scout Question. I have read that article through time and time again and kept coming back to it because of its substance...I think he has the starting key to dealing with the whole issue...and also because of something that kept bothering me (and I say this most respectfully and nervously about anything written by someone who thought and wrote at a quantum leap level above this poor car mechanic).

In order for us to pick up the argument, here follows lengthy quotes from the article: (underlining mine)

There is a natural knowledge of God, a knowledge of God outside of God's revelation of Himself in Holy Scripture. This is not a saving knowledge of God. Though therefore limited in scope, this natural knowledge of God is true as far as it goes (aletheia, Rom. 1:18,21). God has also endowed all men with their conscience to bear witness to them about their relation to Him as their God and of their accountability to Him for their conduct over against His inscribed law (Rom. 2:14-16;1:32). This natural knowledge of God in man goes beyond the bare realization that there is a God and embraces a consciousness of His eternal power,

glory, wisdom, goodness, righteousness (Rom. 1:20,32; 2:4; Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-27; Psalm 19). Man's natural knowledge of God can be deepened and developed by a study of nature (Rom.1:20) and of history (Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-27).

Even as natural man has a certain knowledge of God, so he also has the ability to discern in a measure, as far as outward deeds are concerned, what is morally good and evil. This ability comes from the inscribed law. Man has a realization of the divine authority of this inscribed law, a realization of his accountability before God to act according to this inscribed law (Rom. 2:14-16; 1:32).

In Romans 2:14-16 St. Paul...asserts that also the gentiles, who do not have the revealed law, do the things contained in the law. He does not say that they do them regularly; much less that they do them properly, so that God's law is satisfied with their obedience. The whole context makes it clear that the gentiles are not capable of performing truly good works. Paul is speaking of outward acts which men can see and evaluate. He points out that with their occasional efforts, whenever they do the things contained in the law, these unregenerate gentiles give unmistakable evidence that the work of the law is written within their hearts. This inscribed law is not something that they have acquired through speculation by the trial and error method; it is not a summary of what through experience and observation they have found to be most expedient in regulating human conduct; it does not consist of conventions which through usage and training have gradually acquired the force of law. No, this inscribed law forms the starting point of all ethical thinking and judging. Man did not write it into his heart; he finds it there written by another hand. Paul speaks of the gentiles doing by nature the things contained in the law. The same God who created their nature is also the author of the inscribed law. They may not like it, but it is unrelenting in its demands.

...Conscience corroborates the testimony of the inscribed law. Conscience is more than an activity of the intellect discerning what is morally good and evil; it is more than a moral function, judging the ethical merits or demerits of specific human conduct. Conscience is a religious function, a consciousness of God which confirms the inscribed law as the law of God and declares the demands of this law as divinely binding. ....As man's entire nature became corrupt through the Fall, also the inscribed law became blurred and his conscience subject to error. Yet for the purpose of bringing forth civil righteousness both still

function sufficiently, inducing man to accept God's judgment, based on the inscribed law and the testimony of conscience, as just and inescapable. (pp.67,68)

You noticed the mention of the expression civil righteousness. Prof. Lawrenz will return to that later, but at this point, he turns to

#### The Use that Natural Man Makes of His Natural Knowledge of God and of His Law

The natural knowledge of God, though true in itself so far as the substance is concerned, is inevitably turned into something false when handled by natural man. For he applies it, and by himself can apply it, only according to the basic lie introduced by Satan into the world, the opinio legis (Gal. 3:3). Instead of using his natural knowledge of God to honor and serve God in the spirit of grateful love, natural man invariably deals with God, insofar as he has a natural knowledge of Him, in the spirit of the law, endeavoring to appease His wrath and merit His favor (Rom. 1:21; Acts 14:8-18; 17:22-31). This is the initial catastrophic step in repressing the truth of the natural knowledge of God. This repressing Paul ascribes to all men as they are by nature (Rom. 1:18). It is not due to ignorance but to his inborn wickedness, to the fact that man is steeped in unrighteousness.

The opinio legis in which he operates with his natural knowledge of God leads man to neutralize this knowledge with further vain and foolish ideas and actions.....

Some, indeed, turn moralists, trying to curb by their judgments the reckless living of their fellowmen (Rom. 2:1-8). (pp.68,69)

I am not completely certain what he means with that word "moralist". My Webster's says it is "one concerned with regulating the morals of others". I imagine that means that the moralist not only practices the rejection of wrong and the adoption of right in his life, but he also teaches it to others and even holds others to the standards he has developed. But it appears the Prof. Lawrenz may also be including another step in the work of the moralist...that of teaching some kind of eternal reward (or punishment) based on the behavior of their students in response to the moral doctrine. In other words, "if you're good according to these standards, you'll go to heaven (or some place like that)." I think what lies behind his statement is that the moralist ascribes a positive spiritual value to the law.

But, just for now, ask yourself this question, "Could it be possible that there might be two spheres (civil and

eternal) involved...and that the "moralist" may have a God-established right...indeed, an obligation to operate in the sphere of the civil area as long as he stays in it, not offering an eternal reward or punishment?"

After mentioning that the moralists condemn themselves because they commit the same things they condemn (Rom. 2:4), he picks up the thought

...With impenitent hearts they act on the assumption that man's nature is inherently good, that in order to achieve real goodness of life it is enough to instruct the understanding properly and to influence the will by censure or praise. They are blind to the fact that crimes and vices are merely symptoms of the total depravity of the human heart, that a complete change of heart is necessary, which only the Gospel can effect.  
(p. 69)

In other words, he is saying that the "moralist" is trying to get people (kids) to do the right thing and avoid the wrong thing with censure or praise, rather than understanding and then operating with the knowledge that you can only really be good in this life (is the next life also included?) after the Gospel has captured your heart and changed you on the inside

Then he makes the statement,

It is this activity of the moralist which characterizes the use to which the natural knowledge of God and of His law is put in the program of Scouting. In its basic oath and law, to which every Scout must subscribe, Scouting expresses a recognition of God and of an obligation to Him. In offering this oath and law as something that is adapted to every boy, it operates with the assumption that it lies within the power of every boy ("on my honor") to make a proper use of his recognition of God and to fulfill his duty toward Him.(p.69)

Next, he lists a few examples of "blindness to man's natural depravity" to reinforce his argument that the Scouts certainly misuse their natural knowledge of God. We shall take a closer look at some of those examples later, but the one listed above ("on my honor") gives us an understanding of what he means. Then he turns to the subject of

#### The Spiritual Function of the Natural Knowledge of God and His Law in Natural Man

Scripture assigns no positive spiritual value or function to the natural knowledge of God and of His law in natural man. It knows only of the negative one of depriving man of any pretext for his failings, so that he may realize to his consternation that he is

without excuse (Rom. 1:20; 2:1,5). In the service of the church's commission to preach the Gospel, we, too, can make use of man's natural knowledge of God and of His law only for the purpose of bringing the sinner to a realization of his guilt and condemnation that he may despair in himself. Man's natural knowledge of God and of His law forms the starting-point (Anknuepfungspunkt) for the church's preachment of the law, whereby the sinner is humbled in preparation for the Gospel message, which alone can produce saving faith and a thankful life of Christian sanctification. Thus Paul used the natural knowledge of God in Romans 1 and 2; thus he used it also at Lystra and at Athens (Acts 14 and 17).

This is not the use to which the natural knowledge of God and of His law is put in Scouting. The Scout program abuses this knowledge in the manner of the moralist. When the individual Christian associates and identifies himself with Scouting, he therefore strengthens and confirms all those in the Scout organization who are not Christians in this abuse of their natural knowledge of God and of His law; he fails to help them to a realization of their guilt and condemnation, of their need of a complete change of heart through the Gospel. In other words, he vitiates his Christian testimony to sin and grace. (pp. 71,72)

Before we move on, let me ask a few questions: "Do your children attend public schools where they speak about being good citizens, doing good things, using the system of rewards and punishments in order to lead children into what is generally regarded as proper behavior and attitudes for scholars and for life? What about ethics classes in which students (as well as businessmen) are taught how to do the right thing and make right decisions...all on the basis of "natural knowledge". Does government, properly or improperly, take on the role of moralist when it passes laws, gives rewards to special citizens, and punishes--sometimes even by death--the evildoer? Is that not acting on the basis of natural knowledge of God and His law...however perverted that may be? The last question is related to the others, but we shall wait for the answer that ties them all together...because it seems to me that there is something in common here with the statement that "With impenitent hearts they act on the assumption that man's nature is inherently good, that in order to achieve real goodness of life it is enough to instruct the understanding properly and to influence the will by censure or praise." (Lawrenz, p. 69) Whether in the school, the public arena, or in any organization, there is more to it than whether or not there is a misuse of the natural knowledge of God and His law...because we are going to find that everywhere except within the church (and perhaps we'll find it there from time to time (God forbid)). Even those who teach child and parent

training resort to such techniques. Must we say to our people, "You cannot go there, nor can you use such knowledge? Or, can we ask the question, "What is the sphere--civil or eternal?" Perhaps we shall see.

### DISCERNING THE ORGANIZATIONS

Professors Armin W. Schuetze and Irwin J. Habeck, in their book, *The Shepherd Under Christ*, NPH. 1974., speak about organizations outside the congregation.

For purposes of evaluation, organizations can be grouped two categories. The one consists of such organizations that have antichristian or unscriptural principles, policies, or programs as an intrinsic part of the organization. The very existence of the organization depends on principles that are hostile to Christianity. The Masonic Order, for example, cannot exist without the antichristian features that become evident in its rituals, prayers, and symbolism. Salvation by character is part and parcel of Masonic thought and teaching. Any society for the promotion of "a woman's right to abortion" exists for a purpose that is intrinsically contrary to Scripture. the Christian dare not compromise his faith by becoming identified with such organizations.

The other category consists of such organization<sup>n</sup> which in themselves have no inherent principles and purposes that make membership impossible. They may, however, at times have incidental adjuncts, like promiscuous prayers or doubtful activities, which are not an essential part of the organization. Frequently organizations may inject religious elements that are to give the organization respectability or the appearance of piety. Political conventions, for example, call in a pastor, priest, or rabbi to open their meetings with prayer even though religion is in no way a part of the organization's purpose. The Congress of the United States does not exist for religious purposes, and the opening prayers at its sessions are only incidental and not an intrinsic part of its existence. Many organizations are in this category, and membership in them cannot categorically be ruled out even when undesirable features attach themselves in an incidental way. The Christian may be able to divorce himself from the undesirable or unscriptural adjunct while remaining a member of the organization. His influence may, in fact, help avoid or eliminate such objectionable nonessential additions. (pp. 338,339)

That is some helpful information...now comes the application of their principle:

(First the lodge is examined and found to have a false view of Scripture, a false view of God, a false view of the way to salvation. false prayers, and an ungodly fellowship.) Then,

### The Boy Scouts of America

Among organizations for children and adolescents which have intrinsic elements contrary to Scripture, besides those associated with lodges, the Boy Scouts of America is the most prominent. Although it insists that all religious teaching should be left to the church, its purpose, aim, and program inherently conflict with biblical truth. The purpose of the organization is character training (my emboldening, JPH). Its aim, according to the Scout Oath, is that the Scout may do his duty to God and his country; help other people at all times; and keep himself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. Its program has to do not merely with teaching certain skills, especially such as involved camping and the outdoors, but centers in the Scout Law. It must be noted that the Scout Oath (also called the Promise) and the Scout Law are necessary parts of Scouting. Without them no Scout troop may exist, even if it is sponsored by a Christian congregation. They are considered essential to the spirit of Scouting.

This calls for a careful examination of the role of the Scout Oath and Law in the character training of Scouting. While the aim of doing one's duty to God and country are shared by Christianity, the manner of attaining them differs completely. An examination of the Scout Law in the light of Scripture shows that it subverts the function of God's law, Christian sanctification, and the way of salvation (to support this, the authors refer to the articles by Prof. Jerald J. Plitzuweit in the NWLutheran in 1970-JPH). To promise "on my honor" to do one's duty to God hardly accords with the Scriptural confession that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Php. 4:13). the spirit of Scouting, builds self-righteousness and is hostile to Christianity. Its type of character training conflicts with Christian character training, based on Holy Scripture. (to support this statement, the authors refer to Prof. Lawrenz's Quarterly article). These objectionable elements of Scouting are not mere adjuncts that may attach themselves to a particular troop but are essential to its existence. It is an organization with which the church and its members may not become identified. (to support this statement, they refer to Prof. Schuetze's own article in the booklet "Guidance from God's Word".)

(Then the authors continue with service organizations



such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lion's clubs.) They are service clubs, having the goal of improving business and professional ethics (do you think they might also occasionally or even frequently misuse the natural law of God?-JPH), and of working for social betterment and the general welfare of the community. (pp. 339-344)

Might we once again ask, "What is the sphere of these groups?"

(They continue) While membership cannot be considered impossible because of the inherent nature of the organizations, it will be necessary to warn against religious elements and doubtful programs with which the Christian will not want to become associated. Examples of such are unionistic prayers and sponsoring of a Boy Scout troop. The church member in such an organization should consider it his responsibility to keep the organization from adding such nonessential elements that conflict with his religious principles.

The pastor may be invited to join one or the other of clubs. Remembering that membership makes him responsible for all that the organization does, ~~the pastor will decline the invitation.~~ (p.344)

(Then follows an analysis of some other groups, and finally some instruction in how to quietly deal with the problem, should it occur, of a member who joins an objectionable group.)

Their view that the dividing line between <sup>objectionable</sup> organizations (and there are many of them) that we can be a part of with no problem and those that we cannot be a part of lies in their intrinsic or extrinsic religious elements (both of which can be contrary to Scripture) must have been a difficult one to think through and put into print, but it is very useful. And yet, it comes with some flaws. I would think the flaws would especially show themselves when we get down to dividing hairs on the question of "ex" versus "in". As we are acutely aware, there are some who see "in's" where others clearly don't (cf. previous WELS fund-raising efforts). But might there be a better question that could be asked, one that might more clearly define the issue? I think so.

One organization that was not addressed was one with which most of us have had some dealing--Alcoholics Anonymous. Related to it are many successful drug treatment programs. I know of one of our congregations that actually has an AA group meeting in its church. If we take a look at their Twelve Step program, we find not just a little difficulty with their intrinsic religious elements. Allow me to quote just a few of the steps:

2. (We) came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. (According to AA materials, they are not a religious organization--even atheists may belong)
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.  
(from AA literature)

Would you say the religious element is extrinsic or intrinsic? Try leaving the concept of God out of the program! If it is intrinsic, then must we counsel our people to avoid such organizations when they are in critical, perhaps even desperate need and beyond our help? Or should we just "wink" at it and not say anything, thereby compromising ourselves and our doctrine for the sake of expediency? Or should we ask the question... "What is the sphere-civil or eternal?"...and then proceed?

#### CIVIC RIGHTEOUSNESS

Prof. Lawrenz, in his Quarterly article to which we previously referred, takes up the subject of civil or civic righteousness.

##### The function of the Natural Knowledge of God and of His Law in the Life of a Christian

In a Christian's life of sanctification the natural knowledge of God and the inscribed law perform a function similar to that of the revealed law in its third use (Psalm 19)

##### The Function of the Natural Knowledge of God and of His law in promoting Civic Righteousness

The natural knowledge of God and of His law performs a vital function in promoting civic righteousness (Rom. 2:14-16). In a certain measure can and does serve to keep people as they are by nature from gross crime and vice and to incite them to outward decent living.

##### Civic Righteousness, Its Nature and Purpose, and How it is Maintained

(Scripture doesn't use the term, but it does teach the substance that is meant to be covered by it)

Ever since the Fall the earthly life of mankind is meant to be covered by it (c.r.)...Not until He has called, enlightened, sanctified, and gathered the entire number of His elect through the Gospel and thus perfected His church of believers unto eternal life, will He destroy this world and bring mankind's earthly life to an end. In the meantime men are to live and dwell together here on earth, each for his appointed time. To make this possible for God's gracious purposes, when mankind is by nature totally depraved, at least a measure of outward decency, peace and order needs to be maintained.

(Marriage, human authority have been established by God so that we can have a measure of good order.) It is this righteousness among men which God maintains through civil authority that we mean when we speak of civic or civil righteousness. It has to do with outward deeds and acts insofar as they make for a measure of peace and order quite apart from the motivation by which they are performed. In maintaining civic righteousness human government is not interested in motives as such, in their spiritual value, but merely insofar as motives are effective in promoting certain outward deeds and restraining others (civil sphere).

God has not merely ordained civil authority to maintain civic righteousness. He has at the same time left natural man, though corrupt in sin, the ability to show an understanding for such civil authority, the ability to see its necessity and appropriate laws and ordinances, and finally the ability to render in a measure the civic righteousness which it demands. Our Lutheran Confessions sum up this ability of man as "human reason", meaning the full scope of the abilities which Scripture ascribes to natural man, and which are sufficient unto these ends.

(Then comes a list of things such as police regulations, health rules, natural impulses (such as natural love between parents and children, patriotic love for country, sympathetic feelings toward fellowmen in misery and need, etc.)

When we speak of human reason we furthermore include the ability to discern in a measure, as far as outward deeds are concerned, what is morally good and evil. This ability comes from the inscribed law. Included is a realization of the divine authority of this inscribed law, a realization of man's accountability before God to act according to this inscribed law (natural knowledge of God, conscience). This endowment enables man to establish civil authority to exercise the function which God would have it perform of punishing the evil doers and of protecting the law-abiding.....At the same time it leads men to show a measure of respect for such laws

and to guide their conduct according to them.

All of these human endowments summed up as "human reason" do to a certain degree (his emphasis) serve to hold most people back from gross crime and vice and to incite them to a measure of outward decent living. (Triglott references). These outward deeds when effected in the unbeliever, of course, have no spiritual value before God, inasmuch as they are born out of slavish fear, out of the vain attempt to justify themselves, out of selfish motivations of pride, honor and reward. ..they make for civic righteousness. God is not interested in civic righteousness for its own sake. The maintenance and safeguarding of civic righteousness which God effects through civil authority on the basis of all that belongs to "Human reason" is not God's ultimate aim. It is merely a means to an end. God's ultimate aim is the peaceful development, internal growth and external spread of the church, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim. 2:2), that churches may have rest to be edified and built up (Acts 9:31).

For the preservation of human society God also uses the righteousness fostered by Scouting on the basis of the natural endowment of man. From this point of view we may also rather see an organization like Scouting in the world about us than an atheistic society flouting every outward observance of the demands of God's law. For a Christian to participate in Scouting, however, involves other considerations.

(From this point on, he points out that a Christian is obligated to fulfil all that civil authority looks for and has a right to demand in the way of civic righteousness...yet as a Christian he will do this as a part of his life of sanctification-out of faith born fear and love of God)(pp. 73-76)

Pieper, in his Christian Dogmatics (CPH, 1953), Vol 3, discusses the good works of the heathen, pointing out that in their external form, their works are "much like the works of Christians, yea, surpass them in the sight of men." Here he quotes Luther:

Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Scipio have performed greater feats than ever any Christian; such prowess in war, such endurance and fortitude in all kinds of adversity and hardship you will not easily discover in any king"(St. L.II:461ff.)

Pieper goes on to say

The best distinction is made when the Lutheran Confessions assign these works to the wholly different spheres to which they actually belong. The good works of the heathen belong in the sphere of civil righteousness (iustitia civilis) or of the State. In this sphere they deserve high praise, and, as the Confession says, God rewards them in this life with temporal blessings. Here he quotes the Triglot which I shall quote to a larger extent:

Now, we think concerning the righteousness of reason thus, namely, that God requires it, and that, because of God's commandment, the honorable works which the Decalog commands must necessarily be performed according to the passage Gal. 3,24: The Law was our schoolmaster; likewise 1 Tim. 1,9: The Law is made for the ungodly...And this righteousness reason, by its own strength, can, to a certain extent, work, although it is often overcome by natural weakness, and by the devil impelling it to manifest crimes. Now although we cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it (for this corrupt nature has no greater good [in this life and in a worldly nature, nothing is ever better than uprightness and virtuel, and Aristotle says aright: Neither the evening star nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness, and God also honors it with bodily rewards), yet it ought not to be praised with reproach to Christ. (Apology of A.C. Art.IV 22-24)p. 127

Back to Pieper:

It is God's will that the kingdoms of this world be maintained, namely, as the scaffolding for the building of the Church. And as civil righteousness is the mainstay of the kingdoms of the world, God bestows temporal rewards upon the works of civil righteousness. That is the glory and the value of the good works of non-Christians in the civil domain. But as to their value in the spiritual sphere, they are to be rated as sin, not only secundum quid but absolutely, without any limitation. Without any limitations Scripture declares that the heathen are dead in sins (Eph. 2:1), alienated from the life in God....sharply distinguishing between the worldly kingdoms and the Church, we say with the Lutheran confessions that the works of the heathen are good in the civil sphere but have no spiritual value.

(p. 44)

In a paper on this subject of civic righteousness delivered to the Michigan District Southeastern Pastoral Conference on April 30, 1973, Pastor George Tiefel states that

It is important to observe the paradoxical mode of expression required when we describe natural man's relationship to God and goodness. He "knows" God but then again he doesn't. Luther somewhere compares this with two ways of knowing a man. I may be able to recognize a man's face, be acquainted with him superficially, and know that he is someone to be reckoned with; but that doesn't mean I know the man's feelings or intentions toward me. So it is that all men have what Hoenecke calls an "incipient" knowledge of God. The fool who denies God's existence thereby suppresses his natural insight (Psalm 53) "Fool says in his heart there is no God".

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God...(Rom. 1:19ff)

6. So even natural insight does not enable men to please God eternally, for "though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them" (Rom. 1:32). This is the paradoxical nature of man's knowledge or ignorance of God. He has a knowledge of God, but not a "true" knowledge. He is ignorant of God, and yet not so ignorant that he is thereby excused.

7. It is in this sensitive area of natural man's relationship to God that we are in most danger of speaking past each other, in that one is talking about the outward respect and knowledge of God which all creatures have (civil sphere-JPH), and the other is speaking about that true knowledge of God which comes only through Christ (eternal sphere-JPH).

Although we concede to free will the liberty and ability to do the outward works of the law, we do not ascribe to it the spiritual capacity for true fear of God, true faith in God, true knowledge and trust that God considers, hears, and forgives us. These are the real works of the first table, which the human heart cannot perform without the Holy Spirit. As Paul says (1 Cor. 2:14), "The natural man", that is, the man who uses only his natural powers, "does not perceive the things of God." (Apol. XVIII, 7)

For to some extent human reason naturally understands the law since it has the same judgment naturally written in the mind, but the decalogue does not only require external works that reason can somehow

perform. It also requires other works far beyond the reach of reason, like true fear of God, true love of God...(Apol. IV, 7.8)

8. Notice that sometimes our confessions limit civic righteousness to the second table, which "reason understands"(Apol. IV, 34). Yet in keeping with the paradox described above, they acknowledge that

...from the natural law even the heathen had to some extent a knowledge of God, although they neither understood nor honored him rightly, Rom. 1,21 (S.D. V 22).

9. Men do worship God, but as an "unknown" (Acts 17,23). They express his worship in outward works (Apol. XVIII,4).

Therefore we may profitably distinguish between civil righteousness, and spiritual righteousness, attributing the former to the free will and the latter to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate...This distinction is not our invention but the clear teaching of the scriptures. (Apol. XVIII, 9.10) (pp.1-3, Tiefel paper)

It is important that we see the excellent insight of the writers of the Apology on this matter. They recognize the two spheres-civil and eternal(spiritual). Keep in mind the context of the quotes above, namely Article XVIII Of Free Will. It had to do with whether or not men can without the Holy Ghost "love God and perform God's commandments with respect to the substance of the acts, and can merit grace and justification by works which reason performs by itself, without the Holy Ghost!"(Apol. Art. XVIII 68 [Triglott]). The minute we start talking about doing a work that earns any sort of eternal merit, or is God-pleasing in the sense of being done as a true faith-generated action...at that minute we have entered into the sphere of the eternal. The Fathers have done an excellent job at keeping the two spheres distinct.

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Back to Tiefel:

10. It is also a kind of theological overkill if, because civic righteousness has no value for justification and is even in a way hostile to it, we should on that account fail to give civic righteousness its due in its own realm. God established government to "punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" (1 Pet. 2:14). Rulers are not a terror to "good conduct but to bad"(Rom. 13:3) We are uncomfortable with calling civic righteousness "goodness" and



"virtue", but that is what it is. (my emboldening-jph)  
We must learn to operate within the proper distinctions;  
and when we are dealing with outward conduct we must be  
able to evaluate it properly as moral or immoral  
behavior. it is this righteousness, which proceeds from  
our native "sound judgment" (Apol XVIII,5), that people  
usually mean when they refer to "spiritual values": a  
kind of honor and decency; fair dealing and good  
neighborliness; even respect for God and religion,  
without getting into the details of religion as such.  
All of this is properly within the realm of civic  
righteousness, and is praiseworthy (my emboldening-jph)

We freely give this righteousness of reason its due  
credit; for our corrupt nature has no greater good  
than this, as Aristotle says, "Neither the evening  
star nor the morning star is more beautiful than  
righteousness."\*(Nicomachean Ethics [!] [V,3,III])  
God even honors it with material rewards.  
Nevertheless, it ought not be praised at the expense  
of Christ. (Apol IV,24)

But the works of the law can be performed either  
before justification or after justification. (my  
emboldening-jph) Before justification many good men  
even among the pagans--such as Xenophon, Aristides,  
Fabius, ....performed the works of the law and  
accomplished great thing. Cicero suffered death  
courageously in a righteous and good cause. Pomponius  
was a man of integrity and veracity; for he himself  
never lied, and he could not bear it if others did.  
Integrity and veracity are, of course, very fine  
virtues and very beautiful works of the law; but  
these men were not justified by these works. After  
justification, moreover, Peter, Paul, and all other  
Christians have done and still do the works of the  
law; but they are not justified by them  
either.(Gal. 2,16--1535---[Luther] Am. Ed.  
26,123.124)

11. The above quotations were intended to show how we  
ought to recognize the (temporal) goodness of civic  
righteousness. But you will have noticed that the  
fathers always praised natural goodness by way of  
concession; the main thrust of the Reformation teaching  
(as well as the whole gospel) is that our natural  
righteousness, whether in respect to God or to neighbor,  
does not justify, does not even prepare us for grace, is  
not in any way remotely meritorious for salvation....

"God does not require of any man that he do more than  
he really can." So said the schoolmen. Luther  
comments: This is actually a good statement, but in

its proper place, that is, in political, domestic, and natural affairs...When the sophists say that the natural endowments are sound, I concede this. But if they draw the inference: "Therefore a man is able to fulfill the law, to love God, etc.," then I deny the conclusion. I distinguish the natural endowments from the spiritual; and I say that the spiritual endowments are not sound but corrupt, in fact, totally extinguished through sin in man and in the devil....The natural endowments are indeed sound, but which natural endowments? Those by which a man who is drowned in wickedness and is a slave of the devil has a will, reason, free choice, and power to build a house, to carry on a governmental office, to steer a ship...these have not been taken away from man..they have been confirmed. But the sophists twisted them into the spiritual realm. ...thus they confused civil and ecclesiastical matters. It is up to us to clean this up and to remove these scandals from the church. We concede that these statements are true, but in their proper place, that is, in the physical realm. (Luther-Gal. 2,20--1535--Am Ed. 26,173)

B. What is the cause of civic righteousness ?

14. We have described civic righteousness and noted its limitations. But it is still more important to see that God himself "requires this civic righteousness". (Apol. XVIII,9) Although it is for this life only, yet we must acknowledge it to be a positive good, in its own realm. These outward works are "good and profitable" because they come from God and are under his providence---"every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas. 1,17):

None of these (civic works) is or exists without God, but all things are from him and through him. On the other hand, by his own choice man can also undertake evil, as when he wills to kneel before an idol, commit murder, etc." (C>A> XVIII,6.7, quoting St. Augustine)

God does indeed approve (civic righteousness), require that it be performed, and offer rewards to it, and to some extent reason is able to perform it. (Luther. Gal. 2,21--1535--Am Ed 26,183)

Thus God himself is the founder, lord, master, protector, and rewarder of both kinds of righteousness. (Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved--1535--Am Ed 46,100)

15. God promotes civic righteousness through his kingdom of power, his providential rule of the present world. God elicits these works through his law, which

always demands more than man can render. Therefore no one attains by means of the law to the eternal promises given in this law. Still, God grants certain material rewards for even a partial fulfillment....

...(Luther)..To be sure, the Gentiles have certain laws in common with the Jews, such as these: there is one God, no one is to do wrong to another, no one is to commit adultery....This is written by nature into their hearts...

It is natural to honor God, not steal..written in the hearts of all men. (How Christians Should Regard Moses--1525-- Am Ed 35,164)

...

16. Thus it is God's will that all men be confronted by this divine word, the law. As law it is always referred to God's authority and his scale of retribution, whether this is stated explicitly or not. It is wrong for us to demand that reference to God be stricken from all moral teaching outside the church. (My emboldening-jph) Whoever teaches ethics in God's name is, in that matter at least, doing what God wants done, irrespective of his personal relationship to the gospel. It is an objective, divine work he is doing; in that role he is God's servant. Even when he does not have a "true" knowledge of God, it is praiseworthy (on the plane of the law) that a man is to this extent "religious" (Acts 17,22)

This safeguards outward discipline, because all men ought to know that God requires this civil righteousness, and that, to some extent, we can achieve it. (Apol. XVIII,9)

18. ...Luther already perceived that the state cannot force anyone to believe. (Temp. Auth.--1523--Am Ed 45,106). the modern idea goes beyond that. It sees that even the legal requirement that men acknowledge that God exists may already interfere with religious liberty. Whether this view is right or wrong does not change the fact that it is God who rules in every sphere of earthly life and society, and that it is appropriate for him to be mentioned on the plane of the law (my emb.jph) Even when he is not expressly named, he is wittingly or unwittingly implied in all notions of civic morality. This is intuitive in all men. God made it that way. Where the legal apparatus of the state is not involved, it is still natural to expect the mention of God and an expressly positive attitude toward the general categories of religion and spirituality, whenever ethical actions are required.

## SUMMARY

What have we learned?

1. God's primary aim is to bring all men to the knowledge of the truth that salvation lies in Jesus Christ alone...that a person receives this salvation through Holy Spirit-worked faith in Him and His redemptory, sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. ~~The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he is justified.~~ He possesses true righteousness before God (Christ's own righteousness given to him by faith).
2. In order that His Church might proclaim this blessed message, and extend the Kingdom, God has ordained that there shall be order among all men (not just among Christians). To achieve this order, He has established a civic righteousness based upon His inscribed law on men's hearts, which gives to man still a natural knowledge of Him and His will. This natural knowledge is far from perfect and complete..in fact, may be quite confused, distorted, and misused (especially because of the basic lie of Satan--the opinio legis). Nevertheless, God is pleased to use this civic righteousness, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Church. It is a means to an end, something like a scaffolding for the building of the Church.
3. According to his natural knowledge of God, natural (unconverted) man knows about God. To a certain extent, he even has the human will and freedom to choose among the works and things which reason by itself can grasp. To some extent, he can achieve civil righteousness or the righteousness of works. He can talk about God (not knowing who He really is) and even express worship of Him in outward works, which works have no eternal merit in God's sight, but which do meet with His approval in an earthly sense, because He requires this civic righteousness, and even offers rewards for it.
4. According to this civic righteousness (as Luther stated), "It is natural to honor God, not steal..." Therefore whoever teaches ethics in God's name is, in that matter at least, doing what God wants done. it is wrong for us to demand that reference to God be stricken from all moral teaching outside the church. Even when he is not expressly named, He is wittingly or unwittingly implied in all notions of civic morality. This is intuitive in all men. God made it that way.

Thus we see that this "civil sphere" is quite broad. It may even make us feel uncomfortable at times because we perhaps have downgraded good works (in the civil sphere) so that nobody in our congregation would "get the wrong idea" and thus think they could be saved by doing such good works. Prof. Irwin J. Habeck wrote an article in the WLQ (Vol. 75, No. 4, Oct. 1978 p. 254ff.) with the title "Don't downgrade Good Works", which was especially directed at both seminary students and "more mature theologians" who did not express gratitude for the genuine good works of faith that were done by Christians. But he also addressed the fact that we should be careful "not to give the impression that there is nothing good about the works done by the unregenerate man lest we confuse people by making them wonder whether it really doesn't make any difference in this life whether a man gives generously for the support of his favorite charity or whether he robs a bank. But then, indeed, we can be quick to add that when it comes to the vertical relation to God, the good works of the unregenerate are only "glittering vices" and merit nothing." (p. 254)

How do we discern whether an institution, organization, association, or body is operating in the sphere of civil righteousness....or whether it is operating (or attempting to operate) in the sphere ~~of~~ the eternal? I propose a rather simple test: Does it teach about the way to eternal life?

Note that we haven't asked whether it talks about God, whether it attempts to teach morality or even how to please God in this civil sphere. These things all belong to the area of civil righteousness, as we have seen Scripture and the Confessions repeatedly establish.

That test can easily be applied to the Masonic Lodge. We find they do, in fact, teach that the way to eternal life (the Celestial Lodge above) is through the keeping and observance of the principles of the lodge (rank self-righteousness). The Lodge has moved itself from the lower rank of the civil sphere to the higher rank of the eternal sphere. As soon as it does that, we are commanded by our Lord to judge it on the basis of His clear word as to its correctness of doctrine. We simply reject the Lodge and its teachings and no Christian will have any part of it.

When any organization moves itself to or identifies itself as a part of the eternal sphere (promises of the way to eternal life are inherent in its name or purpose), such as the label, "Christian" organization (anything to do with Christ has the promise of eternal life), then we must deal with that organization on the basis of fellowship principles. Those scriptural principles which we apply are the ones developed long ago by the Wisconsin Synod Commission on Doctrinal Matters, discussed by the Joint Doctrinal Committees of the Synodical Conference, to wit:

Church fellowship is every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of the common faith in which Christians on the basis of their confession find themselves to be united with one another. (p.3)

But if an organization does not teach the way to eternal life, then we are dealing with the civil sphere and other standards apply. One such standard might be "does it teach anything contrary to God's moral will in the civil sphere?" Organizations such as abortion "rights" leagues, man-boy love associations, homosexual organizations, citizens opposed to the Christian church, etc. would obviously violate God's will for the civil sphere (which is to establish a decent and orderly world according to the inscribed law for the sake of the Church).

Notice that we are keeping any discussion as to the role of the opinio legis off to the side, not because we are trying to ignore it, but because it is everywhere! Whether our president is talking about making our country better ("and I believe in God!"), the school principal is urging the students in the morning "pep talk" over the intercom, "Because of students like you, this world is going to be a better place...as soon as we get the litter off the football field", the newspaper is editorializing about the need to return to "old values" so we can make our community a good one "again", or the parent is saying, "You're such a good boy because you always do what I tell you"(like my mother--she had to say it so often because...)...no matter where you look, the natural man can and does apply his natural knowledge of God and His law "only according to this basic lie introduced by Satan into the world, the opinio legis" (Lawrenz, p. 69). Paul said, "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?"(Gal.3:3) And the answer will always, in every case with natural man, be "I sure am!". This is a given. But we need to understand especially that this is so in the civil realm. We decry that fact and we will do all we can to help our members see the terrible danger that exists in the assertion that we can keep God's will by our own power. We will teach the law in its severity so that God's people will see their sin (and perhaps also understand it well enough so they can lead others to see theirs) and their need for the wonderful Savior our good and gracious God has so mercifully provided for us. But as soon as we speak of a Savior, we are talking about eternal life and we have moved from the civil into the eternal realm. See how easy it is to do this?

Another question that needs to be asked of organizations in the civil realm, if it has been established that they do not conflict with the basic moral will of God (inscribed law,

as well as the revealed law), is the Schuetze-Habeck question: "Are there any incidental adjuncts, like promiscuous prayers or doubtful activities, which are not an essential part of the organization?" (cf. prev. full explanation, p. 15).

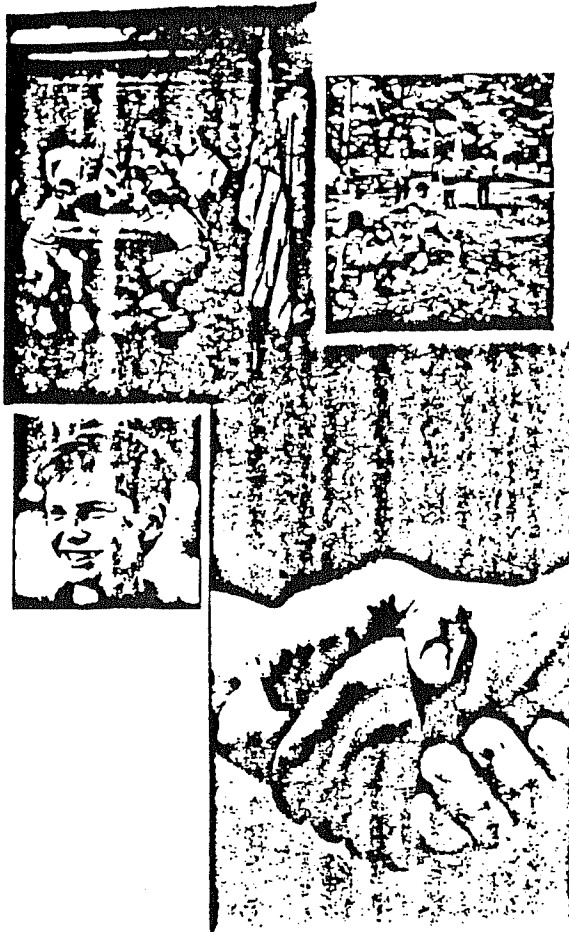
There are going to be differences of opinion on some of those matters. We need to always instruct and warn our people about any violation of God's dear word...but do it in such a way that our instruction will be heeded because of the evangelical, informed, patient and firm way we teach it. Schuetze and Habeck have an excellent piece on that. (pp. 347-349)

### The BSA

And so we finally come to the Scouts. They are known throughout the world for their many good deeds. Their 1990 Tenth Edition of their Handbook is a colorful and informative thing. It even comes with a 24 page guide on "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse, filled with good advice. Most of the history of our church's criticism of the Scouts has also included some words of praise for them. Prof. Lawrenz says,

For the preservation of human society God also uses the civic righteousness fostered by Scouting on the basis of the natural endowment of man. From this point of view we may also rather see an organization like Scouting in the world about us than an atheistic society flouting every outward observance of the demands of God's law. (He then points out that there are other considerations for the Christian to consider). (p. 75)

Even the 1954 pamphlet by Prof. Fredrich for the COP starts out by acknowledging BSA's perceived goodness. An unfriendly witness complained (during the Communist investigations by McCarthy and others) that he was being "persecuted simply because he had joined certain organizations." A congressman replied, "It's all a matter of the type of organization to which you belong. Nobody would ever think of investigating you because of membership in the Boy Scouts of America." (p.1) Well, there have been some who have investigated it! But let me introduce you to the BSA before we hear from others, all from the 1990 handbook.



## SCOUT LAW

A Scout is **TRUSTWORTHY**. A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. Honesty is a part of his code of conduct. People can always depend on him.

A Scout is **LOYAL**. A Scout is true to his family, friends, Scout leaders, school, nation, and world community.

A Scout is **HELPFUL**. A Scout is concerned about other people. He willingly volunteers to help others without expecting payment or reward.

A Scout is **FRIENDLY**. A Scout is a friend to all. He is a brother to other Scouts. He seeks to understand others. He respects those with ideas and customs that are different from his own.

A Scout is **COURTEOUS**. A Scout is polite to everyone regardless of age or position. He knows that good manners make it easier for people to get along together.

A Scout is **KIND**. A Scout understands there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. He does not harm or kill anything without reason.

A Scout is **OBEDIENT**. A Scout follows the rules of his family, school, and troop. He obeys the laws of his community and country. If he thinks these rules and laws are unfair, he tries to have them changed in an orderly manner rather than disobey them.

A Scout is **CHEERFUL**. A Scout looks for the bright side of life. He cheerfully does tasks that come his way. He tries to make others happy.

WELCOME TO THE ADVENTURE OF SCOUTING!

7



## THE SCOUT MOTTO

The Scout motto is **BE PREPARED**. A Scout prepares for whatever comes his way by learning all he can. He keeps himself strong, healthy, and ready to meet the challenges of life.

## THE SCOUT SLOGAN

The Scout slogan is **DO A GOOD TURN DAILY**. Good Turns are helpful acts of kindness done quietly, without boasting, and without expecting reward or pay. Doing at least one Good Turn every day is a normal part of a Scout's life.



A Scout is **THRIFTY**. A Scout works to pay his way and to help others. He saves for the future. He protects and conserves natural resources. He carefully uses time and property.

A Scout is **BRAVE**. A Scout can face danger even if he is afraid. He has the courage to stand for what he thinks is right even if others laugh at him or threaten him.

A Scout is **CLEAN**. A Scout keeps his body and mind fit and clean. He goes around with those who believe in living by these same ideals. He helps keep his home and community clean.

A Scout is **REVERENT**. A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.



## THE SPIRIT OF SCOUTING

It is easy to join a Scout troop, but it is not so easy to live up to the ideals of Scouting. For that, you need courage and determination. In some ways, Scouting is like a game with rules you must follow to be a member of the team. The rules of Scouting are found in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. It is by following these rules that you can become a true Scout.

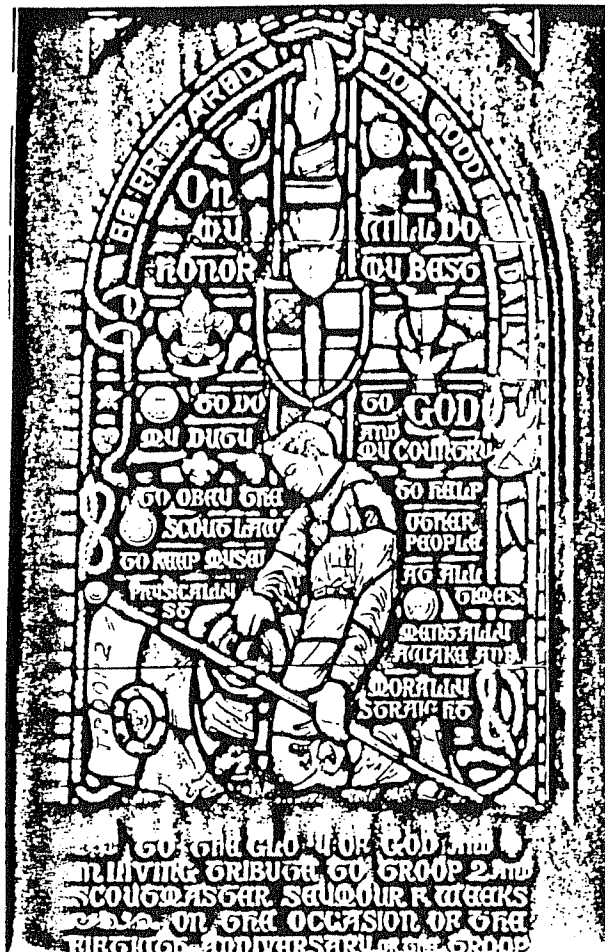


### Scout Oath

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.

THE SPIRIT OF SCOUTING

549



### THE MEANING OF THE SCOUT OATH

Before you pledge yourself to any oath or promise, you must know what it means. The paragraphs that follow will help you understand the meaning of the Scout Oath.

On my honor . . .

*By giving your word, you are promising to make every effort to live by the high ideals of the Scout Oath. Your success is a measure of your honor. As a Scout, you must hold your honor sacred.*

. . . I will do my best . . .

*You have many talents, skills, and interests. Do your best with them, and use them for good purposes. Don't be satisfied with less than your best effort even when less is required of you. Measure your achievements against your own high standards, not against the performance of others. As a Scout and through out your life, you will have opportunities to learn and to help many people. You will also be faced with challenges that may severely test you. Use your abilities to do your very best. That is what Scouting requires.*

. . . To do my duty to God . . .

*Your family and religious leaders teach you to know and love God and the ways in which God can be served. As a Scout, you do your duty to God by following the wisdom of those teachings in your daily life, and by respecting the rights of others to have their own religious beliefs.*

. . . and my country . . .

*As you study our country's history, you learn about the men and women who toiled to make America great. Most contributed in quiet ways. Others sacrificed their lives for our country. All of them did their part to build the nation we have today. Help keep the United States strong by obeying its laws. Learn about our system of government and your role as a citizen and future voter. Do all you can to help your family and neighbors live happy, productive lives. The land itself is an important part of our national heritage. Work for the conservation of our natural resources. Teach others respect for the land. Your efforts really will make a difference.*

. . . and to obey the Scout Law; . . .

*The twelve points of the Scout Law are the rules of Scouting. They are also rules you can apply to your whole life. The Scout Law sets forth ideals to live up to. By using the Scout Law as a guide, you will know you are always doing your best. Others will respect you for the way you live. Most importantly, you will respect yourself.*

. . . To help other people at all times; . . .

*There are many people who need you. Your young shoulders can help them carry their burdens. A cheerful smile and a helpful hand will make life easier for many who need assistance. By helping whenever aid is needed and by doing a Good Turn daily, you prove yourself a Scout. You are doing your part to make this a better world.*

. . . To keep myself physically strong, . . .

*Take care of your body. Protect it and develop it so that it will serve you well for an entire lifetime. That means eating nutritious food; and being active to build strength and endurance. It also means avoiding drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and any other practices that can destroy your health.*

. . . mentally awake, . . .

*Develop your mind. Strive to increase your knowledge and make the greatest use of your abilities. Be curious about the world around you. Learn all you can both in class and beyond school. With an open attitude and the willingness to ask questions, you will get the most out of your life.*

. . . and morally straight.

*To be a person of strong character, guide your life with honesty, purity, and justice. Respect and defend the rights of all people. Your relationships with others should be honest and open. Be clean in your speech and actions, and faithful in your religious beliefs. The values you follow as a Scout will help you become virtuous and self-reliant.*



Lifesaving is not the only test of bravery. You are brave every time you do what is right in spite of what others might say. You are brave when you speak the truth and when you admit a mistake and apologize for it. You are brave when you refuse to let alcohol, tobacco, or drugs become a part of your life. And you show true courage when you defend the rights of others.

*A Scout is CLEAN. A Scout keeps his body and mind fit and clean. He chooses the company of those who live by these same ideals. He helps keep his home and community clean.*

You never need to be ashamed of dirt that will wash off. If you play hard and work hard you can't help getting dirty. But when the game is over or the work is done, that kind of dirt disappears with soap and water.

There's another kind of dirt that won't come off by washing. It is the kind that shows up in foul language and harmful thoughts.

Swear words, profanity, and dirty stories are weapons that ridicule other people and hurt their feelings. The same is true of racial slurs and jokes making fun of ethnic groups or people with physical or mental limitations. A Scout knows there is no kindness or honor in such mean-spirited behavior. He avoids it in his own words and deeds. He defends those who are targets of insults.



*A Scout is REVERENT. A Scout is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties. He respects the beliefs of others.*

The word *reverence* refers to a profound respect for God. The wonders of the world remind us of our God's creative power. We find it in the tiny lines of a leaf and the great mysteries of the universe. It exists in the kindness of people and in the teachings of our families and religious leaders.

We show our reverence by living our lives according to the ideals of our beliefs. The Scout benediction is "May the Great Master of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."

The United States Constitution gives each of us complete freedom to believe and worship as we wish without fear of punishment. All your life, you will encounter people who hold different religious beliefs or even none at all. It is your duty to respect and defend the rights of others whose beliefs may differ from yours.

You are probably fairly familiar with the basic charges that have been leveled in the past against the Scouts. A study of nearly all the available documents in English will reveal these major points of contention:

#### 1. The Oath.

On my honor, I will do my best...." Prof. Jerald J. Plitzuweit, in his article in the NWL (3/15/70) analyzed the honor to mean: "...it consists of an overgrown pride in oneself, an appeal to the flesh to appear superior to other people."(p. 90). I doubt if the Scouts would agree with the "superior to other people" tag, but, yes, it does appear to be an appeal to personal pride, strength, and ability to keep commitment. At this point we might ask what takes place when one pledges (a promise on the basis of their personal character) allegiance to the flag; or pledges their heart "to greater loyalty"(4-H); or any number of pledges that are made throughout life. Or might we ask, "What is the purpose of such a pledge other than an expectation that the pledger will keep his promise?"

I think we are in the area of civil realm, simply because there is no teaching of the way to heaven and no promise made that you will get there by following the codes of the Scouts. I am open to being taught otherwise, but one will have to point out a contrary view on the basis of what is said and written by the Scouts, not on what we read into their materials from a Christian point of view. We could read many things into almost any organization...from the 4-H to the public school system...if we wanted to approach things from the (what I feel is) superior position of the eternal realm (the Church). We know about the fact that we are poor miserable sinners, that there is no good in us, that we are lost and condemned creatures and that there is no hope of heaven without God's personal intervention on our behalf. We know about that wonderful intervention, too. Just the name Jesus floods our hearts with joy unending and peace without end.

But Joe civilian out there in the civil realm doesn't know anything at all about his Savior. Yet he isn't without good sense. The human will does have freedom to "choose among the works and things which reason by itself can grasp."(Apol. XVIII,4). Two thirds of the world out there really have nobody else except themselves to lean on because they have no real God, just their dreamed-up one (Allah and Buddha and all the rest have been spun out of their opinio legis-controlled natural knowledge of God). So really, they must appeal to honor.

They teach that "success" is the measure of your honor"...you hold your honor sacred". Some things have changed! Take a look at an older version:

You promise on your honor to keep yourself morally straight. No one but yourself will know how faithfully you practice this part of your Oath. It is a test of your honor and your strength. Science tells us that every time we do anything, nerve impulses make trails in our brain. When we repeat that action, we widen the trail. Our actions tend to follow that trail as water runs down a creek bed, and so we form a habit. Try moving the furniture in your room, and see how your stumble over it. The same thing happens in your mind when you rearrange your habits. If you form the right sort of habits, your actions follow automatically.

You have it in your power to make the right sort of track in your brain that will determine how you will act. Every body can say to himself, "I will be what I want to be." Your actions follow your thoughts. You can control your thoughts. It comes down to a matter of right thinking, and building right habits.

(1951 BSA Handbook, p. 25; quoted in Prof. Lawrenz's paper, p. 70)

Prof. Lawrenz goes on to say,

"Though this particularly crass expression of blindness man's natural depravity is not found in the latest Boy Scout handbook, the blindness itself has not been deleted. It is so much part and parcel of the basic thinking of Scoutism that assertion upon assertion also in the most recent official handbook make sense only when read in the light of Scouting's premise of not reckoning with the natural depravity of every boy."  
(p. 70)

Even Professor Lawrenz admits there is a change in their attitude...it is (in 1972) not so "crass". But I wonder if he noticed the change (compare the "meaning of the Scout Oath" (previous page) with the above paragraph. The idea that "you control your thoughts..it all comes down to right thinking"...those things are less evident now. No more promise of perfection. The reality of the human condition seems to be acknowledged. "Make every effort" is not nearly the same anymore as "it just comes down to right thinking".

As Luther said, "Integrity and veracity are, of course, very fine virtues and very beautiful works of the law; but these men were not justified by these works." (Am Ed 26,123.124)

"God does not require of any man that he do more than he really can." So said the schoolmen. Luther comments: This is actually a good statement, but in its proper place, that is, in political, domestic, and natural affairs.... (Gal. 2,20--1535--Am Ed 26,173)

To do one's best is all we ever ask of anyone--student, pastor, or Scout. But here already I think we begin to see signs of even the inscribed law's ability to do its job...its negative job...of bringing men to an awareness of their inability to keep the law and the resulting despair from that knowledge. For who has ever really done his best...or even thinks he has? Most flip the statement out quickly ("well, I did the best I could"), but my experience teaches me that the law--even in the civil sphere--has produced a much-desired (by God) sense of guilt..at least for the thoughtful person.

...To do my duty to God...Like a lightning rod, this particular phrase draws a lot of sparks. The Christian knows that even after we have done all we were told to do by God, still we should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." (Lk 17:10). But we operate from the sphere of the eternal...we really know who God is because He has revealed Himself to us through His word..and finally through His Son, the One through Whom we have eternal life...Jesus Christ. (Hebr. 1:1,2) Natural man doesn't have the benefit of the revealed knowledge of God...he operates from his natural knowledge...and even that gets messed up by his opinio legis. That still doesn't give him any excuse. Paul tells us that God has made His presence (though not His saving presence) plain to mankind. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Rom.1:20). That's why Luther writes.."It is natural to honor God...(How Christians Should Regard Moses--1525--Am Ed. 35,164..quoted in Tiefel paper, p. 6) Tiefel concludes from this that "It is wrong for us to demand that reference to God be stricken from all moral teaching outside the church. Whoever teaches ethics in God's name is, in that matter at least, doing what God wants done, irrespective of his personal relationship to the gospel. it is an objective, divine work he is doing ..in that role he is God's servant. Even when he does not have a "true" knowledge of God, it is praiseworthy (on the plane of the law) that a man is to this extent "religious" (Acts 17:22--the "religious" men of Athens).

Who is this God for whom the Scout is to do his duty? They aren't going to tell you because they can't because they don't know who He is! They just know He is there. The closest I could find them coming to any definition at all was in the quote of the Scout benediction: "May the Great Master of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."(p. 561.) And it is pretty plain that that really doesn't say much at all.

Your family and religious leaders teach you to know and love God and the ways in which God can be served. As a Scout, you do your duty to God by following the wisdom of those teachings in your daily life, and by respecting

the rights of others to have their own religious beliefs. (1990 Handbook, p. 550)

In his paper of Oct. 22,23, 1979, Prof. Westerhaus says, As to a definition or description of God, the Scouts refuse to define or describe God. This is left to the various religions and their religious leaders and sacred writings. The Scouts wish to be impartial but this in effect gives equal validity to each religion's teachings about God. (p. 9)

I think one may objectively state that their impartiality, rather than giving equal validity to every religion, actually indicates a "hands-off" attitude. They do not wish to say who God is. I think this indicates a real desire on their part to avoid not only religious disputes, but also to avoid becoming a religion or teaching religious doctrines other than the natural knowledge which everyone has of God. As a matter of fact, Prof. Westerhaus, as major writer of the December, 1982 work by the Committee for Information on Organizations-WELS entitled "Girl Scouts of the United States of America--a Reappraisal", comes up with a rather important conclusion concerning nearly exactly the same wording in a bit of correspondence between one of our pastors and the Girl Scouts Director of Organization Relations, Helen I. Brady:

The Promise includes the statement: "On my honor, I will try: To serve God ..." that implies, of course, that a girl making the Promise acknowledges God. Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. in no way defines God, nor does it attempt to imply that "each person's faith, irregardless of object, is equally pleasing to supreme being...In no way does Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. attempt to teach religion...Nothing is said about "Salvation, forgiveness of sin, eternity," or any other doctrine. (Letter of April 5, 1977, to Rev.Peter B. Prange)

Available Girl Scout literature nowhere explains what the spiritual motivating force is of which the constitution speaks. One possible interpretation that presents itself is this that each member's belief in God and awareness of her duty to serve God are the motivating force that is to move her in attempting to achieve the ideal set before her in the Girl Scout Law. The quoted statements seem to indicate that the Girl Scout organization is not intent on setting up a religious fellowship, or on proving that all religions really are one or have the same goal or a similar ecumenical objective, but rather that they consider religious faith a prerequisite for the ~~or~~ the successful functioning of their program. Girl Scouts do not have chaplains, or open their sessions with prayer, or have religious services in which all members are

promised eternal life, as do the veterans organizations, for instance. (p. 3)

I think Prof. Westerhaus (the Committee) has an excellent point here...a point which should probably be also applied to the Boy Scouts, because it appears to me that the wording and intent are the same.

Again, BSA has done some changing on this, although it appears that they have been trying to remain impartial for as far back as I could find references to their definition of God, maintaining that the Scout's family and church should train him in their own religious teachings. In Pastor Gieschen's paper (undated), we find a quote from the 1943 handbook:

"What is a Boy Scout's duty to God? What does a Boy Scout owe to the infinite Creator of the universe, the Source of life itself? ...Belief in God: of course. Obedience to His basic Ten Commandments and His larger command to brotherhood? Of course...but more than these, the real man keeps himself in conscious harmony with God and with God's other creatures, his fellow men and in active participation with the Church."

(p. 108)

## 2. THE LAW

You can see some changes here. We also see it in their explanation of Scout Law that says a Scout is reverent. (cf. the copied page.) You will notice that while the law says the Scout is to respect the beliefs of others, it is explained as the duty "to respect and defend the rights of others whose beliefs may differ from yours." (p. 561). That is basically the same thing under the Oath...."respecting the rights of others to have their own beliefs". (p. 550)

But they are pretty adamant about the fact that there is a God (whoever He is). Currently there is a lawsuit against them going through the court systems just on this matter. A Mr. Elliott Welsh, writing in Christian Century magazine (May 9, 1990) explains that

In March my son Mark and I sued the Boy Scouts of America. We didn't sue for damages; we sued because BSA discriminated against us on the basis of our religious belief--or in this case, lack of belief. That they did discriminate is not in dispute.

(p. 484)

He goes on to say how his son picked up a flyer from school, got excited when he saw the fun he could have in Tiger Cubs, and wanted to join. So Mark and dad Elliott went to sign up, but when they got the application material, there was a paragraph headed Declaration of Religious Principle. It

stated in part:

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...(p. 484)

It turned out that the local Tiger Cub coordinator, a "woman of such integrity that she made it known to the scouts that she, too, wasn't religious" ended up quitting in her shared shock and dismay. So now the Scouts are in trouble for using the public schools to distribute their literature while discriminating against those who do not believe in God.

Welsh points out that in France now a girl can choose between an oath that invokes God and one which does not, depending upon her convictions.

I spoke with Mr. Lee Sneath, an attorney with the public relations firm for the BSA about this particular case. He couldn't tell me all the particulars, but he had debated Mr. Welsh on radio (I don't know what the results were). When I asked him who this God is that the Scouts are trying to maintain a position on, he replied, "We're not in the business of defining God." He repeated that stand when I asked the question from several different points of view. When I questioned him about the Boy Scout chaplains, he said, "If we eliminate the chaplaincy, we'd be accused of eliminating God by all our Baptist friends!" (He himself was a Baptist, although "he knew a Lutheran"). He was a friendly person, explaining that when you cross an atheist and a Jehovah's Witness you get somebody who knocks on your door for no reason at all (I didn't know that before), as well as other important information. But he stood firm on their position without defining who God was. He himself confessed a personal faith in Christ as his SAavior...but would not carry that over to the Scouts.

I spoke on several occasions with our local Sarasota Boy Scout Executive, Mr. Don Reddenbough ("Let's get together and get a troop started in your church!"). He identified himself as a Roman Catholic, later stating that he knew the Scriptures say that "belief is sufficient to get into heaven"; (I didn't ask him what he meant by that). He informed me about the way they deal with the religious differences in this area. The Mormons all go home (on Saturdays--so they are in their home "church" for Sunday; they do not mingle at all with the rest religiously. The Roman Catholics have their own priest take care of services. And the protestants ("unless they are very picky..which kind of Lutheran did you say you were?...is that as bad as the Missouri Synod?") can all be lumped together. He preferred an ecumenical service at their campouts. When I asked him if



# The BSA Report

A REPORT FROM THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA TO ITS CHARTERED ORGANIZATION

1985 — REAFFIRMED IN 1988

## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA REAFFIRMS POSITION ON "DUTY TO GOD"

The national Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America at its regularly scheduled meeting in Irving, Texas on October 10, 1985, approved a "Reaffirmation of the Position of the Boy Scouts of America on 'Duty to God.'"

The national office of the Boy Scouts of America and its Stonewall Jackson Area Council located in Waynesboro, Va., announced that Boy Scout Paul Trout will continue as a member in good standing and has received his Life Scout Award. He was eligible to receive his Life Scout Award because he subscribes to the Scout Oath with its 'Duty to God' as well as to the Scout Law that asks a Scout to be reverent.

Earlier this year, the 15-year-old Scout was not approved for his Life Scout Award because it was understood he could not support the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The Boy Scouts of America has made a thorough analysis of the matter. This involved contacts with members of the BSA's national Religious Relationships Committee, the young man and his family, and local Scouters. It has been determined that Paul Trout, indeed, does subscribe to the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The full Board resolution reads as follows:

### REAFFIRMATION OF THE POSITION OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA ON "DUTY TO GOD"

RESOLVED, that the following reaffirmation of the position of the Boy Scouts of America relating to "Duty to God" be, and hereby is, enacted and that the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, and literature of the Corporation reflect this reaffirmation accordingly.

This year, America is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America. Since 1910, 72 million Americans have subscribed to the Scout Oath and the Scout Law which have stood the test of time.

The national Executive Board of the BSA proudly states, through its Mission Statement, that the values which the organization strives to instill in young people are those based upon the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. A Scout pledges: "On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law . . . ."

The first Boy Scouts of America *Handbook for Boys* which was published in August 1911 declares that ". . . no boy can grow into the best kind of citizenship without recognizing his obligation to God." (Page 215.)

The latest edition of *The Official Boy Scout Handbook*, published in February 1979, reads: "'A Scout is reverent.' All Scouts show this by being faithful in their duty to God." (Page 484.)

While not intending to define what constitutes belief in God, the Boy Scouts of America is proud to reaffirm the Scout Oath and its declaration of "Duty to God."

Approved by National Executive Board, October 10, 1985

# SUMMER OPPORTUNITY AS A SCOUT CAMP CHAPLAN

You can serve as a Scout camp chaplain this summer if you are a seminarian, rabbinical student, or divinity student, desire to help youth, and know something about Scouting.

Camps are located throughout the United States and operate 5 to 10 weeks during the summer.

Many camps have opportunities for spouses, too. The salary ranges from about \$125 to \$150 per week, plus room and board.

Sound like fun?

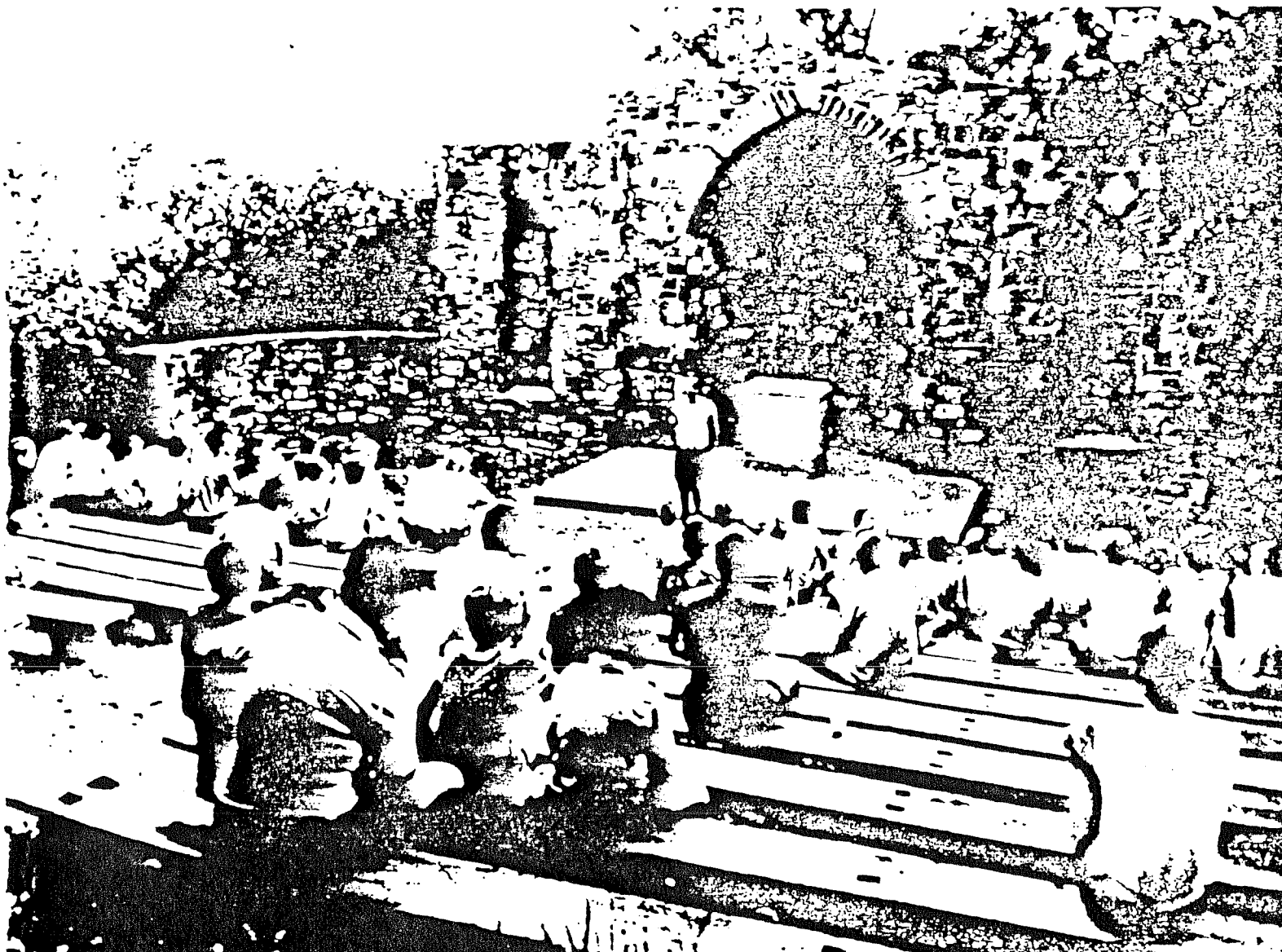
See your rector, field education director, or a representative of your religious advisory committee on Scouting when he visits your campus.

Or write:

Religious Relationships, S226  
Boy Scouts of America  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015-2079



NO. 5007



he thought a boy who followed the Scout ideal of duty to God would go to heaven, he replied, "I wouldn't touch that with a ten foot pole (he said that several times). It is not in my province." They do not have any devotion in local meetings but they do have an invocation and the "custom" of the Scout benediction. I asked him if an Indian boy led the invocation with the words, "In the name of the Great Spirit", how would he deal with that? "No problem!" You can see the problems that come with operating out of the natural religion of man's heart.

About two weeks ago I spoke with Mr. Smokey Eggers, Director of the BSA Relationships with Baptists and Evangelical Office about the question of who the God of Scouting is. He steadfastly maintained that BSA will not define God, but they do plan to "go to the mat" on the issue of God (he was quoting directly Mr. Ben Love, Chief Scout Executive, who had made that remark in a staff meeting that morning I had called. When I posed the question of a conscientious Baptist boy who objected to a Muslim opening...could that boy, who believed in God, sit out of the invocation and benediction? Mr. Eggers saw no problem with that. He also acknowledged the problem of defining the God of Scouting, all the time maintaining that it was proper for them to do so...saying, "This is just one of those bones we're going to have to gnaw on until..." He himself is a Southern Baptist and professed a personal faith in Christ as his Savior.

We see a consistency in their position. I think we need more input from others who have spoken with Scout leaders (and I think we need to get their interpretation...not just write what we think they mean to say..or not say). But they do appear to mean what they say when they affirm God's existence, but they won't define Him. Their chaplains appear to function to serve their disparate religious needs (according to their lights), although the Scouts do not advocate one belief over another, letting the boy's family and church train him in knowledge about God. There is probably a great deal of similarity to our nation's military, which is convinced of the value of religious faith, while supporting none in particular...and even permitting chaplains of particular church bodies who wish not to be supported by or behold to the military to care for the souls of those soldiers who belong to that faith.

We could continue the debate for a long time on this issue. What is clear is that when we understand that the Scouts operate in the civil sphere according to the natural knowledge of God and His law, we begin to be more careful in our statements about them and their "religion". To those who say that their boy could not confess Christ as Savior, we might remind them that he could not do that in the 4-H either (although he could do it in a closed BSA troop within his local church). Nor can he do it in the public school.

Those organizations also operate within the civil sphere, for the benefit of a decent and orderly society...but, like the BSA, having no positive spiritual value whatsoever.

That is an important point. If they state or imply that their morality and good character received by way of Scout instruction has any merit toward God, they have crossed the line clearly into the eternal, spiritual sphere. Years ago things were said that implied some sort of heavenly value to the Scout teachings. I think Baden Powell, the British founder of Scouting seems to be saying Scouting increases your chances of going to heaven, when he said,

"I think often that when the sun goes down the world is hidden by a big blanket from the light of heaven, but the stars are little holes pierced in that by those who have done good deeds in this world. The stars are not all the same size; some are big, some are little, and some men have done small deeds, but they have made their hole in the blanket by doing good before they went to heaven. "Try to make your hole in the blanket by doing good work while on earth." "It is something to be good, but it is far better to do good."

(Handbook for Boys, 1951, p. 23)

I still remember when I heard that paper delivered; at the end of its presentation, somebody else got up who had apparently been studying Scouts also, and mentioned that this quote, along with most of the others in the paper were out of date and no longer applied...somewhat to the embarrassment of the speaker. We need to be careful here that we do properly represent Scouting where it is at today. In his 1979 paper, Prof. Westerhaus was careful to say

\* Scouting literature makes no mention of the hereafter. The closest thing to pointing a boy to an ultimate life-goal is this statement: "Be prepared for life--to live happy and to die happy, knowing that you have done your best." That's the big idea. (1979 Handbook, p. 43).

I appreciate his honesty. In the 1990 edition, the emphasis is clearly on this civil sphere--today.

Be prepared for life --to live happily and without regret, knowing that you have done your best. That's what the Scout motto means.

(1990 Handbook, p. 562)

Is Scouting denying natural man's depravity and spiritual blindness? I think so...just as my next door agnostic neighbor is...and just as our public schools do. Does it teach that the law is a stepping stone to heaven? I don't think so. I think that some people are convinced it does

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though...partially because they see it through the eyes of years ago...when self-righteousness was more blatant and clear.

Are there religious elements that are troublesome? Yes. But just as Professors Schuetze and Habeck acknowledge that many organizations in the civil sphere (service clubs, veterans organizations, etc.) have troublesome religious elements, yet on that account alone they may not be rejected (p. 344), so we need to carefully examine Scouting to see if it is truly operating in the civil sphere as a character-building organization on the plane of law.

Since it is a civil-sphere (according to these eyes) organization, the Church cannot make use of it in its program of Christian character development and growth in sanctification. It knows nothing of Christ and uses law alone to motivate and train.

For myself, this study has helped me to appreciate our Pioneer program. We recently kicked off the new season with an introductory program for the parents. What a joy it was to be able to say that we had something they could not find anywhere else---a truly Christ-centered youth program. After the presentation was over, one of the members of our adult instruction class whose 2 sons will be in the program, came up and said, "I really like this...nothing against the Scouts (and we hadn't mentioned them at all)..but this is far better...I really appreciate the Christ-centered approach!"

But not every congregation has the number and kinds of people available to staff a youth program..especially here in the outlying district. What if a family comes to us for doctrinal instruction and already has a child in the Scouts? Or shortly after they become members (and we still have no Pioneer or youth program) and start searching for something for their boy or girl? One solution might be to give the parents a Pioneer handbook and plan book and ask them to do their own youth program. If that does not work for whatever reasons, and they are still convinced that they need a character-training program (as well as wholesome activity for their youth), rather than let them rot in front of the Nintendo game...

In the December 1982 reappraisal of the Girl Scouts, the WELS Committee for Information on Organizations closed with these words:

We do not find statements that are patently false or require unbiblical practice, but rather statements that are likely to confuse or mislead especially those who are weak in their Christian understanding. Pastors who are dealing with families whose daughters are, or wish to become, members of the Girl Scouts will want to

instruct those families carefully and patiently as to the dangers of confusion to which the girls will be exposed. However, except in case of open repudiation of the scriptural principles involved, church discipline, or a refusal to instruct or confirm, would not seem appropriate. (p. 4)

In his 1979 paper, Prof. Westerhaus says that

If there is a difference between the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, it is one of degree not kind. ...The result is that both Prof. Lawrenz and Prof. Schuetze have put it more than once, "It's harder to prove our accusations or criticisms against the Girl Scouts", or to look at it from another angle, it may be more difficult for lay people, especially people without a good understanding about fellowship principles and Grace versus Work-righteousness to become convinced that there is something objectionable about Girl Scouts.

(p. 16)

We may hear more about both kinds of Scouts in the months ahead.

There are so many dangers to a simple child-like faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. One of those dangers is that the natural knowledge of God will become confused and mis-directed by one's opinio legis...and thus set out on the road of the Pharisee. That would be a damnable thing..and we would not want to be a party to any advice which would put a child on that road.

There are other dangers also. Prof. Westerhaus points out in his 1979 paper that 5 popular youth organizations began during the brief period of only eight years between 1906 and 1914. It was during the rise of the industrial revolution. Families moved from the farm, where they worked alongside each other to the city...where parents --especially fathers-- worked long days six days a week..weren't home to train their sons...or were too tired when they did come home. At the same time the laws were passed making school attendance mandatory beyond the eighth grade. The schools kept children busy only six or seven hours a day..leaving considerable free time and energy. No longer were those children regularly exposed to the fresh air and sky. And you can figure out why camping and youth programs that promoted that sort of "back to nature" thing became very popular very quickly.

Does all that sound familiar? In a time when our culture is being damaged because the name of God is not heard in the land...not even on the plane of law much any more...when our youth are in danger because of exposure to many ungodly influences--more than we ever were at their age--when the major problems in our schools are no longer whispering in

class or walking in the halls at the wrong times or chewing gum..but murder, robbery and rape...then it is important that we seek solutions that are God-pleasing and life-building for our youth...for Jesus' sake.

Everglades Conference  
South Atlantic District  
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John P. Huebner