SCOUTING

The Boy Scout movement began in England under the guidance of Lord Robert Baden-Powell in 1909. It appeared in the United States early in 1910 as the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), where a variety of churches used its programs as a part of their ministries to youth and families. After investigating the new scouting movement, the Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized the MIA Scouts on November 29, 1911, with the intent to provide worthwhile leisure time and athletic activities for its young men. On May 21, 1913, the MIA Scouts, upon invitation from the National Council, became part of the BSA.

Under YMMIA direction, this program moved rapidly forward in the Church. In 1928 Church leaders designated scouting as the activity program for the deacons and teachers of the Aaronic Priesthood and transferred its administration to the presiding bishopric.

In that same year the Vanguard program was developed by the Church for young men older than Boy Scout age. In 1949 Cub Scouting was officially adopted by the Church, and the primary...
organization was asked to administer scouting for boys under twelve years of age, with boys eight to eleven as Cub Scouts and eleven-year-olds as Boy Scouts of the Blazer Patrol. In 1959 the Vanguard program was replaced by the Explorer Scout program, designed by the Church for older boys and later adopted by BSA for use throughout the United States.

Over time the Church’s scouting program for older boys was divided into the Explorer program, for young men age sixteen through eighteen, and the Venturer program, for those fourteen and fifteen. The Venturer program was eventually replaced with the nationwide BSA “Varsity Scout” program.

In 1977 responsibility within the Church for the scouting program was transferred from the Presiding Bishopric to the newly organized Young Men Presidency, which has operated since that time under the direction of the quorum of the twelve apostles.

As scouting evolved, the Church adopted scouting programs in the United States that correspond with specific age groups and Aaronic Priesthood quorums. Currently those programs include Boy Scouts for deacons quorum members, Varsity Scouts for teachers quorum members, and Explorer Scouts for priests quorum members. In each case, the scouting program serves as a part of the activity program for the Aaronic Priesthood quorum.

Although scouting has become an integral part of the Church’s activity program for young men in the United States, it is less prominent in Church units in other countries. Many Scouting organizations throughout the world follow principles and policies incompatible with Church standards. As a result, the Church authorizes wards and branches to associate only with scouting programs affiliated with the World Scouting Organization. In countries where this organization operates, Church units are urged to affiliate with, and develop, full scouting programs. Because scouting institutions are rare in Western Europe, the Church there has developed its own scouting organization, known as Aaronic Priesthood Scouting, as part of the activity program for the Aaronic Priesthood.

Wards and branches in the United States sponsor scouting units as part of their Aaronic Priesthood program. As a result, the Church has for years led all other organizations, religious and otherwise, in the total number of scouting units sponsored by any one chartered organization. In 1990 the Church registered 24,560 scouting units with BSA. During that same year, the public schools sponsored 16,543 units; the United Methodist Church, 11,179 units; and the Roman Catholic Church and affiliations, 9,530. The public schools enrolled 1,096,914 scouts; the Roman Catholic Church, 398,997; and the United Methodist Church, 333,096. The Latter-day Saints enrolled 342,156 scouts and 139,557 adult leaders that year.

Church leaders have taken an active role in BSA affairs at the national level as well as in Church scouting. Most of the presidents of the Church since the time scouting was organized have been honored by the BSA, including George Albert Smith, Heber J. Grant, David O. McKay, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson, all of whom have received significant honors for their contribution to scouting on a national level. Most recently, President Ezra Taft Benson received the Bronze Wolf Award, given by the World Scouting Organization for distinguished service to scouting around the world. He also re-

An LDS sponsored scout troop at the Evergreen Boy Scout Camp, Uinta Mountains, Utah, 1986. The Church sponsors more Boy Scout units than any other single sponsor in the world. Courtesy Craig Law.
ceived the Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope awards from BSA in recognition of many years of service on a local and national level.

In addition to Church presidents, Thomas S. Monson, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert L. Beckman, Marion D. Hanks, and others among the General Authorities, have also served in positions of distinction and leadership at the national level of the Boy Scouts and have been recognized for their contribution on behalf of the Church.

Both the program and the support service system of the BSA have been influenced by LDS volunteers, and many of the values, objectives, and goals of the Church for its young men are reflected in the expanding program of BSA.

When the BSA was first organized, certain religious principles were defined as the keystone of the organization, including (1) belief in God, (2) reverence for God, (3) fulfillment of religious duties, and (4) respect for beliefs of others. Because these principles have remained at the heart of scouting, the Church has embraced and promoted scouting as a major part of its program for young men.

The BSA and the Church have forged a close working relationship. In partnership with the Church, the BSA provides its programs, facilities, support, and training. The Church, in turn, provides youth, youth leaders, financial support, and promotion of its implicit values. This relationship has flourished because scouting continues to support wholesome leisure-time activities, to provide a spiritual view of life that is compatible with the Church's teachings, and to encourage boys and leaders to be loyal to the Church.

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SCRIPTURE

[This entry consists of four articles:

Scriptures
Authority of Scripture
Words of Living Prophets
Forthcoming Scripture

The origin and history of the Latter-day Saints is closely tied to scripture, ancient and modern. The article Scriptures sets out the LDS view of scripture and the differences between it and other scriptural traditions and concepts. Authority of Scripture deals with the role of scripture in the beliefs and practices of Latter-day Saints. The essay Words of Living Prophets focuses on one of the distinctive features of LDS belief, that of divine revelation through modern prophets. The article Forthcoming Scripture treats the LDS expectation, rooted primarily in latter-day scripture, that other scriptures are yet to be revealed by God.]

SCRIPTURES

Although "scripture" usually denotes written documents, in LDS sources it is also defined as "whatever [God’s representatives] shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 68:2-4; cf. 1:38; 2 Pet. 2:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). This broader understanding of the term is at once a comprehensive principle and a functional definition, taking into account both written and spoken modes of inspiration.

The corpus of LDS scripture is substantially larger than that of the traditional Protestant canon. It includes the Bible, the Book of Mormon (531 pages, 1981 English edition), the Doctrine and Covenants (294 pages, 1981 edition), and the Pearl of Great Price (61 pages, 1981 edition). From the outset, Latter-day Saints’ commitment to the Bible and the Book of Mormon and their attempt immediately to formulate and standardize their teaching in relation to surrounding cultures made them a “bookish” people. By contrast, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam the process of compiling and fixing sacred writings as “canonical” came comparatively long after their origins, and in each case the process resulted in a closed canon.

The Bible is accepted as the word of God by Latter-day Saints “as far as it is translated correctly” (A of F 8). They acknowledge that though the messages of scripture are divine in origin and impetus, the words in which they are clothed are