

Statement by the General Secretary of the General Commission on United Methodist Men (GCUMM) related to the recent adult membership policy shift by the Boy Scouts of America

July 28th, 2015

On July 27, the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) changed its adult membership standards. According to the resolution, “No adult applicant for registration as an employee or non-unit-serving volunteer, who otherwise meets the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, may be denied registration on the basis of sexual orientation.” Previously, the same policy applied to all youth members as a result of a policy change in 2013.



We recognize that existing standards for adult leaders are still the foundation of scouting including the adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, the Declaration of Religious Principle, and the highest level of good conduct consistent with scouting’s “codes of conduct.”

The new policy will not change the process for selecting Scout leaders. The decision of who will lead a unit (Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, or Venturing crew) chartered by a United Methodist Church still resides with the local church. Local churches will continue to select and approve Scout leaders based on the church’s Christian convictions and the evaluation of the character and skills of potential Scout leaders.

No church will be required to accept any volunteer as a Scout leader simply because of the new policy.

As part of the current charter agreement, the local church is protected by general liability insurance for its board, officers, and volunteers related to authorized scouting activities. As related in the resolution:

“The Boy Scouts of America will defend and indemnify to the fullest extent allowed by law any bona fide religious chartered organization against any claim or action contending that the chartered organization’s good faith refusal to select a unit leader based upon the religious principles of the chartered organization is in violation of the law.”

All Scout volunteers, regardless of their sexual orientation, are required to take and follow principles of the BSA Youth Protection Training. Any Scout leader found in violation of any of these principles is subject to immediate dismissal. Within the current annual charter agreement signed by a local church and a local BSA council, the BSA agrees to fulfill an array of duties including,

training Scout leaders, providing program resources, developing professional and support services, providing youth-protection training and conducting criminal background checks on leaders.

The Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting, GCUMM, has enjoyed partnerships with four civic youth agencies for many years, including the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, Camp Fire and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

The primary reason for these partnerships is our commitment to ministering to the children and youth of our church communities, including at-risk youth.

Additional comments may come from the Board of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, after they meet August 20-22, 2015.

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