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From: Charles Dahlquist
To: (NAME REMOVED FOR PRIVACY, "LDS SCOUT LEADER" INSERTED)
Sent: Sat Sep 24 13:28:56 2005
Subject: RE: -Wood Badge policies
Dear "LDS SCOUT LEADER",

Thanks for the "note." My apologies for the delay in response, but I have been buried and am just getting to many of my emails.

I am glad that the "ABC NAME" Council has now scheduled a weekend Wood Badge on Thursday, Friday, Saturday. I would hope that the majority of those in attendance are LDS. It is important to support this large step by the council - but more importantly, it is vital that we, as priesthood and Aaronic Priesthood/Young Men leaders take training seriously. We are part of this great partnership with BSA for very specific reasons: If we fully participate, our young men will be blessed and better prepared for missions and for the blessings of the temple. Part of that participation is training - especially Wood Badge.

In your missive you quoted *"an inconsistency" in the policy as having the goal to "recruit at least one Wood Badger each year, but each ward to enlist at least one person every two-three years, and unit Scouters themselves to attend Wood Badge within one-two years after completing the basic training sequence."* I wonder if we are not putting form over substance. If we are really intent in touching the lives of our young men, in building, as Elder Ballard has challenged, "the greatest generation of missionaries this world has ever seen..." then we will do whatever is necessary to help us to accomplish that - including getting trained. For most of us, Wood Badge is life-changing because it has to do more with vision and understanding than anything else.

Just to be candid with you, I struggle with the goals of "1 per ward per year" or "two per stake per year" or "3 1/2 per unit per two - three years..." And even more ridiculous is the goal that a leader take Wood Badge within 1-2 years after he has taken Basic Training. Statistics tell us that by that time, 90% of our leaders will be doing something else!

I suggest that it would be helpful to re-read D&C 128:19-22 and see just how important training was to the Prophet Joseph. Granted, his training came from beyond the veil. However, without it, he could not have accomplished what he did.

Just because this is God's work, why do we think that we do not need to be trained in that program which the Church has espoused for nearly 100 years as the "activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood?" And the reason why Scouting training is vital is that, by and large, we do a very poor job in training the leaders we call to Aaronic Priesthood/Young Men callings - and yet expect them to work miracles in the lives of their young men. One of the great blessings of our partnership with Scouting is the marvelous training that is provided.

The call is for every leader, including stake presidency members working with youth, high councilors, stake Young Men presidents, Bishopricks, ward Young Men leaders and Scouting leaders to be trained. By my count that is, at the least, 7-10 per ward and 50-75 per stake. I know companies that don't even allow a new employee to step into the plant or office until he has received initial training. They do that because they know that, without training, most individuals will be ineffective in the job they were hired to do. And yet, we call leaders to strengthen, motivate and prepare young men for missionary service and life in general - without one iota of training.

In contrast to that, I know one bishop who has 17 Wood Badge trained leaders in his ward. Imagine the strength of their youth program. I was in another ward the other day - a new ward with little Scout tradition. I was there because my grandson, now 11 years old, was getting his Second Class and First Class badges. As I spoke with a member of the

bishopric after the Court of Honor, he indicated that their entire Scouting team - Bishopric, Young Men presidency and Scouting leaders were heading to Wood Badge in October. I can only imagine what a great blessing that will be to the boys those leaders serve. **INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT 1 FROM A WARD AND TWO FROM A STAKE - WHY DON'T WE JUST COMMIT TO GET EVERY LEADER TRAINED, INCLUDING FAST START, BASIC TRAINING AND WOOD BADGE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEY ARE CALLED.** Once a priesthood leader makes that type of an investment in the training of a leader, he will be less likely to release him after 6 months of faithful service - but will leave him in long enough to have a positive effect in the life of a boy.

There is one other reason why training is important. **In the BSA, we have approximately 17% of the boys registered nationally. However, 50% of the fatalities arising from activity-related accidents were in LDS sponsored units.** As we have evaluated each of these, there are three reasons for these accidents: (1) lack of training (most didn't even know what the BSA "Guide to Safe Scouting" was); (2) lack of tenure; and (3) lack of common sense. One final thought and then I'll stop.

With some exceptions, generally the best Duty to God progress is made in those units that also have vibrant Scouting programs. The lessons on achievement programs learned in Scouting are the same that will make Duty to God effective. If seldom see a ward or stake that has a vibrant, exciting, building Duty to God program, that does not also have a great Scouting program.

Not long ago, I spoke with a ward YM leader who was excited about the Duty to God program they had for their priests. "One week we have one mission president come and talk to the boys about this subject, and the next week, we have a returned missionary come and talk about that subject, ...etc." I asked, "Are they all lecture/discussions in the Church building?" "Yes," was the answer. "And do they constitute your full activity program for priests, except for joint activities?" Again the answer was "Yes." Then I asked, "And are your priests excited about what you are doing?" After some reflection, this Young Men president said, "You know, they really aren't. We are having a very hard time getting them to attend." Had this leader been to Wood Badge, he would have learned early that when you take "fun" out of youth programs - most of the youth take themselves out as well. Scouting teaches us how to build character and spiritual depth in our young men, and how to help them become involved in service and making a difference in the lives of others - while they are having fun. I, personally, am grateful for the effect of my own personal attendance at Wood Badge at Camp Maple Dell 23 years ago. I may not remember how to make a woggle, but I can still recall my feelings experienced during the training - it was life changing for me.

Thanks for all you do to strengthen the programs of the Aaronic Priesthood within your area. I had not intended to be so long-winded, but have strong feelings - as if you couldn't tell.

Best wishes,
Charles Dahlquist
Young Men General President