

Scoutmaster Jim Boothby and Unificationist Boy Scouts respond to debate about allowing gay boy scout members

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Word that Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was considering lifting its ban on gay Scouts leaders and members has generate much activity on the web as of late. BSA said on Monday, January 28, 2013, that it may reverse its membership policies, granting sponsors of the 2.7 million young scouts nationwide the choice of whether to allow homosexual boys to participate. Founded in 1910 as part of the international Scout Movement, BSA has since then seem more than a hundred million American boys from ages 10.5-18 as its members.



Robert Abrendroth, James Abendroth, Richard Henderson, Andreas Hochmuth (senior patrol leader)and Richard Abendroth as they enjoy an unexpected thawing spell, Black bird Knob trail. Mon National Forest, West Virginia, Feb 2011

The Los Angeles Times wrote on January 29, 2013: “The proposed policy shift, which the Scouts' national board will discuss next week in Irving, Texas, follows a decades-long effort to exclude homosexual boys and adult leaders. It also coincides with growing public support for gay rights and pressure on the Scouts from corporations, some local governments and even members of its board to eliminate the ban.”



Scouts rig a rope suspension bridge to cross the normally heavily ice covered waters of Red Creek to bring scouts across one by one in a late winter thaw. Mon National Forest, West Virginia, Feb 2010 Mon National Forest. Feb, 2006

According to The Daily Beast on January 30, 2013, the Boy Scouts underwent “considerable scrutiny” for its treatment of Ryan Andresen of California, who, after having fulfilled the necessary requirements to reach the highest rank of Eagle Scout, was denied that honor because “he had come out.” As a result, Andresen’s mother started a Change.org petition

that garnered more than 450,000 signatures, and Andresen himself was awarded \$20,000 by Ellen DeGeneres on her talk show toward his college tuition.



Assistant scoutmaster and eagle scout Richard Abenbroth at the helm as his brother, senior patrol leader Robert Abendroth also helps with the tiller. Scouts are navigating the troop's 30' newly donated Soverel race sailboat on a late summer afternoon on the Chesapeake Bay, off the shore of Annapolis Maryland, August 2012. The troop's 17' Good Go speed boat (out of picture) circles and pulls tubers.

What would be the stance taken on this topic by boy scouts of the Unification Church, a church that openly defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman? Joy Morrow, the president of New Hope Academy, which sponsors the Boy Scout Troop 1212, of which the majority of boys come from Unificationist families, said the following:



On a snowpack of several feet of newly fallen snow, older scouts from Unificatioinist BSA Troop 1212 press deeper into the Dolly Sods Wilderness, on their annual winter mountaineering trip to the Monangahlia National Forest, West Virginia. Feb 2010.

"The New Hope Academy has about seven or eight gay/lesbian families with students enrolled – adopted or biological children. Our mission is to serve the children, and if the Boy Scouts of America is committed to serving the children, then their policy should change regarding boys who have same-sex attraction. At New Hope we teach sexual abstinence and always have. At the same time, I take the position that if a boy is not barred from scouting because he has had premarital sex, he should not be barred because he is gay either."



Post rain shower mist shrouds South Mountain in an early morning moment of indecision as the older boy leaders try to decided what to do about one lagging canoe that can't seem to keep up. Lake Merriwether, Goshen Scout Camp Reservation., Goshen, Virginia, July 2006.

Jim Boothby, Scoutmaster of Troop 1212, said, "Our work is about developing character, competence, bravery and team mindedness in young leaders coming up. There's no place for any one's sexual issues – gay or otherwise – in a scout troop, anyway. Why worry about the incredibly small percent of possible gay boy scouts? Every young man can benefit from what boy scout training offers and that's what we focus on. Everyone's sexual issues need to stay out of what we do."



Assist Scoutmaster Christoph Wilkening (obscured) Eagle Scout Jake Mas, Scoutmaster Jim Boothby and Senior Patrol leader Teo Wilkening confer about route choices through the mountains, Mon national Forest, West Virginia, Jan 2010.

Boothby continued: "The presumption here is absolute sexual abstinence for young men anyway. We've got far more important things to worry about. Last year we had seven young men achieve Eagle Scout after 5-7 years of work on their part. My own sense is that the sexual orientation brouhaha is a creation of the American media more than anything. For 99.9 percent of active busy scout troops like us, it isn't not even remotely an issue."

Troop 1212 has had 31 Eagle Scouts since its founding in 1999 by Boothby and about eight other first-generation Unificationists fathers, and at any given time, involves about 25 scouts. "Our purpose is to raise leaders for God and for True Parents who know how to be public people, have the confidence and competence to take responsibility for things, have hands-on leadership experience and at the same time have built bonds of brotherhood among themselves. It's been very gratifying for us to see these guys grow up," Boothby added.