

### ***“What Is A Boy Worth?”***

When people find I have seven daughters, they want to know why I got involved in Scouting. It was a defense mechanism, believe me.

I saw a cartoon once, it showed a Scout troop in a United Way parade. They had a banner stretched over them as they came down the street. It said this “Remember, we’re the fellows who will marry your daughters.

Someone asked this question, what is a boy worth? The best answer to that question was given by Alex Haley in his book “Roots” which described the history of his family from the time they were slaves until the present day.

The story began with the birth of a baby boy in a western African village. It was the custom in that village that the father would take his child, when it was eight days old, out of the village where someplace private and present the baby to the Gods. On a summer night, Amourou took his tiny baby boy in his arms, left the village and walked to a top of a high hill where nothing obscured the views of the heavens, surveying the majesty of God’s creation, the star filled sky, the full summer moon, that father raised his infant son in his arms and said to him, behold the only thing greater than you.

As I observe this generation of youth, I can echo those sentiments. In their own words they’re awesome. They are royal children of God with very special things to do and they’re worthy of all our efforts to help them achieve their potential. In the face of all the negative publicity that they receive, may I remind you of the importance of their character, of their nobility, of they’re future. Despite their reputation of giving in to peer pressure, the new morality, drugs, what’s in it for me, I see so much evidence that they’re better than my own generation. That they evidence they really are God’s children.

In surveys that have been made of special high school students across the nation, it is quite evident that these young people excel. They have discovered that 65% of them were members of an organized religion, 4% use marijuana, 75% have not had sexual intercourse, 84% preferred a traditional marriage, and 69% reported their life at home was happy most of the time. A pretty good tribute I think, to parents across the nation.

More directly related to Scouting, consider the experience of some of these noble young men.

Several years ago, Andrew Falsdorpf disqualified himself from the National Spelling Bee after the judges thought he had spelled “ukelele” correctly. When in fact, he had misspelled the word by substituting an “e” for an “a.” His reaction, “ I didn’t what to feel like a slime.” The first rule of Scouting is honesty.

Several years ago I heard about a young man, named Christopher Roundtree, who made up his

mind that he would be an Eagle. He finally earned his Eagle after 18 operations and a tough struggle against a series of problems including kidney ailments, a learning disability, a 30% hearing loss in one ear and didn't have any hearing in the other, and a speech impediment. His mother said, "they wanted to put him in a special Scout troop for the handicapped". But, Chris has never felt there is anything he couldn't do. The rest of us, being very intellectual, can find reasons that he can't do something but he makes lairs out of us all the time. He does 200% of his capabilities. If I don't feel well sometimes, I just look at him and think 'boy, this kid never feels well.' I'm so proud of him. He's a fighter.

A World Jamboree was held in the mountains west of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. During that time, when the Jamboree was held, there was a war between Great Brittan and Argentina. During the opening night ceremonies, of that Jamboree, a 70 mile per hour wind blew a driving rain down through the encampment, knocking down hundreds of tents, and flooding several camping areas including that of a contingent from Argentina. Despite the Falklands Island War, the British comrades come to their rescue, sharing their camp with them, their supposed enemies.

Three Venturers, Clay Richards, Ron Lorverd, and Dean Geeng were returning home from a movie when they came upon a burning wrecked car at a freeway exit. The driver, a young woman was seriously injured, unable to move and calling for help. Bystanders were doing nothing. Ignoring personal risk, Clay Richards approached the car but was driven back. "I backed off once," he said, "I was afraid it was going to blow up. She was kind of groggy and said 'help me please, someone help me.' The second time I just said to myself, it's for her good. If it blows up on me that it." With that thought, Clay helped the badly injured woman out of the car. With a compound ankle fracture, she relied on Clay to carry her to the curb side. Meanwhile, Ron Lorverd used the fire extinguisher out of his car to attach the flames. When that and another extinguisher provide by another bystander failed to completely douse the fire, Ron and Dean Geeng ran to a payphone to call paramedics. Arriving police and firemen completed extinguishing the fire. The three were disappointed by the lack of help from bystanders who stood watching until the three provided leadership. Said Clay, "It kind of made me mad. They just stood there." The woman outside the payphone when asked why she hadn't called for help responded "I didn't have any change."

After the disaster on September 11<sup>th</sup> a few years ago, a young Cub Scout thought of doing something about it. I read this with deep interest of what this young man had done. Luke Green, is a compassionate kid who showed how much one 10 year old can effect people. Watching TV reports of rescue efforts following the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, he saw rescue workers cut their hands digging through the rubbish at ground zero. That was enough to send him into action. Luke distributed flyers around his home town of Baltimore, Ohio. Then dragging his wagon with an American flag stuck on the back he went door to door collecting 400 pairs gloves from the residents. It was more than his wagon could carry. Despite the number of gloves, Luke wanted to personally autograph each pair. With the help of his mother, he stuffed a penny and thank you note into a finger of one glove in each pair. The note exclaimed that he and his neighbors, did not want any of the rescuers hands bleed while they were searching for survivors. The penny was to bring them luck. Soon the collection was off to New York. The rescue workers were touched by Luke's work and his personal message. The wrote, they called, they sent gifts. All very

thankful. The Pack Luke belonged to renewed the drive, collecting 800 additional pairs of gloves. The Cub Scouts also added a note and a penny to each pair. Then, Luke, his father and Cubmaster Glime traveled to New York to deliver the new supply of gloves. Luke's desire to help these worker kept them safe and helped show the difference one Scout can make.

Dying of bone cancer, John Hunicue organized an Eagle project to get 100 donors to give blood to hospital's. Several weeks later, he was carried on a stretcher, to a Court of Honor convened in a hospital auditorium where he received his Eagle Award. For a moment the ceremony was stopped for a special announcement from the hospital. They had just processed their 200<sup>th</sup> blood donor, courtesy of John's efforts. Two weeks later, John was dead but he had done more good and developed more strength of character in his few short years than many of us will in a lengthy life time.

What is a boy worth? Unfortunately most of them don't know what they are worth. They struggle with self worth, as they merge from the cocoon of childhood and seek to find their place in life.

One teenager met his friend on the street. "What are you doin' tonight Marty?" "I don't know, what are you going to do?" Does that sound like teenagers today? Many of us don't recognize that in this royal generation lies our future. We underestimate them or we expect too much of them in their youth.

A father and his teenage son got into a violent argument ending with his taunting his son. "Why don't you grow up?", the son replied "Dad, that's what I'm trying to do."

Do you remember what it was like to become a teenager? Seeking independence yet wanting security? Anxious to prove he's a man, yet beset with his own inadequacies and inabilities. How desperately they need heroes close by who can help provide, strength and courage to face the challenges of life, a positive example of righteous living, guidance in making correct decisions and assurance to stay on the path when discouragement or social pressures rear their ugly heads. Don't any of you ever underestimate the power you adult leaders have on these youth in leading our boys.

For sometime, I was Young Men's President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We completed a study of teenage boys at that particular time. That study revealed that as a boy enters his teen years, his parents have the most powerful influence on his life. As a boy matures, the impact of adult leaders such as Priesthood leaders, Scoutmasters, Varsity coaches, Venturing advisors becomes more pronounced. By the time a boy reaches 16 or 17 years of age the influence of that adult leader becomes the foremost influence in producing the wholesome outcomes we seek for our youth. Who do you think of all the boys leaders, has the greatest impact on those boys? You might understand tonight. It's the Scout leader. He's able to take these boys out of that sterile atmosphere of the classroom and associate with them in the laboratory of life which Scouting activities give them.

What is a boy worth? He's worth all that it take to make him into a good man. No one's too

busy, no one's too good, no one's too important, no one's too rich or too poor. There's no such thing as it takes too much time. Nothing is as important as the time we give to our youth for they are our future.

How is he to learn to distinguish truth from error, righteousness from unrighteousness, good from evil. How is he to know that he can have the guidance of God in his daily life unless good men and women are in place to lead him in those paths. I can just tell you as a Church, we sustain the Scouting movement because of its' emphasis on character and spirituality. We believe that Scouting can make a significant contribution through its leaders and through its program by teaching every Scout two fundamental convictions. First, that each is a son of God and second, there is no enduring success or happiness to be found except in conformity with divine law. Sometimes we forget that, in our anxieties to reach their lives.

What is a boy worth? A boy is a bank where we can deposit our greatest treasure. I congratulate some of you who have done just that, who we have honored here tonight. I salute you great Scouters for your dedicated service to youth. I'm so impressed when I see how devotedly you give time, your means, and your efforts to bless their lives. I trust you find happiness and fulfillment in your service. I promise you rich rewards of satisfaction as these great young men take their places in our society. I want all of you here tonight to know that I love you as my brothers and sisters in this great important movement and I appreciate the opportunity of serving at your side.

As families in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we teach our children to sing that lovely song that helps them understand who they are. As I sing it's simple poignant lyrics, I always get a lump in my throat as I contemplate their dependence upon us, their elders, to lead, guide, help and teach them who they are and what they may become. I am a Child of God, and He has sent me here, has given an earthly home with parents kind and dear. I am a Child of God, and so my needs are great, help me to understand his words before it grows to late. I am a Child of God, rich blessing are in store. If I but learn to do his will, I'll live with him once more. Lead me, guide me, help me find the way. Teach me all that I must do, to live with him someday.

What is a boy worth?