



FACT SHEET

Association of Baptists for Scouting

History

Cofounded by the late Joe C. Carrington Sr. and the late Owen Cooper, the Association of Southern Baptists (our parent organization) operated out of Austin, Texas, for more than 20 years. In February 1975, the executive committee and board changed the name to the Association of Baptists for Scouting (ABS).

The ABS is a group of concerned Baptists who, in the best cooperative spirit, are interested in supporting the total mission of our churches by offering a positive youth program with a spiritual emphasis.

Our Mission

The mission of the ABS is to help strengthen Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing as an integral part of local Baptist congregations' ministry to youth. The ABS also assists BSA local councils to register new units within Baptist churches, helping the churches in their mission of outreach, Christian citizenship, education, and lay leader development.

More than 100,000 Scouting youth and adult members are now being served through approximately 5,000 Baptist churches that use the Scouting program as part of their ministry to youth. More than 3,200 of these youth earned one or more of the God and Country series or religious emblems as part of their spiritual growth program in 2004.

Needs

- Nearly 80,000 of the estimated 100,000 Baptist churches in the United States have no youth program beyond Sunday school. Approximately 5,000 Baptist churches use Scouting as an outreach ministry to youth and families.
- Churches operate 54 percent of all Scouting units.
- Although Baptists have historically been strong on Christian citizenship, outreach, and community service, many pastors and lay leaders do not understand or recognize the Scouting program as a sleeping giant of outreach ministry.

Why Just Baptist?

Although many denominations use the Scouting program, there are more Baptist churches in more places that are concerned about reaching youth but do not have the proper vehicle to accomplish their mission. Scouting can help meet this need.

What About Other Youth Programs in the Church?

According to a Baylor University study of youth programs in SBC, ministers from Southern Baptist churches with both RA and BSA programs report that the programs complement much more than they conflict. The complementary nature of Scouting and Brotherhood youth programs stems in large part from the distinct and complementary nature of the programs' goals.

Thousands of Baptist churches have more than one youth program operating successfully and compatibly. Other youth programs in the church tend to be "inreach" ministry programs while Scouting is an "outreach" ministry. These programs serve different target markets. The keys: *purpose*, *goal*, and *leadership*.

**Investment
Dividends**

- Some Baptist youth have become Christian while working on the God and Country religious emblems program.
- Many Baptist God and Country recipients now hold full-time, church-related occupations; countless others have become active lay leaders in local churches.
- A strong majority of Baptist leaders are Scouting-trained.
- Scouting is a family-centered program designed to help strengthen the family unit.
- Baptists have the prime opportunity to influence character, Christian citizenship, and leadership development in youth.