

# ABS Today

A Publication of the  
National Association of  
Baptists for Scouting

Fall/Winter 2009

## 2009 National Meeting Held at Philmont Scout Reservation

June 27, 2009

ABS held its annual meeting at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, NM. Pressing business at this year's meeting included updating the association's by-laws and election of new officers. The by-laws were in need of updating and ABS is blessed that ABS member Bobby Boykin took on this project. His recommendations were reviewed by the voting members and passed without exception. Thank you Bobby for your work on this project. Please go to our Website should you wish to review the changes.

Smoky Eggers, endowment chair, gave a report of his travels around the country talking about ABS and our endowment

fund to keep us operational. He has reached the Carolinas, the West—including Oklahoma—and met with members in the South during the fall.

Election of new officers was a big part of the meeting and we have a new president and vice president who have not previously served on the board. This is exciting as they will bring new energy to the job and will carry on with the great job Chip Turner has done during the past several years.

Our new president is Jeff Thompson of Gainesville, Georgia; with A.J. Smith of Alabaster, Alabama, coming in as vice president; and Merri C. Addison of Phenix City, Alabama, will be our secre-

tary. A complete listing of officers is inside this issue.

The 2010 National Meeting location and date were not decided at the meeting, but information on this will be published very soon.

Charles Holmes, Community Alliance, National Office, was presented with the Good Shepherd Award.



## Bringing Youth to Christ through a Scouting Ministry

June 21-27, 2009,  
PHILMONT

ABS hosted Bringing Youth to Christ through a Scouting Ministry training during Relationship Week 2009. Twenty participants from across the United States,

including 98-year-old Olen Jackson, received training to help us renew our goal of helping organize new units in Baptist churches. We received the tools to work with and made new friends to help support us in this effort. We were

also privileged to be invited to a Friday night dinner at the home of the Rabbi who was serving on Chaplain Staff.

If you have concerns about starting a new Scout unit, see the article on page six.

### Special Points of Interest:

- Annual meeting and relationship training at Philmont Scout Reservation
- Olen Jackson
- Changes to P.R.A.Y.
- Endowment and time to renew membership

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Founded 1954

[www.baptistscouters.org](http://www.baptistscouters.org)

## President's Message: Who Are We? — Jeff Thompson

Jack ran into a general store and asked the owner, "Have you seen me before?" "No, never!" he replied. "Then how do you know this IS me?," Jack cried.

This Appalachian antidote expresses our challenge as the Association of Baptists for Scouting. Scouting has been connected with Baptist churches since its beginning in the United States. Baptist leaders have volunteered and supported Scouting on both the national and local levels. Several of these Baptist leaders organized ABS in 1951 to build a network between Baptists and Scouting. With this rich history, it is surprising that today so few Baptist denominations and churches know anything about our association or how Scouting can be a ministry.

We have a great opportunity to address the question, "Who are we?" We can address this by doing the following:

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*"Who are we?" Does your church and BSA Council know about us?*

*Jeff Thompson, President*

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- Better understanding our history. All members need to read "Why Not Baptist?" by Chip Turner.
- Continuing to develop our policies and procedures.
- Continuing to develop leadership.
- Ensuring communication with and support for members.
- Staying focused on our mission statement: to bring youth to Christ through a Scouting Ministry.
- Working with Baptist denomina-

tions and churches proclaiming our existence and explaining Scouting as a ministry, especially among children and youth ministers.

- Continuing to work on our goal of having 50 Scout units chartered to Baptist churches.
- Having at least 5,000 God & Country religious emblems completed by Baptist youth.
- Recognize at least 150 Baptist pastors and lay persons with the Good Shepherd award.
- Having a fully functioning Joe C. Carrington Society.

In pursuing these, we will better understand who we are and will be able to better communicate our mission so that Scouting can become an instrument for the Kingdom of God.

## A Modern "Barnabas" — Olen Jackson

Brother Olen Jackson at 98 years young was a model Barnabas—always an encourager. He came to the 2009 Philmont Baptist Conference to say "so long" to Scouting and his friends. In his own words this is what happened: "I became alive, got my second and third wind and God worked an old-time revival in me. God told these old bones to get up and walk...run! So I told my brothers and sisters at Philmont that I was going back to Bienville Parish in Louisiana and get Scouting back in my church and community."

In a short time Olen called "Smoky" Eggers and said, "Come over and help me." In the meantime he had lots of encouragement from many of his Philmont friends through cards, letters and telephone calls. Smoky called the Norwela Scout Council, and the Scout Executive and staff pledged their help. On August 9, 2009, a planning meeting was held at the Council office with

current and retired BSA professionals. Olen said, "Now give God the credit!"

Since 2006 ABS has had the theme "Revival in Baptists for Scouting." Using this theme, Olen planned for Smoky, District Executive Grant, and Pastor Rev. Samuel Joseph to meet with this church, Springfield Baptist in Gibsland, Louisiana, to continue the revival and reorganize a pack and troop in Gibsland, Louisiana. "But, God had much bigger plans," Olen said, "God had arranged that on the fifth Sunday in August, 12 National Baptist

churches would meet together in Gibsland with over 100 pastors, deacons and other church leaders."

The conference leadership invited us to speak, to hear our story and God's plans to bring Scouting back to the area. They heard that there were 81 Baptist churches in the district with over half being National Baptists and that there were NO Scouting units in this large area. C.G. Miller, Jerry Allen and Ora Miller assured us that the entire conference would be in attendance to hear us for a 15-minute presentation. We had come prepared to give all key leadership a National Baptist Emphasis kit along with the BSA Baptist kit on "How to Organize a Unit in a Baptist Church." Olen said, "God's people listened and we will bring back a pack and troop in Springfield Baptist Church this year. If rural



Continued on next page..

## An Interview with Smoky Eggers, Endowment Director

Smoky Eggers selflessly stepped up to the plate and accepted the position of Endowment Director. He has given us 14 months of dedicated hard work, covering 11 states and holding 88 meetings. Recently, Dr. Kirk Sullivan was able to catch up with Smoky and interview him to ask him questions on what has happened, where we are, and where we need to be:

**Background:** ABS just completed the first year of its campaign to raise \$3 million for the endowment. Our first year's goals were:

- Get ABS's most active members and friends signed up.
- Get organized in 12 key states.
- Reach a target of \$300,000.

**Q. Dr. Sullivan:** How are we doing?

**A. Smoky:** Our goal for the first year was \$300,000. I am pleased to report that 100 friends and believers have donated \$216,000. While short of our goal, we are not the least bit discouraged.

**Q. Dr. S:** Will we reach our goal of \$3 million by the end of 2011?

**A. Smoky:** YES, but only if we have enough volunteers to make the necessary contacts. Who is we? You and me and all ABS members.

**Q. Dr. S:** What is our greatest need?

**A. Smoky:** A more comprehensive written plan for the campaign.

**Q. Dr. S:** What else is needed to insure

victory?

**A. Smoky:** We need to double the number of workers; hold 100 more information meetings in the key states of FL, TN, GA, KY, MO and VA; and time and people helping to get major gifts and providing major gifts.

**Q. Dr. S:** What will it take to be more successful?

**A. Smoky:** More dedicated people like those listed in the newsletter who have a sense of PASSION, URGENCY AND RISK.

**Q. Dr. S:** What is the track record for ABS?

**A. Smoky:** In a nutshell, we have raised \$3 million twice in our 54-year history. This was during the Joe C. Carrington years and during the Dr. Owen Cooper and Al Lineberry years.

**Q. Dr. S:** What are the primary giving principles?

**A. Smoky:** People give money to people! People give money to opportunities, not to needs. People give money to success, not distress. People give money to make a change for the good. People do not give money, unless they are asked!

**Q. Dr. S:** Smoky, in your 36 years of experience on the battlefield for ABS, where have we not measured up?

**A. Smoky:** Lack of commitment and always being organized as we should be. "Bringing youth to Christ through a Scouting Ministry" is a theme that will serve as our guiding light.

We need to put ABS in our wills like our brother Catholic, LDS and other major Scouting denominations do.

Too much has been expected of professional Scouters and a few dedicated volunteers who have carried 80 percent of the load! The groups listed above have worked together more effectively and believe strongly in their purpose. If Baptists are to move up from #5 among religious groups, we must be willing to cooperate and work efficiently.

**"WE CANNOT FAIL IF WE PUT GOD FIRST AND PRAY FOR HIS GUIDANCE. WE MUST FOLLOW OUR LEADERS AND WORK TOGETHER. THEN, WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN "BRINGING YOUTH TO CHRIST THROUGH A SCOUTING MINISTRY."**

Smoky, at age 83, has been involved in Scouting for 70 of those years. In March 2010, he will retire as our Endowment Director. He has helped the rest of us with our ABS goals as he worked on the goals for the Endowment. Over the next four months he will be concentrating on Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia and Missouri. We can help reach our goals by helping him in those states or in the state where you serve Scouting and your church.

Let's pledge to pray more, to invite our Scouting friends and church members to join ABS, and to get copies of the pledge form into the hands of our friends to provide them with opportunities to support ABS and our goals.

## Olen Jackson — Continued

Louisiana can have a Scouting revival, why can't the rest of us allow God to work through us to do the same?"

Olen Jackson left us on October 12, but his vision is not gone. Smoky Eggers, Sam Houston, and Robert Hightower represented ABS at the memorial services in Scouting uniform. The pastor

made a commitment to start those Scouting units Olen was committed to forming.

Olen, you will be missed. See you on the other side.



A.J. Smith, Sam Houston, and Olen Jackson, at "Bringing Youth to Christ through a Baptist Scouting Ministry," Philmont Training Center, Philmont Scout Ranch, NM

# P.R.A.Y. Program has a New Look

By Mark Hazelwood

In July 2009, the P.R.A.Y. Program received a facelift. It's the same great program, but with a fresh new look that blends the traditional with the contemporary. Recognitions retain the cross on the shield, but feature a new color-coded design to symbolize how the four programs come together to build a foundation of faith for young people.

The four colors represent the four levels in the P.R.A.Y. series: God and Me (Red), God and Family (Yellow), God and Church (Blue), and God and Life (Green). These four colors converge into a point to create an "X" at the center of the cross. "X" is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ, and it is symbolic of how Christ should be at the center of our lives.

The new look coincides with a name change. Rather than referring to the curriculum as the "God and Country" series, it will now be called the P.R.A.Y. Program. Each medal will designate a specific program they have completed.

These changes stem directly from a desire to increase the number of youth participating in the program and to increase the number of congregations developing a P.R.A.Y. ministry. A large number of clergy perceived "God and Country" to be a B.S.A. program and would not teach it, not realizing that it was actually created by the faith community.

The actual curriculum content has not changed; the program themes and requirements are still the same. The "old" books are not obsolete. Denominational medals have changed in order to reduce the number of items that need to be tested. Instead of nine different denominational medals to choose from, there is only one standard medal. Everyone will use the same medallion and have the option of "customizing" it by pinning a denominational pin onto the ribbon.

Out of respect for current youth members who have already completed two of

the four programs, P.R.A.Y. will continue to make the standard old style God and Church medals available for the next two to three years, and the standard Gold and Life medal even past that. This commitment extends only to standard Protestant medallions. Visit the P.R.A.Y. Website at <http://www.praypub.org> for pictures and further details.

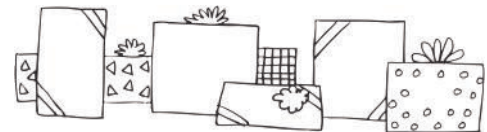


## Year-End Giving – Remember the ABS Endowment Fund

As 2009 winds down, and you look at your yearend giving, we request that you consider giving to the ABS Endowment fund. The Officers of the Association of Baptists for Scouting would like to extend our wishes to you, your Scouting Units and your families for a blessed Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

The total cash and pledges (including prior cash and pledges) to date is \$218,300. These pledges and gifts are the result of the commitment of the following leaders: Al Lineberry, Rex Thomas and David Johnson (Division I); Ernest Reece, Roy Gullick, and Merri Addison (Division II); Olen Jackson, Van East, Alan Carlton, Troy Kelley and Michael Grissom (Division III).

Nov./Dec. Report	Total Gifts	Receipts Nov./Dec.	Division Total
<b>Division I</b>	37	\$3,400	\$30,425
<b>Division II</b>	32	\$2,100	\$27,550
<b>Division III</b>	59	\$1,350	\$54,600
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>\$6,850</b>	<b>\$112,575</b>



We are accepting applications for the position of editor and publisher of the ABS newsletter. If you are interested in this position, please send a self-written application describing why you would like be considered for this position and what your vision is for our newsletter.

Please e-mail your application to Merri Addison at [merri81@bellsouth.net](mailto:merri81@bellsouth.net) and

Jeff Thompson at [go-hiking@earthlink.net](mailto:go-hiking@earthlink.net).

This is a great opportunity for you to serve God while ministering to your fellow ABS Members.

The newsletter is currently published on a quarterly basis. If you have any questions about this position, please call Merri Addison at (706) 366-4998.

## Community Alliances Division and ABS

National BSA has been reorganized. The Relationships Division, Commissioners and all levels of the Scouting program are now called Community Alliances. This is headed by Charles Holmes (member of ABS) and his assistants Sharon Aycock and Angela Elliott. We would like to extend a "thank you" to them for all they have done and all they continue to do to assist ABS.

We volunteers must have an organiza-

tion to work with (the BSA) and they must have volunteers to help them with their work. If you get a chance, why not drop them a "thank you" card in the mail. It would be a welcome change from the usual "we want something" they receive. You may send them to the following address:

BSA National Office  
PO Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015

## Humor Break

A bent-over old lady hobbled into a doctor's office. Within minutes she came out again, but miraculously she was standing upright. A man in the waiting room watching her said in amazement, "My goodness, what did the doctor do to you?" The old lady replied, "he gave me a longer cane."

— Sam Houston

## A Promise to Keep, A Biblical Perspective on the Scout Oath

*On my honor,*  
Psalms 15:1-2

*I will do my best*  
Hebrews 6:1 and Matthew 5:45

*To do my duty to God and my country*  
Deuteronomy 6:5

*And to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times;*  
Proverbs 3:27

*Making a promise is basis to Christian life and to the Scout Oath. The resource book for life is the Bible.*

*To keep myself physically strong,*  
I Kings 2:2

*Mentally awake,*  
II Timothy 2:15

*And morally straight.*  
Psalms 24, I Timothy 2,  
Proverbs 10:9

Christians are to practice the highest standards of morality, and Scouting affirms this exemplary stance. Truly the Scout Oath is a promise to keep! It is positive training for life. It is biblically sound. Scouting is an outreach ministry.

## 2009 Atlanta Area Council Duty to God Encampment

By John Lyon, Baptist representative—AAC Religious Relations Committee



The last weekend of October brought together over 580 Scouts and Scouters to Bert Adams Scout Reservation for the 2009 Duty to God Encampment. The event started off with ABS representative Smoky Eggers (left) presenting the Silver Good Shepherd award to

Mr. Truett Cathy (right) Friday evening.

Saturday there were three specific religious services spread throughout the day: a Jewish Shabbat, a Catholic Mass and a Protestant Vespers.

Also on Saturday, discussion leaders worked with small groups of Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. The goal for Cub Scouts was to earn the Language and Culture belt loop, while Boy Scouts worked toward a strong partial on the American Cultures merit badge. In addition, a round-robin game provided different aspects of faith and opportunities to practice them, while a wide-area game in the tradition of Baden Powell

kept everyone busy.

An interfaith worship service capped off the weekend on Sunday.

For more pictures of the event, go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/biggamecat/DTGE2009?authkey=Gv1sRgCOHi4J24n4rHIw#>.



The BSA will soon celebrate its biggest milestone yet—its 100th Anniversary Celebration. We want to fire up the passion for Scouting while giving everyone an opportunity to make a difference—and earn recognition. Through *A Year of Celebration, A Century of Making a Difference*, we will do just that. Individuals can earn awards by demonstrating dedication to five of Scouting's core values—Leadership, Achievement, Community Service, Character, and the Outdoors. Participants can earn one award in each category. The program will be both fun and engaging and, most important, will show America the impact of Scouting through its commitment to these values. To find out more, go to <http://scouting.org/100years>.

# Common Concerns about Organizing a Scout Unit

## 1. We already have a youth program.

It's great that your organization cares about the youth in its community. Scouting is ideal for working hand in hand with existing programs to enhance current offerings. Not only are the BSA's goals/values compatible with yours, but its methods can work well with what you do. Scouting provides programs and facilities to make a good program even better.

## 2. We tried Scouting before and it did not work.

What do you feel were the reasons it didn't work? Was it a lack of organization/commitment, uncommitted or poor leaders, lack of training, lack of vision, or poor support from your district/council/BSA? Address each issue:

- **Organizational commitment:** This starts at the top. A strong **commitment** from of your organization's leadership (head, board, etc.) will be contagious.
- **Leaders:** Use **selection**, not recruiting. Go after the very best in your organization (after all, it's your program), train them and then support them!
- **Vision:** Be creative about how you serve the youth of your organization; have a **vision** of what you want your program to accomplish and then implement that vision.
- **BSA issues:** Assume it will not happen again, then promise and deliver.

## 3. We don't have any youth in our organization.

Scouting provides a means for your organization to become known in the community, especially among families with children of Scouting age. It's great advertising and community goodwill. In addition, the Scouting program is a tremendous outreach tool into the community and gives people an opportunity to become a part of your organization.

## 4. We cannot afford Scouting.

The ninth point of the Scout Law states: A Scout is thrifty – he learns to pay his own way. We teach that Scouts and units should pay their own way. We provide opportunities for troops to raise money for their use. The only cost to chartered organizations is a \$20 charter fee.



## 5. We don't have any meeting space in our building.

The BSA understands how you feel; others have felt that way, too. Many organizations have identified classroom areas as meeting space for Scouting programs. Additionally, some organizations used the resources of their members and employees to provide space for meetings. Another potential solution is that of a joint chartered organization to charter the Scouting program.

## 6. No one knows anything about the Scouting program.

Many of our best leaders have started out knowing little or nothing about the Scouting program. Scout councils provide various training courses throughout the year, roundtables and self-study materials. Subjects include outdoor skills and other topics. The BSA also provides volunteer support for leaders to help them provide a high-quality program.

## 7. We cannot charter a Scouting unit because we have no leaders.

The BSA has a process to help you choose leaders. The process involves listing the characteristics required for a leadership position and then identifying individuals who fit those characteristics.

## 8. We cannot charter a Scouting program because our youth are mostly from single-parent families.

One of the strengths of the Scouting program is its ability to include and serve a variety of family configurations. In fact, Scouting is particularly helpful to youth from single-parent families.

## 9. No one has time to be a leader.

It's important that you find the time; if you don't, there are people on the streets who will find the time to spend with your child, and they may not be the type or kind of people you want your child to be around. Scouting has a program that brings families together, consisting of family camping, religious awards, etc.

## 10. Liability is a major concern of our organization.

The general liability policy issued to the BSA provides primary liability insurance coverage for all chartered organizations for liability arising out of their chartering of a traditional Scouting unit. Your \$20 charter fee covers your organization with the liability insurance provided by the BSA.

To download a copy *Organizing a Unit at a Baptist Church: New Unit Resource Kit*, which contains this as well as additional information on starting a new Scout unit, go to <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/baptis.pdf>.

For questions or other assistance in starting a Scout unit, contact your local BSA council office where there are trained professionals ready to assist. You can find your local office by going to <http://www.scouting.org> and clicking on "Find Your Local Council" at the top of the page.

# Renew Your ABS Membership Today for 2010



Don't miss out on receiving the ABS newsletter and other benefits of membership. Just complete the form below and return it with your payment to the address listed at the bottom of the form to renew your ABS membership for 2010.

## Application for ABS Membership – for 2010

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Church Membership \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Church – City, State)

Baptist Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

(Example – Southern Baptist, National Baptist, etc. or if not Baptist – other denomination)

Local BSA Council \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years in Scouting \_\_\_\_\_

Scouting Position(s) Currently Held \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my Annual Membership Fee (check one):

- \$35 Individual                       New or  Renewal
- \$50 Joint (husband and wife)     New or  Renewal
- \$100 Corporate, Business or Church
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ additional contribution to the ABS Endowment Fund.

Please send me information about the following:

- P.R.A.Y. Program (formerly God & Country Religious Emblems Series)
- Good Shepherd Adult Recognition
- Literature on Scouting Ministry in Baptist Churches
  - Baptist Unit Award of Excellence
  - ABS Endowment Fund
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this completed form with your check to:

**Association of Baptists for Scouting, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079**

President – Jeff Thompson

Vice-President – A.J. Smith

Secretary – Merri C. Addison

Questions: call or e-mail the secretary at (706) 366-4998 / merri81@bellsouth.net

ABS is a 501(c) 3 corporation.

### Distinguished Eagle Presented to Dr. Kirk Neely

Dr. Kirk Neely of Spartanburg was presented with the Distinguished Eagle award in early November by the Palmetto Council. Dr. Neely is a 50-year veteran Baptist Scouter and chair of two Baptist Reachout Conferences.

Dr. Neely is a doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling. He's also a former Merrill Fellow at The Divinity School of Harvard University, where he did post-doctoral study.

Congratulations Dr. Neely.



*Almighty God,  
As we enter the celebration of 100  
years of Scouting in the United  
States, we  
Ask for your blessing and guidance.  
Teach us to Stay, in the very center of  
Scouting principles,  
Teach us to Say, words filled with  
honesty, integrity and honor  
Teach us to Display, genuine Scout-  
ing spirit grounded in the Scout Oath  
and Law  
Teach us to Play, so that doing our  
duty is an expression of job  
Teach us to Pray, for your grace and  
truth to give breath and life to the  
Scouting movement worldwide.  
Thus, O God we humbly ask for your  
assistance, now and in the decades to  
come.  
Amen*

Dr. William Paul Tabell  
Philmont Chaplain, 2009

### 2009–2010 Officers

- **President**  
Jeff Thompson
- **Vice President**  
A.J. Smith
- **Secretary**  
Merri C. Addison
- **VP Membership**  
Bobby Boykin
- **Treasurer**  
Ed Brown
- **Chaplain**  
Sam Houston
- **Webmaster**  
Michael Grissom
- **Newsletter**  
Merri C. Addison
- **God & Country**  
Michael Grissom
- **Endowment VP**  
Smoky Eggers
- **Good Shepherd VP**  
Smoky Eggers
- **2010 Jamboree Chair**  
Joe Yoke

The ABS Today newsletter is a members' benefit. If you membership is not up-to-date and in good standing, this will be the last newsletter you receive. See the enclosed application to renew your membership. Thank you for your support of Scouting.