The End
of an Era

T

hursday, May 25, marked the end of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) as a moral force in guiding boys into manhood.

On My Honor, I Will Do My Best
Writing these words brings no joy. My background in scouting runs deep – serving in turn as a den leader, Cubmaster, assistant scoutmaster, troop chaplain, troop committee chair, national jamboree chaplain, and Venture crew advisor.

I have completed the comprehensive range of scout leader training and have received many recognitions and honors. I serve on the board of Members of Churches of Christ for Scouting and am a father of two Eagle Scouts.

To Be Morally Straight
From its founding, the BSA has regarded homosexuality as inconsistent with scouting’s commitment to morality – most recently reaffirming this prohibition in the summer of 2012.

Following months of pressure from liberal groups, the BSA executive committee in February 2013 intended to lift the ban on homosexuals, both as adult leaders and youth members. This intent leaked to the press, creating a firestorm and causing the national leadership to back down temporarily and to put forward a new proposal.

The compromise now embraced by a majority of the full voting membership forces all scouting units to accept homosexual youth into packs, troops and crews. The prohibition on homosexual leaders remains in place. This new openness to homosexual youth goes into effect Jan. 1, 2014. My exit from scouting will be Dec. 31.

My problem with this change is on two fronts. First, morally, accepting homosexuality as a permissible option and, further, forcing all scout groups to accept homosexuals without regard to the moral principles of the religious groups sponsoring most scouting units destroys the foundations of traditional decency.

Second, practically, permitting open homosexual youth to participate is corruptive to young men going through the challenging time of adolescence. The BSA placed in their new policy a cynical prohibition against sexual activity of any kind by youth. They imagine this fig leaf will cover the perversity of their pretense.

Imagine, in working with a mixed group of teenage boys and girls, if we were to set a policy prohibiting sexual activity but then permit these boys and girls to sleep in the same tents and to shower in the same bathhouses. The very idea is vulgar. Why is it, then, acceptable to insinuate open homosexuals into such proximity with other boys?

Young men in their teen years are sorting through how to address their sexual desires appropriately. They need guidance in understanding the morality of traditional relationships between men and women. They do not need the confusion brought on by open homosexuals engaging them romantically – or even sexually.

A Scout Is Trustworthy
I am not leaving precipitously. In anticipation of scouting’s abandonment of morality, I have been resigning my various responsibilities. Yet there are young men who are counting on me to help with their advancement throughout the next few months, and I will not let them down.

I know many devoted men and women of faith who are remaining in the scouting program, and I wish them well. Other than church and family, the friends I have made in scouting have been the best people I know.

I intend to continue to help individual scouts in any way I can, but from outside the program. I will be glad to help the young men with Eagle projects and to attend their courts of honor. We will continue to buy popcorn from the boys, even as we have continued to buy cookies from the girls.

But I will not serve as an advocate for a program I believe sold its birthright for a bowl of liberal stew. I will always treasure the blessing scouting has been in the past and will always regret the travesty it has now become.