



Royal Rangers

MINISTRY PLAN FOR 2008 - 2012

# Seek & Save

— LUKE 19:10

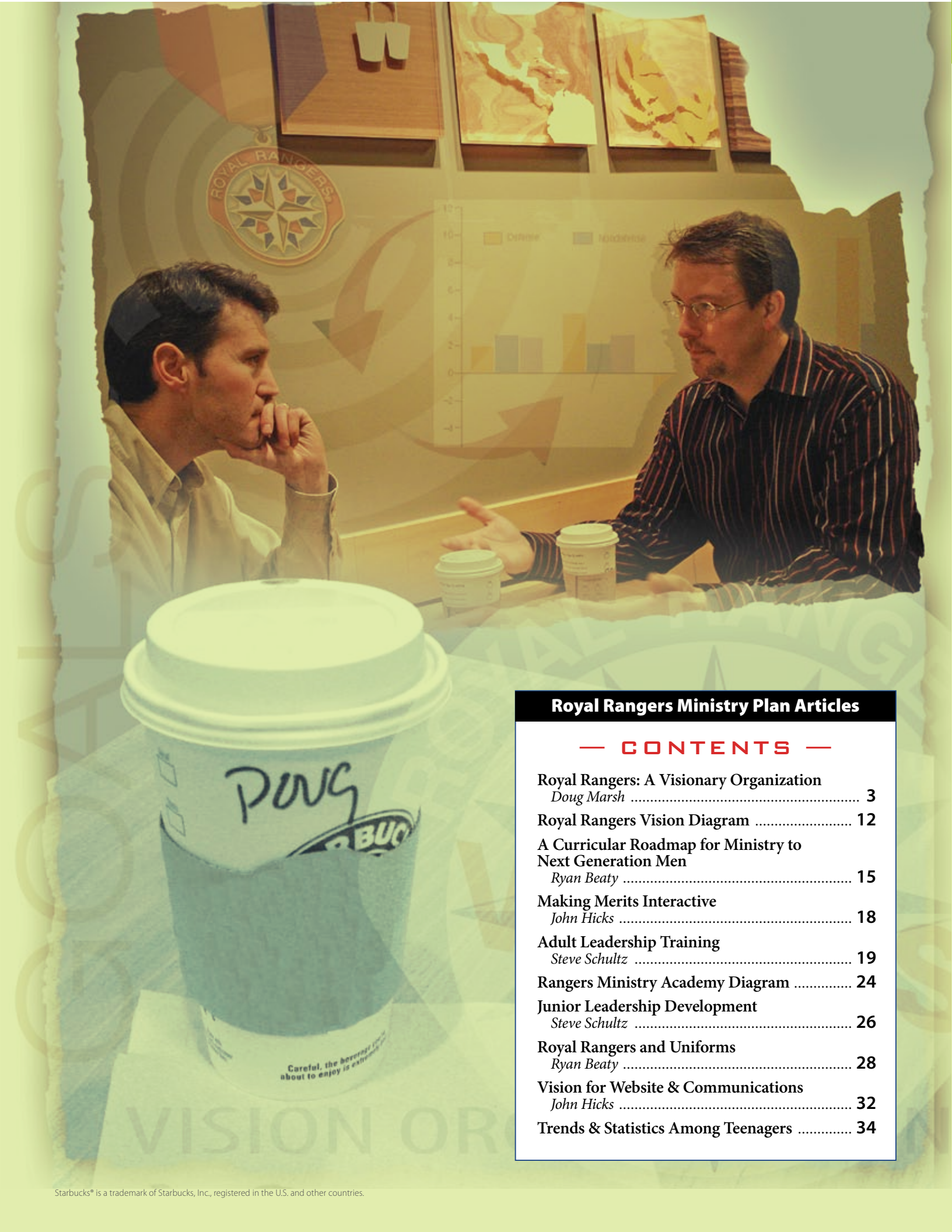
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Royal Rangers  
to the iPod<sup>®</sup>  
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## Royal Rangers Ministry Plan Articles

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# Royal Rangers: *A Visionary Organization*

*John Hicks and Doug Marsh visited over a latte at Starbucks®. Here's how the conversation went...*

## INTRODUCTION

*Doug, you have been the national Royal Rangers director for just over one year. How are you feeling in your new position?*

I am honored to be serving our movement! Our best pastors, children's and youth leaders, and laypeople lead Royal Rangers; they are shaping many of our movement's finest future men. As I witness their devotion to ministering to the spiritual needs of boys and young men, I can't help but feel humbled by the opportunity to serve them. I've concluded they are the most exemplary sacrificial givers of our time.

In addition to a sense of awe, I also feel very optimistic. God has yet again given the Assemblies of God family outstanding leadership in the persons of Dr. George Wood, Rev. Alton Garrison, and the other members of the Executive Leadership Team. They are skillfully building on the contributions of Brothers Trask and Crabtree.

Dr. Wood has articulated five core values that will guide the activities of our national headquarters family; one being to "strategically invest in the next generation." Our new leadership continues to value Royal Rangers' investment in the next generation of men! They are also setting the stage to enhance cooperation between ministries at headquarters, like Royal Rangers with Children's Ministries, Youth Ministries, Men's Ministries, Girls Ministries, Gospel Publishing House, and others.

It is an exciting day to be part of the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal movement in America and around the world; it is an exciting day to be reaching boys and young men.

So, John, you asked how I feel. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve and optimistic about the future of our movement and our efforts to influence the lives of boys.

## VISION

*You are a visionary leader. So everyone is dying to know where are we going as a ministry?*

Actually, I'm not sure many leaders would (or should) be comfortable being called a "visionary leader." No organization should depend on a single visionary leader for direction.

Instead, leaders at all levels, especially at the local level, should be energized by and fully committed to a common cause. In our case, it is taking boys on a full journey to Christlike manhood. Royal Rangers is a mentoring ministry for future men. Once we are bound by a common cause and identity, everyone is free to be innovative, to make decisions, and to pursue goals within the framework of the cause. This keeps every member's activities coherent and coordinated. Our ministry vision should be shared by every member and personally owned and modeled by each.

So I'm more comfortable suggesting we view

ourselves as a visionary organization, comprised of members who are bound by and committed to a common cause and shared identity.

*Point well taken. You want Royal Rangers to be a visionary organization/ministry, not one led by a visionary leader per se.*

Exactly right!

*So what is our battle cry? What challenge do you rally Royal Rangers leaders around?*

Excellent question. Here is my challenge to every Royal Rangers leader: "Let's influence more boys and young men than ever and do it more effectively than ever!"

You see, in nearly five decades Royal Rangers has influenced *millions* of boys in America and around the world, *literally!* While this reality excites us, we must not let our memories of the past be greater than our dreams for the future. We have only just begun. Our success is not measured by what we have accomplished but by what we have yet to accomplish. There are millions of Ranger-aged boys in America today, yet only 125,000 of them are affiliated with our ministry. Far too many of them have no clue God in His love is searching them out for personal and eternal friendship. We have millions of boys and young men to influence, so our best days must lie ahead—their eternal destiny depends on it! *We must* influence more boys and young men than ever.

What is more, we must be very effective in how

we reach them today. The message of the gospel is timeless, but the methods are not. There is no such thing as a timeless “Ranger way.” What *made* Royal Rangers relevant to boys and young men in 1962 when Rangers was founded may or may not *keep* Royal Rangers relevant today or tomorrow. Our loyalty is not to temporary methodology but to the timeless message. We are committed to taking the message to boys and young men even as we adapt our methods. Souls-in-the-balance demand that we be more effective today than ever!

So bottom line, I want to challenge our leaders at all levels to grow, to reach out to influence more boys than ever, and to do it more effectively than they ever have.

*Describe for me, then, in concise and vivid words what you hope Royal Rangers will look like in the not-so-distant future.*

We will be the premier, most sought after church ministry for the next generation of men in America—period! It will be affordable and practical so that every family and church can participate. As we grow, we will remain quick and responsive to learn and adapt to our changing society. Men will be eager to be trained to mentor young men in Christlike manhood; young men will be empowered to assume leadership of Royal Rangers, making it a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry. Personal and spiritual growth will be fun, hands-on experiential development; friendships will charge our ministry atmosphere. We will reach every boy and young man by creative methods; every Ranger will be eager to serve a God-given cause greater than self. Anyone would be proud to be associated with Royal Rangers!

*Wow! That’s exciting!*

It should be. As long as there are lost boys and young men in America, Royal Rangers leaders will be uniquely equipped to reach millions of them. Jeremiah 29:11 is a great message for Royal Rangers leaders today: “I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” If we will be a visionary organization under the direction of the Lord and be committed to what He is committed to, our past will always be bright while our best days will always be in the future.

## MISSION

*It sounds like our ministry purpose is rock solid.*

Absolutely! Royal Rangers exists to “reach, teach, and keep boys for Jesus Christ.” We are a mentoring ministry for future men.

*Reach* speaks to evangelism; we are each called to participate in world evangelism. *Teach* speaks to discipleship; as Royal Rangers leaders, we are each privileged to equip the next generation of Christlike men. *Keep* speaks to spirit-powered

leadership; we are to empower boys to be lifelong servant leaders.

Evangelism produces growth, equipping produces depth, and empowerment produces fruit that lasts. Wise Rangers leaders are purposefully engaged in all three activities.

This is why we exist—to evangelize the world, to equip the next generation of Christlike men, and to empower lifelong servant leaders. To Rangers leaders this is more than just our ministry purpose; it is our life purpose.

“I want to challenge our leaders to grow, to reach out to influence more boys than ever, and to do it more effectively than they ever have.”

## VALUES

*So our ministry purpose is rock solid, and, as you said, our loyalty is to the timeless message of the gospel. But it sounds like there are some improvements in the works for Royal Rangers if, as you suggest, our methods are temporary. What principles will direct you and the staff as you guide this ministry into the future?*

Well, I’d hope if we are all members of a visionary organization that we would be bound by some common values in pursuit of a common cause—principles that would guide everyone in Royal Rangers, not just the national team and me.

Let me break these down into three classes: individual, organizational, and ministerial values. John, you and I may chose to visit more in the future to flesh these out in more detail. For now, though, let me simply bullet these out.

*OK. You said the first set of values were individual values, right?*

That’s right. As Royal Rangers, we must each be committed *Christ-followers*. As such we should reflect the character, kindness, and zest for life exhibited by Christ and described in the Ranger Code. We should be *mentors*, Spirit-empowered models of Christlike manhood. We should be *servant leaders*. We are servants first, leaders second. We are also committed *team players* who balance individual and team rights for the good of the whole. Finally, we must be *faithful*. Those who follow will find us faithful for having been biblical, ethical, legal, moral, and wise.

*Let me see if I got all those. Royal Rangers leaders are committed Christ-followers, mentors, servant*

*leaders, team players, and faithful. Did I get them all?*

You got it! This describes a leader highly committed to his or her local church and to the cause of Christ.

*You said the next set of values were organizational. Describe them.*

Sure. As a ministry, Royal Rangers should be a missional organization (that is, a purposeful organization), a learning organization, and a relational organization.

As a *missional organization*, members are passionate for the things of God; passionate for the lost, doubters, and seekers; passionate about leadership development; and passionate about achieving goals. You see, we Royal Rangers leaders are passionate about boys because we know that every boy and young man is a custom project in the Master’s hands and we believe we are His tools.

As a *learning organization*, members are innovative; they question, learn, and change to meet the needs of their communities. Everyone is committed to personal improvement; we grow leaders so they can birth new ideas, take initiative, and solve problems. All minds are mined. Members are the opposite of defensive; they are open and vulnerable. Teaching and learning is hands-on and experiential.

And finally, as a *relational organization*, friendship charges the ministry atmosphere! Members connect upwardly with God, inwardly with one another, and outwardly with the lost. We are servants of the community first, leaders and change agents second.

*Those are great organizational values. What are the ministerial values?*

John, I’ve written extensively on these values in the series of articles entitled *ThinkOne*. So I don’t believe we need to spend a lot of time on these. I’d only encourage our leaders to download the five articles from the national ministry website.

In a nutshell, here are the ministerial values. Rangers must mirror New Testament ministry patterns because they are timeless. Our ministry *purpose* must always be evangelism and discipleship. Our *message* is the Word of God. Our *power* for ministry and our ministry direction come from the Holy Spirit; we are Spirit-empowered and led. Our *call* and the way we express it comes from God not from a ministry handbook. As a *community*, we are biblically mandated to love each other and the seeking extravagantly. And finally, our chief discipline must be prayer.

Again, I don’t feel we need to unpack these further since I’ve already written and spoken about these so much. Let me just add a note about how pleased I was with the response and participation



in the annual national prayer vigil that Randy Wood directed for us last fall. I anticipate this being an annual emphasis since prayer must be our chief discipline. If we work, we work. But if we pray as we work, God works all things out for His good.

**STRATEGY**

*Those are excellent values. But bringing about renewal in a ministry that's nearly 50 years old probably has its challenges. What is your approach or strategy?*

First off, I'm assuming leadership of a healthy ministry. My predecessors, starting with our founder, Johnnie Barnes, and followed by Ken Hunt and Richard Mariott, each invested his heart and soul into Royal Rangers. It is no accident that we have accomplished so much. Their leadership has inspired thousands upon thousands of men to join this cause, and millions of boys in America, in addition to those in 73 other nations, are the benefactors. Yet, there is no perfect ministry, and Royal Rangers won't be perfect when I'm succeeded either.

Having said that, we must choose one of three approaches to our future. One option is to defend the ministry just as it is, ignoring the question of whether or not we are relevant, practical, and affordable to the maximum number of today's church families as possible.

*It sounds like the stick-your-head-in-the-sand approach.*

Well, I would describe it as a "defender" mentality. In my view, this is the wrong approach to ministry; ministry should be forward moving not static or status quo. While we must always learn from the past, yesterday's success can be our worst enemy if we think it will always produce the same results. I consider it unwise to simply defend ministry as is, ever. As I said earlier when we discussed organizational values, we should seek to be a learning and evolving ministry, remaining in sync with the lost we are trying to reach with the timeless message of the gospel.

*You suggested there are three approaches to our future. What is the next?*

The next approach I also find unacceptable. If the first approach were labeled "defender," the opposite approach would be "prospector." A prospector is never concerned about where he last found gold, only where he will find it next.

Some have suggested Royal Rangers was effective in reaching boys yesterday, but today we need to find a new and different way. I fundamentally disagree with this approach because Royal Rangers, as a tool for the evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development of next generation men, is still very effective and widely used in the Assemblies of God and by over thirty other Pente-



costal fellowships.

That is not to say Royal Rangers is perfect, but to abandon it and move on is to ignore its present-day success. And frankly, provided we don't assume a defensive posture, I believe our best days are yet to come!

*So am I correct in assuming this third approach to our future is what you would suggest we embrace?*

Yes! I've chosen to call it the "analyzer." It is the proper balance between the two extremes described, defender and prospector. Neither approach is acceptable by itself, yet both have some merit.

There are many things we are doing very well that we should leverage as we move into the future. There are others that should be altered or discarded as we embrace new ideas and methods. If we embrace the values presented, the Royal Rangers of 2062 when we celebrate our centennial will still be committed to the same message and cause as we are today, yet the program will have evolved with a unique look and feel to its methodology consistently in sync with the times.

With the analytic strategy we are constantly questioning our methods, learning new ways, and changing to stay in sync with the lost so they can understand and appreciate our timeless message. As Rangers leaders, we should seek to be described the way the Old Testament historian portrayed the men of Issachar, "who understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (1 Chronicles 12:32).

As long as there are boys and as long as there

are men willing to be evangelists, the Holy Spirit will empower us to discern our times and how to communicate the timeless story of His love without compromise.

*You are touching on an important topic. Our society is constantly evolving. How have things changed since Royal Rangers started in 1962 and what affect does that have on us today?*

In 1962, our churches were rather homogenous, meaning they were very similar to one another. They were alike in worship style, service format and length, church structure, etc. You could be on the north side of town one Sunday, the south side another, in Washington D.C. on the third Sunday, and in Los Angeles on the fourth, and no matter where you were you pretty much knew what to expect. As a result, one-size-fits-all Royal Rangers was widely accepted. Today, you only need to visit a few church websites to find how different they are. For church leaders to view Royal Rangers as relevant, we should be wise by offering many applications--a flexible and simple ministry model.

That is why we say we are "Taking Royal Rangers to the iPod® Generation." A decade ago people were okay buying music on a CD with 10 songs arranged the way the label company chose. Today, people want to download select songs from the Internet and create playlists of their own choosing. This is an appropriate picture of what our churches feel they need and want. They are demanding a boys' ministry that is thorough and complete yet customizable to their unique needs.

*Can you illustrate what you mean?*

Sure. Some churches have more resources to devote to ministries like Royal Rangers, others less. Some want a strong emphasis on camping, others on sports, others on technology, others on trades, and still others want to emphasize some or all of these. Some want a spit-shine look to their uniforms, others a more functional image, others are content simply with t-shirts or no uniform at all. If we are wise, we will adjust our ministry to accommodate the full spectrum.

*So our churches want to pick and choose?*

Yes, they do. They need options that will fit their budgets, available manpower, interests of their leaders, boys, and young men, the demographic the church is trying to reach, etc.

Let me unpack this further by talking about camping. In the 60s and 70s camping was a great way to attract boys to our churches almost everywhere. Today, it still is in many communities. In others, however, it is not. So either we ignore the communities where camping is losing its appeal or we ask what will attract boys in those places and offer it in addition to camping.

This is a perfect example of the analyzer strat-

“Our Bible merits should instill into boys Christlike qualities and manly character, teaching them principles of biblical sexuality, biblical worldview, Bible doctrine and how it applies to them as future men, spiritual growth and disciplines, and Bible knowledge. This is the purpose of our Bible merits.”

egy. We don't abandon camping because it in fact does work in many places still. But we don't defend camping to the exclusion of other methods. By embracing new ideas, without discarding camping, we position ourselves to “influence more boys and young men than ever and do it more effectively than ever.”

*But don't we already do that? Doesn't our merit system already provide a wide range of options?*

Sure, in one sense it does. We have many merits that represent a wide range of interests. But if you are going to earn one of our medals, say the Gold Eagle or the Gold Medal of Achievement, you will need to get involved in camping. While I believe we have the content for a wide range of interests, we have yet to create an advancement system that will accommodate them all.

*We may be getting into more detail than you care to at this time, but would you mind explaining how we might create an advancement system that would accommodate the varied interests of boys? How does that work?*

I'd be glad to. There will be other venues for detailing this, but let me explain it in general terms. When you and I discussed the reason Royal Rangers exists, we said our purpose was evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development. Camping is only a means to an end. But if there are other means that would lead to the same end, would we not be wise to use them? Especially if there are boys who are disinterested in camping, but sports, for instance, might attract them to our churches.

Here is how I see it. Our Bible merits should instill into boys Christlike qualities and manly character, teaching them principles of biblical sexuality, biblical worldview, Bible doctrine and how it applies to them as future men, spiritual growth and disciplines, and Bible knowledge. This is the purpose of our Bible merits.

We plan to introduce 18 new leadership merits, six each year starting in '09. These will teach boys how to be servant leaders. There are five universal skills required to effect positive influence on others that future men should learn to apply from an early age. These are social skills (if people don't like you, they won't follow you), equipping skills (when you facilitate peoples' successes, they will flourish and, in combination with others, will make the cause flourish), attitude skills (as the adage goes, attitude determines altitude, and, yes, attitude is a choice--something boys should be reminded of from time to time), leadership skills (there are aptitudes boys can learn to help them manage and lead well), and servant leadership behaviours (learning the right to lead and influence others by serving them first and always). Our emphasis will be on empowering boys to be lifelong servant leaders.

In both the Bible and leadership merits, boys will receive the core of what Rangers is about—mentoring future men. The skills merits, then, have an important but different purpose. They build boys' confidence.

Do you mind, John, if I tell a story?

*Please do.*

When I was a sophomore at Central Bible College, Kerry was not yet my wife. She and a classmate got together on Spinster Spree weekend, a time when the girls get to ask the guys out. Kerry asked me out and her friend asked her boyfriend out. We went to a park for a picnic. Upon arriving, we two guys were each handed a 5-foot stick, one or two yards of fishing line, and a hook. We were then instructed to catch dinner. We hiked down to the pond and within about 45 minutes came back with enough fish for everyone, cleaned and ready to grill. The girls were shocked (and impressed, I might add) that we had actually caught something.

While we were fishing, they had planned to fire





up the grill but had not been able to do it. In no time, I had a fire going, and soon we had a bed of coals. Onto the next problem, the steak the girls had was too thick to actually cook. (Again, the girls had not expected us to really catch any fish!) So I cut the steak in half and butterflied the remaining two pieces. This took some time, of course, and now it was getting dark. So I took our fishing line and used it to hang a flashlight over our meal as we enjoyed our juicy steaks.

By the time the evening was over, I was feeling like a total stud. Without really trying, I had totally impressed my wife-to-be. I was feeling really confident as a man! Where had I learned these elementary skills? Royal Rangers, of course. Our skill merits build boys' confidence in their manhood.

*So bring that back around to our discussion on merits.*

What we did as a national team was ask, "What makes men in America feel 'Ar, ar, ar, I'm a man!'" (to borrow an expression from Tim the Tool Man Taylor). In other words, what general skills do men in our society value that contribute to their sense of manliness? We concluded that our confidence as men is nurtured by outdoor skills, sports, tools, technology, and the arts.

Think about it. Have you heard men say any of the following? "Yeah, I already took my buck this fall!" "Did you watch the game last night?" "Have I shown you my new 18-volt lithium-ion 1/2-inch cordless drill?" "Hang on, I need to reply to this SMS. I dig my new AT&T® smart phone! Have you ever played a McPhersen guitar? The workmanship and sound are off the charts, man!"

All that to say, John, that we can accommodate various interests without compromising our commitment as a ministry to build the next generation of godly men. That objective does not depend on a *single* interest activity.

Our skill merits can attract boys with a wide range of interests while building their competence and confidence as men. Our Bible and leadership merits will equip them to be the next generation of Christlike men and will empower them to be lifelong servant leaders.

*Sounds like we lose nothing!*

No, nothing. What we gain is the interest of a host of churches that might not otherwise be able to or wish to implement a camping program. What we have gained is the ability to minister to a whole lot more boys.

John, the conversation with pastors often goes something like this:

—"Pastor, I'd love to interest you in starting Royal Rangers so that you can build into the next generation of men in your congregation and community."

—"Well, I'd love to! Unfortunately, though, I

"It is my deep conviction that Royal Rangers can be the best in the world at "inspiring, mobilizing, and resourcing men to mentor future men."

only have one man interested in camping. For that reason, I've not been able to start Royal Rangers in my church."

That pretty much ends the whole conversation; the rest of the time after that is usually quite awkward.

What if that was not the end of the conversation?

—"Really, only one man interested in camping?"

—"Just one."

—"What are the other men in your congregation interested in?"

—"Well, I've got three others who are big into sports, and one is a computer technician."

—"Wow, so you actually have five men who could minister into the lives of boys?"

—"Well, yeah, but only one is interested in camping."

—"Pastor, Royal Rangers is no longer just a camping program. Did you know Royal Rangers provides the flexibility so you can build your boys ministry around the interests of your men, not just those interested in camping? Royal Rangers is not a camping program. It is a mentoring ministry for future men."

—"The pastor is surprised and says, "Really?"

See how we could potentially pick up a lot of churches by simply expanding our system so that it is built around the interests of the men in our churches, rather than simply around a single nationally-determined interest? Think of the church that only has a handful of men, none of which are outdoorsmen. Now the pastor can engage those men in ministry to boys.

*Doug, that sounds great! I'm excited!*

John, if I can, let me encourage the person who is either listening to this interview or reading the

transcript to pick up the book *Good to Great* by Jim Collins; it's also available as an audio book. In it the author encourages the leader to behave as a hedgehog, not a fox. The fox is always trying to figure out a new gimmick to get to the next level while the hedgehog has predetermined his or her normal activities and engages in them consistently, which steadily, when repeated over time, builds momentum and moves the ministry to a new level.

*Sounds like the key is to discover what must be done regularly to build that energy.*

Exactly right! To that end, Collins asks the leader to answer three questions. The first is, and I've taken the liberty to personalize these, "What is Royal Rangers passionate about?" The answer to that question is very easy for us. We are passionate about evangelizing, equipping, and empowering the next generation of Christlike men and lifelong servant leaders. We are passionate about life-changing ministry to boys.

*That has been our passion for nearly 50 years!*

Yes, it has.

*What is Collins' second question?*

Collins asks, and again I've personalized the question, "What can Royal Rangers be the best in the world at?" Now this proved to be more difficult to answer. From our founding, we have modeled ourselves after the Boy Scouts of America. It is a great American institution, and we have and will continue to learn a lot from them. But we had to ask, "Can we be the best scouters in the world?" The truth is we can't be. Primarily we can't be because that is not our purpose. Our passion and purpose revolve around reaching or evangelism, teaching or equipping, and keeping or empowering.

Our purposes are much more in keeping with Ephesians 4:12, where we provide our lead pastors, children's pastors, and youth pastors the resources and inspiration to "prepare the men in their congregation for works of service, so that the boys in the body of Christ may be built up." Our purposes are in line with Paul's instruction to young ministers in Titus 2:2, 6, "For today's men to mentor tomorrow's men to be temperate, respectful, self-controlled, sound in faith, love, and endurance."

Pardon my paraphrasing, but the point is we will never be the best scouters, or campers. However, I believe we can be the best ministry in the world at "inspiring, mobilizing, and resourcing men to mentor the next generation of Christlike men and lifelong servant leaders."

*Isn't it great to be part of a denomination that has such vision?*

It really is! We are all so honored to be part of a church fellowship that has a vision for gender-

“Our first overarching goal is to become a learning organization that is continually questioning, learning, and changing (QLC) to adapt to our constantly changing environment.”



specific ministry because ministry to boys and ministry to girls, separately, is biblically sound. There is nothing wrong with coed ministry, but there is a biblically identified need for men to minister into the lives of future men and women into the lives of future women.

It is my deep conviction that Royal Rangers can be the best in the world at “inspiring, mobilizing, and resourcing men to mentor future men.”

Let me add, too, John, we are honored to be part of a fellowship that holds Royal Rangers with open arms, willing to allow over 40 other Pentecostal organizations we relate with to have free access to the ministry.

*Outstanding! What is Jim Collins’ third question?*

His third question has to do with the economic engines required to propel Royal Rangers forward. While as a national team we spent a great deal of time determining this, for the purposes of our visit, I don’t feel it would be necessary to dive into the topic now. Let me point out the obvious, though, if I may. Ministries, even Royal Rangers, must have a plan to generate funding. You can’t have a thriving local, district, and national cause to reach, teach, and keep boys without financial resources at all levels.

When pastors adopt Royal Rangers they are



being resourced to minister to the boys in their flocks. But they are also participating in a nationwide, indeed a worldwide, cause of ministry to boys. The financial investment in ministry to local boys has a national and international impact. Being part of a fellowship with a vision for gender-specific ministry is awesome!

**GOALS**

*Doug, we have been visiting for some time now. You have laid out a solid foundation for understanding the vision, values, and strategies that will guide us into the future. Can you now give us some specific goals for things like curriculum, training, etc.?*

Sure. As a backdrop to the specific goals, let me review the overarching goals that I described at the National Royal Rangers Council in March 2007, shortly after my appointment.

*I think I even remember them. There are three: 1) become a learning organization; 2) become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry; and 3) become a broad ministry of interests to all boys.*

You nailed it!

*OK. Unpack them for us one at a time.*

Our first overarching goal is to become a learning organization that is continually questioning, learning, and changing (QLC) to adapt to our constantly changing environment. While the message of the gospel is timeless and unalterable, the methods for communicating that message can and should change. However, a learning organization does not simply engage in adaptive learning that says, “Hey, let’s tweak this or that until we get it perfect,” but rather in regenerative learning, which is a deeper level of QLC. It is basically asking deeper questions: “Does this work? How can we reach a greater percentage of boys than we are now? Are we using our time and energies wisely? What can or must we do that we have never done before to reach, teach, and keep boys?”

*A learning ministry sounds like a ministry always open to new ideas.*

True. We don’t change just for the sake of change, but, yes, we are always open because learners are curious by nature.

Learners also know that defensiveness is the anti-learning drug. We must avoid defending outdated methods simply based on the premise of “that’s the way things have always been done.” We must be open to new ideas and methods in keeping with a clearly defined purpose and statement of values, which we have already discussed.

*Doug, learning really happens when you synthesize information with other data.*

You’re right. That is why we must be students of our methods as well as students of our culture and environment. Then we must bathe what we are learning in prayer. We study because the Holy Spirit does not anoint ignorance, and we pray because we want to line up with God’s agenda and not our own. The Holy Spirit anoints and directs our learning and planning when we are faithful to go to Him in prayer. That is why our chief discipline must be prayer; God will help us apply what we are learning to reach more souls.





So that is our first overarching goal—becoming a learning organization.

*Let's move on, then, to the second overarching goal.*

The second is to become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry. This will require a fundamental shift in the way we train our leaders. Today, we train our adult leaders to lead Royal Rangers. We will now have to teach them how to equip and facilitate junior leadership in keeping with their boys' ages, maturity levels, and abilities. I believe this will be a key to growth. Junior leadership will ignite enthusiastic participation on the part of boys because they will take personal ownership of their outposts. It will also provide outposts with manpower from sources they are not currently accustomed to looking. We fool ourselves if we look at our boys, particularly our upper elementary, middle, and high school students, and see no leadership potential or desire to exercise leadership.

*Boys take ownership when they are given the opportunity to lead.*

That is so true. Thanksgiving afternoon 2005, Kerry, my wife, was setting up our family Christmas tree. Our then 9 and 7-year-old son and daughter were helping. Kerry instructed them to hang the most attractive ornaments on the front of the tree and the less attractive ones on the back. When she returned a few moments later, they had done just the opposite. All the ornaments they had made at school through the years, which in our estimation as parents held sentimental value but weren't exactly pretty, were all displayed in plain view. Jonathan and Katelyn really loved the tree that year; they took ownership. Of course, Kerry and I liked it too, but it was more beautiful to the kids than to us. So it may be with Royal Rangers as a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry; it may not be as neat to us adults, but when *they* "build it," they will assume a level of ownership that cannot be attained in any other way.

*So our first two overarching goals are to become a learning organization first and a boy-led adult-facilitated ministry second. Let's move into the third.*

Our third overarching goal is to become a broad ministry of interests to all boys in America. One of our current promotional posters reads, "Something for every boy." In theory this is true, but in practical terms we have not delivered. Royal Rangers, according to the Annual Church Ministries Report (ACMR), is currently active in approximately 40% of our churches. If we want that to grow, we must provide a ministry that will engage a wide range of boys' interests.

Now here is a fact we have known and taught for years: "The pastor is the key to Royal Rangers in your church." Part of the implication here is

that if a pastor feels that our activities or methods will interest only a small percentage of his boys he will determine we are irrelevant to his church. However, if that pastor determines Royal Rangers is a ministry with broad appeal to boys and that we will engage the wide spectrum of boys' interests, he will determine we *are* relevant.

Additionally, we must be simpler and more flexible; we must correctly be perceived as a manageable and affordable ministry from a human and economic resource standpoint, which is also a vital element if we are to be a broad ministry to boys. Royal Rangers must be affordable and practical for all churches so that boys living in the rural Great Plains, the city centers, and the bustling suburbs can all enjoy its benefits. This is also part of becoming a ministry with broad appeal; it is available for all churches and families regardless of their address, size, or economic means.

*Excellent! In review, then, there are three overarching goals: first, to become a learning organization; second, to become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry; and third, to become a broad ministry of interests to the greatest number of boys in America. Can we now move into some specific goals?*

"If the leaders themselves teach these servant leadership skills to the boys, they are not only learning but also obligating themselves to model and implement what they are teaching. The leadership merits profit the adult leaders as much as the junior leaders."

Sure. Let me bullet point these out for you. Of course, none of these will be accomplished in a day. These are medium-range goals, and, while we won't go into it at this time, we have broken each of these down into small steps to be accomplished incrementally over a two to five-year period.

*So no promised delivery dates?*

Nope! I'm too smart for that.

*OK. So where do you want to start? Curriculum?*

That would be a perfect place to start. Again,

since there will be other articles and presentations on each of these in greater detail, I will purposefully keep my responses very general.

Today, Royal Rangers enjoys the finest curriculum in our nearly 50-year history. We owe Commander Marriott and his team, principally Brian Hendrickson and Mike Laliberty, a debt of gratitude. They invested their hearts and souls. As we move forward, we have a solid curricular foundation to build on.

Here is our hope as we maintain and improve on it: "Men will find our curriculum a practical, enjoyable, and relevant resource that brings them personal satisfaction as they see boys develop. Boys will have fun while being led through a purposeful journey toward Christlike manhood."

This is key. If we believe we can be the best in the world at providing our churches with a future men's ministry that will mobilize, inspire, and resource their adult men to evangelize, equip and empower boys, then they must find our materials fun and effective. As men enjoy ministry success, that success will breed more success; more men will get involved. Growth in church participation combined with increased male participation equals growth in membership. Keeping our ministry curriculum sharp like a tool and up-to-date is key to perpetual growth.

*If curriculum is a tool, training is men learning how to use it. Can we talk about adult training?*

Our vision here, John, is to "provide leaders with the experience in: 1) Rangers skills, such as outdoor skills, sports skills, tool and handyman skills, technology, and arts; 2) Rangers values, which we discussed earlier; and 3) Spiritual leadership skills to accomplish the Rangers purpose—to evangelize, equip, and empower."

Ministry to boys is not rocket science, but there are skills experienced leaders can pass on that will help men enjoy greater success. Training will be covered at another time in much greater detail, so let's me make a philosophical statement that will guide us. Our training will model methods and techniques that can be repeated at the local level—only.

*Awesome! How about junior training? Obviously, if we are going to become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry, this is going to be big.*

You are right. The philosophy of our junior training must change to reflect the new role of our adult leaders as facilitators of servant leadership development in boys and young men.

Our first goal will be to introduce the new leadership merits we talked about earlier. We will simultaneously seek to create a national standard for the "Trail of the Saber" that will allow districts great flexibility in their junior training camps while maintaining a core philosophy and curriculum that will complement and not contradict what the leadership merits are teaching.



“In regard to uniform, Royal Rangers has been, and I believe should continue to be, a uniformed ministry.

However, like in other areas we have discussed, I believe we should provide uniform options to churches.”



I can't help, John, but underscore an important issue here. In order to become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry, it will be very important that adult and junior leaders teach the new leadership merits at the local level and that they *never* become part of the district junior camps.

*Why is that?*

The reason this is so important is that if our men send boys to the district to earn the leadership merits then the boys will return to their leaders, who because of lack of knowledge of the leadership merits may be incapable of helping the boys put into practice what they have learned. If the leaders themselves teach these servant leadership skills to the boys, they are not only learning but also obligating themselves to model and implement what they are teaching. The leadership merits profit the adult leaders as much as the junior leaders. So for that reason, we must build a firewall to ensure that the leadership merits are taught at the local level *only* and that the “Trail of the Saber” is taught at the district level and reinforces the leadership merits taught at the local outposts.

*You're right. The “firewall” sounds very wise. I know you don't want to go too deep on any of these goals, so let's move on and talk uniform.*

In regard to uniform, Royal Rangers has been, and I believe should continue to be, a uniformed ministry. However, like in other areas we have discussed, I believe we should provide uniform options to churches. For the city center church that is reaching out to dozens of boys in an economically depressed community, perhaps the uniform they would chose is simply a ball cap, t-shirt, and eventually maybe even a vest. For a church ministering largely to our distinguished military personnel, they may choose our khaki uniform. Yet a church ministering to affluent young professionals might feel they need an alternative. For that reason we are planning to introduce a line of uniforms from simple and low budget to sports uniforms to a new utility

uniform all while keeping our current full khaki uniform.

The church as a whole, or groups within the church, would choose which uniform(s) to wear, based on the people they are reaching in their community. The key, though, is that we encourage our leaders to expect boys to wear the uniform they have chosen to weekly meetings and events. This will bring the unity and group identity that uniforms provide.

*How will churches that choose, say, the t-shirt uniform provide recognition to their boys and young men?*

We are planning to introduce a new product for each group and for leaders, too. It will be called an advancement logbook, which is a full color, very attractive, folder. The cover has a place for the boy's name and information. It also has a list of new member advancement objectives and a place to adhere a sticker of the Royal Rangers emblem once the objectives are met. The inside has the group's advancement trail and requirements laid out in a very visual manner and a place to adhere stickers once the requirements are complete.

*Sounds like a very economical approach for the churches and families with limited financial resources.*

It really is! In fact, your comment provides a perfect segueway into another goal, which is making Royal Rangers financially accessible to all churches and families. We have already talked about this some, John, but in practical terms this is part of the strategy. Think about it. If the church can now run Rangers around the interests of their men rather than our one nationally-determined focus on camping and if they can offer Rangers to their boys for the cost of a charter, a logbook and sticker sheet, and a t-shirt, many small and financially-limited churches can begin to enjoy the benefits of Royal Rangers for the first time ever. So the logbooks address a variety of concerns—advancement



recognition and economizing Rangers, just to mention two great benefits. The logbook will facilitate growth.

*Just out of curiosity. I'm asking myself this question and perhaps others will too. How do you anticipate the logbooks and sticker sheets, which is a great idea by the way, will help or hinder the revenue stream of Royal Rangers product sales?*

It will help! Primarily because we will pick up more market share, to use sales terminology, by putting our desire for ministry in the rural, urban, or otherwise small churches ahead of economy. It will allow them to get into Royal Rangers, and over time, if they wish, they will begin to purchase more Rangers gear. In the dozens of places I've used logbooks and sticker sheets, it has always increased participation, and, secondarily, sales. It doesn't happen overnight, but rarely does a church enter into Royal Rangers using logbooks, sticker sheets, and t-shirts and stay there. They usually upgrade. But, if they wish, they can most certainly run the program on the bare minimum and still enjoy all the life-changing effects of Royal Rangers in the lives of boys and their families.

*That's exciting! I know you have said on many occasions that the well-being of Royal Rangers and Girls Ministries are tied closely together. One of your goals, I know, is to work closely with Girls Ministries. Can you describe your hopes?*

It is true that our two ministries affect each other. When a church starts Royal Rangers, they usually start Girls Ministries and vice versa. They don't often start one without the other.

Since becoming national director in January '07, Candy Tolbert, the National Girls Ministries director, and I have enjoyed a close working relationship. Our two teams are hammering out a way for a church, limited by volunteer staff, to run weekly meetings jointly without either ministry losing its own unique purpose or identity--the girls as Mpack Club members and the boys as Royal Rangers. This won't require new curriculum for either ministry, and the boys and girls will continue to progress along their respective advancement trails--girls learning about godly womanhood and boys about godly manhood. Since the boys and girls will be segregated at strategic times, men must be involved. In other words, the plan will not work in a church where there are no men willing to minister to future men.

We will unpack this when we have everything worked out, but the important thing to remember is that we are committed to each others' mutual success *without* watering down the ability of women to minister to the girls and men to the boys. We will not compromise our ministerial purposes or identities--girls will be Mpackers, and

boys will be Royal Rangers. I really see this as a win-win, particularly for churches greatly limited in volunteer staff.

Beyond that, I really want to see a healthy level of cooperation in churches of all sizes. You know overseas about two-thirds of the nations run a coed Royal Rangers program. Neither myself, Candy, or the Executives feel this is the direction the Lord would have us go, but we do believe we can and should work together as closely as possible. Mutual cooperation will only strengthen the two ministries.

*Doug, I know you were born and raised in Peru and Bolivia, living there until you graduated from high school. Then after you and Kerry were married, you became missionaries for fifteen years, serving nine years in Costa Rica where your two children were born. You are fluent in Spanish and love the Hispanic population. What plans do you have to serve our Spanish-speaking Royal Rangers right here in the United States?*

John, you are so right! I love the heavenly language and the Spanish people. It is my desire to skillfully serve and resource the Hispanic churches across the country. As a national team, we have already appointed Hiram Soler to serve as the Spanish Curriculum Field Advisor and Hector Lavelle to serve as the Spanish Training Field Advisor. These are *national* level appointments! They will assist and advise the national team on how to best serve the Latin churches in our districts. I don't want to make any empty promises, so I'm going to restrain my comments, John; however, I believe the efforts of these two fine leaders are going to greatly benefit our Latin American districts! I want to thank Hiram and Hector for their willingness to serve.

*Doug, we have had a great conversation! We've discussed vision, and we've talked about our purpose and our values. You shared about strategy and laid out some very good goals for Royal Rangers. How long do you feel it will take to implement all this?*

Realistically, we are probably looking at 2-5 years; some things may come more quickly, and a few may take longer. Each year, starting in 2009 at our National Royal Rangers Council, we will present to the nation not what we hope to accomplish in the next year but what is now available.

*It sounds like the National Council is going to be very important event to prioritize each year.*

Yes, it really will be. And we hope that Council will be a time of refreshing, learning, and community as together we influence more boys in America than ever and do it more effectively than ever.

"For church leaders to view Royal Rangers as relevant, we should be wise by offering many applications—a flexible and simple ministry mode.."

## CONCLUSION

*As we close, Doug, is there anything on your heart and mind you would like to conclude with?*

I'll conclude my remarks with the following. We are working through a continual process of renewing Royal Rangers, and as we do, we will always maintain our QLC posture with a humble and open attitude. Everyone in the national office will give a listening ear to new ideas and ways to improve. As a matter of practice we intend to keep the communication channels open, especially via email, web surveys, and the like. Additionally, we want to maintain close relationships with district commanders and staff. We are all in this together to see more boys and families know Christ's immense love and to build up and benefit those churches that have caught the vision to proactively reach and shape the next generation of men. We will make mistakes, yes, and we will need your patience. But at the end of the day, I am confident that if our motives are right and our focus is on the lost, first, we will "influence more boys than ever more effectively than ever."

*That is great! Would you mind closing in a word of prayer?*

I'd love to. Let me open my Bible and paraphrase Paul and Timothy's prayer for the church at Philippi (Philippians 1:9-11).

*"Lord, I pray for Royal Rangers leaders all across this nation, myself included, that our love for You and for boys, those who have found You and those still seeking, may grow more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. Help us to discern during this time of renewal what is best for the ministry and for our walk with You so that we may be pure and blameless until You return. Fill us with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ so that our every word, thought, and action may be to the glory and praise of God. To this end we pray and commit ourselves in Your name, Jesus, amen."*



# A VISIONARY

## VISION

*Influence more boys and girls than ever, more effectively*

### MISSION



#### REACH

Evangelizing the world



#### TEACH

Equipping the next generation of Christlike men



#### KEEP

Empowering lifelong servant leaders

### VALUES

#### INDIVIDUAL

We will each be exemplary Christ followers, mentors, servant leaders, team players, & faithful.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL

We will be a missional, learning & relational organization.

#### MINISTERIAL

##### OUR PURPOSE

*Evangelism & Discipleship*

##### OUR POWER

*the Holy Spirit*

##### OUR CALL & EXPRESSION

*from God*

##### OUR COMMUNITY

*Loving Extravagantly*

##### OUR DISCIPLINE

*Prayer*

# ROYAL RANGERS ORGANIZATION

and young men  
*effectively* than ever!

## METHODS



### FRIENDSHIP

*Mentoring in  
Christlike Manhood*



### ACTIVITIES

*Draw Men & Boys Together  
Around Mutual Interests*



### PATROL SYSTEM

*Servant Leadership Development*



### ADVANCEMENT SYSTEM

*Personal & Spiritual  
Growth Process*



### SERVICE & MINISTRY OUTREACH

*Servants First, Leaders Second*



### INTERACTIVE LEARNING

*Hear, See, Do, & Teach*



### UNIFORM

*Group Identity*

## A Word Picture of our Future

**W**e will be the premier,  
most sought after  
church ministry for the  
next generation of men  
in America—period!

It will be affordable and  
practical so that every family  
and church can participate.

As we grow, we will remain  
quick and nimble to learn and  
adapt to our changing society.

Men will be eager to be  
trained to mentor young men  
in Christlike manhood; young  
men will be empowered to  
assume leadership of Royal  
Rangers, making it a boy-led,  
adult-facilitated ministry.

Personal and spiritual growth  
will be fun, hands-on, and  
experiential; friendships  
will charge our ministry  
atmosphere.

We will reach every boy  
and young man by creative  
methods; every Ranger will  
be eager to serve a God-given  
cause greater than self.

Anyone would be proud to be  
associated with Royal Rangers!

**Your Ministry Reaches Further Than You Think.**



**All The Way Into Eternity To Be Exact.**



*Influence More Boys & Young Men Than Ever,  
More Effectively Than Ever.*

[royalrangers.ag.org](http://royalrangers.ag.org)



# A Curricular Roadmap for *Ministry to Next Generation Men*

by Ryan Beaty, National Programs & Outreach Coordinator

**O**ur ministry vision and personal challenge to each Royal Rangers leader is “to influence more boys and young men than ever and do so more effectively than ever.”

Curriculum plays a very important role in achieving this vision. The implication is that curriculum should be relevant to the broadest number of churches and the young men in their sphere of influence as possible; should be a practical, enjoyable, and relevant resource that brings our leaders personal satisfaction as they see boys develop and grow; and should be fun for boys while they are led on a purposeful journey toward Christlike manhood and servant leadership.

In recent months, we have listened to the field via “Question, Learn, and Change” (QLC) questionnaire on our website and have had hundreds of conversations with Royal Rangers leaders, boys, and parents. We have spoken at length with churches leaders, inside and outside the Assemblies of God, to determine what their church needs to mentor the next generation of Christlike men and lifelong servant leaders. Overwhelmingly, we received very similar answers from all the groups with which we spoke. We have also spent countless hours seeking God for direction. As a result, we firmly believe we have discerned both the feelings of the field and the voice of the Lord.

## Advancement Logbooks and Sticker Sheets

COMING 2010

One of the issues dominating our conversations has been the cost of Royal Rangers for churches with a limited Royal Rangers budget.

In response to this concern, we will begin to offer an advancement logbook and sticker sheet option to our local groups, starting in 2010. The logbooks will provide churches a soft entry point into Royal Rangers with a way to track and honor the achievements of their young men without requiring a huge upfront financial investment. There will also be logbooks available for adult leaders.

These logbooks will be full color, highly decorated folders, containing all the advancement levels for an age group, and will come with a sheet of full color stickers, which will be placed in the folder on the appropriate spots to display the individual’s advancements. This system will be cost effective and should be an exciting addition to any boy’s or leader’s portfolio.

## Ranger Kids

In general, the field indicated that the current Ranger Kids curriculum is meeting the needs of our early elementary boys. The limited, yet meaningful, suggestions that will lead to improvements will be addressed at a future time.

## Discovery and Adventure Rangers

The field expressed deep gratitude for the weekly meeting guides, merit references, and quarterly advancement system in the Discovery and Adventure Rangers programs. Yet, two major comments surfaced as items that need to be corrected. First, the amount of writing needed to complete the merits is staggering, and secondly, the Bible merits are not fulfilling their intended purpose.

First, let’s address the writing. In the fall 2007 edition of the *High Adventure Leader* magazine, a letter and article was published, explaining how to eliminate all unnecessary writing by allowing boys to work together on projects and substituting the essay portions with oral or group reports. (The letter and article referenced here are included at the end of this article for your convenience. See page 17-18.) Over the next several years, we will revisit all of the merits in an effort to ensure they provide fun, hands-on, experiential learning.

The other big issue concerns the Bible merits. While the structure of the Bible merits is fine, their content has been found lacking. In order to rectify this, we are completely rewriting the Bible merits. They will continue to be centered on a particular book of the Bible, using the current five-week structure, but their content will completely change. The new studies will pull truths from the various books of the Bible and apply them

directly to the development of the godly qualities of manhood as the boys are disciplined.

Each lesson will cover one of five topics. Each will focus on developing the attributes of godly manhood in future men: doctrine, sexuality, biblical worldview, cultural issue, and godly manhood. These lessons will be age and grade appropriate. Each will have components of reading, reflection, and response to allow for maximum retention of the topic by the boys and young men. The merits will also include a six-year Bible reading plan of select Scripture passages. If followed, the plan allows the boy to complete the reading requirements for the Gold Bible merit, which, in the near future, will be required, in addition to the 24 brown Bible merits, to earn the Gold Medal of Achievement. The reading plan will include introspective, life application questions on the short passages. There will also be a three-year plan available for boys who are in Adventure Rangers but were not previously involved in Discovery Rangers.

The Bible merits will now become the focal point of the weekly meeting. We believe this transition is the best way to mentor boys and remain relevant in the church world. This will ensure that each week the young men who attend Royal Rangers will build a solid and relevant foundation of God's Word. It will also help Royal Rangers move from the moniker of merely a boys' program to a boys' mentoring ministry in the eyes of church leaders.

Being focused on Bible study in our meetings will also make it easier for Royal Rangers to work with other ministries. By taking this approach, Rangers becomes a more realistic option for churches that wish to use Royal Rangers as their small groups ministry for boys, a Sunday school class, or an after school ministry. Additionally, this will open the door for Royal Rangers and National Girls Ministries to work more closely together. We have unveiled a plan in which Royal Rangers and Girls Ministries can meet together for activities in churches that lack the number of leaders necessary to run both ministries separately. The plan will still allow boys and girls to distinctively retain their identity as Royal Rangers and Girls Ministries members, respectively but allow for shared leadership during weekly meetings and on outings at the local level.

### **Leadership Merits: Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers**

In coming years we will also develop a series of eighteen leadership merits. These will be divided into six merits for Discovery Rangers, six for Adventure Rangers, and six for Expedition

Rangers. They will focus on developing the leadership behaviors of the young men in Royal Rangers and will be purposefully designed for the Ranger leader to teach in the local outpost either in the weekly meetings or in a weekend retreat format. These merits should NEVER be taught outside the local outpost, e.g., at a district merit camp. The goal is for mentoring to take place between the young men and their leaders at the local outpost.

### **Expanded Advancement System**

All this is being done while expanding the advancement system to provide churches with non-camping options. Our Bible and leadership merits contain the core elements of the Royal Rangers ministry—the instruction central to our purposes of evangelizing the world, equipping the next generation of Christlike men, and empowering lifelong servant leaders. What, then, is the role of camping and non-camping skill merits? These build boys' competence and confidence in their manhood as men teach boys about their skills, interests, and hobbies. These skill merits become the activities that draw men and boys together and facilitate mentorship in godliness.

In the book *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge, the author relays a story about a rock climbing outing he had with his sons. One of his sons clipped in and began to climb but soon arrived at a place that was not only difficult but also left him feeling exposed. His son hung there, allowing fear to grip his heart. When his father instructed him to come down, the young climber refused, needing to complete the challenge that lay ahead. His father began to encourage to him, "Way to go, Sam! You're looking good. That's it...now reach up to your right...yep, now push off that foothold...nice move!" His son was able to move through the difficult part and keep climbing. He quickly approached a more difficult area and without missing a beat, climbed right over the top of the cliff. "Way to go Sam! You're a *wild man!*" his father said.

He finished his climb and walked back down the other side. His dad was helping another boy strap in and start up the mountain. Sam walked up next to him and quietly asked, "Dad, did you really think I was a wild man up there?" Miss that moment, and you will miss the boy's heart forever. This story illustrates that the activity itself pales in importance to the opportunities that these activities provide for men to speak into the lives of boys, encouraging their identity as godly future men.

By offering camping and a number of other areas of interest, more men are able to be

involved in this ministry. Even churches that have no interest in camping or lack men who are interested in camping are able to launch Royal Rangers. We know our growth is dependent upon involving an increasing number of men; so by broadening the focus of our advancement system, we are able to influence more young men than ever by recruiting more men.

### **Expedition Rangers**

The final area of curriculum is Expedition Rangers. This topic received the third highest number of comments from the QLC surveys. At the request of the field, Expedition Rangers is undergoing a revision of structure, not content, that will make it congruent with that of the other groups. Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers will all have the same annual tiered awards systems.

Additions to the Expedition Rangers curriculum will include adding new silver merits yearly and adding the new leadership merits. The spirit challenge lessons are also undergoing general content revisions but will remain comparable to their current structure.

We believe God has many exciting things in store for Royal Rangers, its young men, and leaders. We thank the Lord for being counted worthy to serve Him through evangelizing, equipping, and empowering the next generation of Christlike men and lifelong servant leaders. We also thank the Lord for previous national leadership, Commander Mariott and his team, for laying a solid ministry foundation. As we stretch and grow into the future, we do so from a much higher curricular level than we ever have ever had. We are truly blessed to have such a godly heritage. ☘

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We believe God  
has many exciting  
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and leaders.

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**Royal Rangers**  
NATIONAL BOYS MINISTRIES

**L. Alton Garrison**  
Division of Church Ministries, Chairman

**Doug Marsh**  
National Commander

October 2007

Dear Royal Rangers Leaders:

The National Royal Rangers Ministries office is listening to you!

One of the concerns you addressed in the Royal Rangers–Question, Learn, and Change (RR-QLC) survey conducted on the national website is that many of the merits require entirely too much writing. And you were right! (Yes, the pun was intentional.)

As a result, we are announcing some tips to reduce the pencil time, making the merits more fun, hands-on, and experiential. I invite you to carefully read the article, “Making Merits Interactive,” by John Hicks the national communications and administrative coordinator.

Thank you for speaking; we are listening. The entire National Royal Rangers Ministry team is dedicated to equipping you to influence more boys and young men for Christ than ever, more effectively than ever!

Honored to be serving with you,

Doug Marsh  
National Commander

PS – If you have yet to complete the RR-QLC survey, there is still time.  
Visit the national website at [www.RoyalRangers.ag.org/qlc](http://www.RoyalRangers.ag.org/qlc).

REACH • TEACH • KEEP  
BOYS FOR JESUS CHRIST

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# Making Merits Interactive

by John Hicks, National Communications Coordinator

Since its inception in 1962, Royal Rangers has been at its core a hands-on, action-oriented program. Our aim, as stated in the 1998 edition of the Leaders Manual, is “to instruct, challenge, and inspire our boys in the areas of Bible doctrine, Christian service, moral conduct, and basic beliefs of our church through interesting activities the boys enjoy.” [Emphasis added.]

In keeping with this tradition, page 4 of the Leaders Guides for both the Discovery and Adventure Rangers programs begin by describing Royal Rangers as “an action-packed, life-changing ministry to boys of all ages.” These resources go on to describe the program as having weekly meetings “filled with the activities, camaraderie, and spiritual challenge that boys need.”

It has long been understood that boys need activity and learn best in an environment rich with hands-on activities and student participation. It is, therefore, essential that the weekly Royal Rangers meeting be a place where boys are given the opportunity to learn by interactive means and to be directly involved in a variety of physical activities. Lecture sessions with PowerPoint presentations where the boys’ primary means of participation is limited to listening and writing should be avoided. In order to maximize our effectiveness, it is essential that we utilize methods of instruction that are most effective for teaching boys.

With these thoughts in mind, consider the following as tips and alternatives when teaching your next weekly meeting:

- Whenever possible, complete merit requirements orally as a group rather than in written format. Requirements beginning with words like explain, list, or tell do not need to be completed in written format but may be completed as a group discussion. Every boy present may then receive credit for having completed that requirement.
- Allow essay requirements to be satisfied orally by short individual presentations to the group. This will satisfy the purpose of the requirement (i.e., knowledge of the subject) while avoiding a written format that could be

a major obstacle to younger boys. For those who aren’t comfortable with oral presentations or when the size of the group makes this option unsuitable, the boys may create illustrated reports by researching and assembling collages of photos or images with captions describing the subjects.



- Look for ways to get the boys physically involved in the learning process. Requirements that begin with “demonstrate” should always involve physical activity not merely explaining or writing a response. “Sit and listen” times should be limited to approximately 1 minute per age. For example, a 7-year-old Ranger Kid can “sit and listen” for approximately 7 minutes; a 12-year-old Adventure Ranger for about 12 minutes. Look for ways to utilize the “hear, see, do”

principle of instruction. Let the boys hear you explain how to do something, see you demonstrate the skill, and then do or practice the skill themselves.

- Provide opportunities for the boys to complete requirements as a group or patrol. Interaction with friends makes any task more fun and enhances learning for everyone.

It should be noted that the requirements for the merits cannot be changed and should be completed as written. The handbooks and workbooks are still necessary resources to direct and track each boy’s progress through the advancement system. However, the methods used to satisfy requirements should be flexible, allowing for differing abilities and maturity levels of boys.

As Royal Ranger leaders, we enjoy a tremendous privilege to serve our Master Ranger, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of Royal Rangers. Along with any privilege comes responsibility. It is our responsibility to provide our boys with an “action-packed, life-changing ministry” that will “instruct, challenge, and inspire” them in their personal growth and achievement as they daily grow into the image of Christ. ☛

NATIONAL ROYAL RANGERS MINISTRIES - October 2007



# ADULT Leadership Training

by Steve Schultz, National Training Coordinator

## Leadership Training Overview

Church leadership believes that well trained leaders are the key to any ministry's success. Pastors understand that a trained volunteer is much more likely to commit their time and can be counted on to show up every week!



So do pastors believe Royal Rangers training is meeting their church's needs? Certainly Royal Rangers have more training options than any other ministry in today's church. Unfortunately, for too many churches training isn't scheduled soon enough or close enough to meet their immediate needs. Sadly, too often when their leaders do attend training it is so boring they don't want to attend additional training.

Adding to pastors and some leaders frustration is a view that their leaders need to attend numerous training classes to be called "trained". Pastors want to see training streamlined to one or two required classes to complete a leader's training needs. So how do we meet the needs of our church leadership who want training streamlined, while still being effective? By valuing each students' time, that's how!

As you read about modifications taking place in our adult leadership training, understand that we did not compromise the goal of training: *Inspire, mobilize, and resource leaders*. Moving forward effective, exciting training will be the key to strengthening our leadership core.

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### Core Training Values

- 1. Spiritual Development.** All classroom and event based adult leadership training will have a spiritual emphasis.
- 2. Ranger Skills Development.** Training will focus on the 7 methods Royal Rangers use to minister to boys. Ranger skills are a key component of this success.
- 3. Leadership Development.** Leadership development will be key as Royal Rangers moves to become a boy led, adult facilitated ministry. It takes a leader to mentor new leaders. Training will help Royal Rangers strengthen its leadership core.



## Rangers Ministry Academy Goals

The Rangers Ministry Academy (RMA) will be the catalyst for inspiring, mobilizing, and resourcing leaders through achieving the following goals.

- Streamline the training process. QLC and the recent training survey have spoken loud and clear. The process to earn the Leaders Medal of Achievement (LMA) is too complicated and long. Training goals need to be clear and achievable.
- Value a leaders' time. We need to value the leaders time by making training effective through hands on learning. Training needs to be held as close to the local outpost as possible.
- Fundamentally change training classes from a complete reliance on PowerPoint to a 30/70 approach. 30% of training will be content driven using multimedia as the delivery tool . 70% will be hands on, activity, and relationship building with God and other leaders. Training will be based on a "hear, see, do, teach" philosophy. Students will "hear" the instructor explain the concept, they will "see" the instructor perform the skill, they will "do" the skill on their own with the instructor facilitating. And finally, when possible, they will be given opportunity to teach others. Training needs to be fun and relational!
- Build strong relationships. All training will be charged with an atmosphere of excitement and enthusiasm, connecting students with each other and their instructors.
- Boy-led, adult-facilitated. Training will focus on how to use skills and knowledge learned during a training event to help facilitate boys leading the local outpost.
- Partner with districts to certify instructors. This will occur through the creation of the "Training Academy" which will replace Instructor Certification Seminar (ICS). The Training Academy is for any leader wishing to become a certified instructor. It is the goal of the national office that every outpost have a certified instructor so local church training needs can be meet quickly and effectively. The Training Academy will be offered by the region in partnership with the districts. The focus will be on Train-The-Trainer techniques assures certified instructors are the best instructors anywhere! The Training Academy prepares graduates to teach in the Ranger Ministry Academy and will be the pre-requisite for attending all other academies. Certification will last for five (5) years and be contingent upon earning points, similar to the existing ICS. There are three (3) potential outcomes for Training Academy attendees: Certified Instructor, Certified Staff (not met the qualifications to teach, but can server on staff), or Fail. The Training Academy will be available in 2011.
- Provide online continuous learning opportunities for leaders. Many current training modules that are essentially one way communication in nature and do not require student - teacher, hands-on interaction (Outpost Chaplain, Outpost Council, etc.) will be moved to online continuous learning. Online training will be tracked with the student receiving an electronic certificate that can be printed.

### Training Academy

The **Training Academy** is for any leader wishing to become a certified instructor. It is the goal of the national office that every outpost have a certified instructor so local church training needs can be meet quickly and effectively.

The **Training Academy** will be offered by the region in partnership with the districts.

The **Training Academy** prepares graduates to teach in the Ranger Ministry Academy and will be the pre-requisite for attending all other academies.

The **Training Academy** will be available in 2011.



- Create the *Royal Rangers Jump Start* training DVD (note: *Royal Rangers Jump Start* is a working title subject to change) covering the essential knowledge a new leader needs to be immediately successful in the local outpost. New leaders can take the *Jump Start* training either on their own or as a team in the local outpost.
- Create a new *Royal Rangers Leaders Manual* that will be the foundation of training. Classroom training and the new *Royal Rangers Jump Start* training DVD will build upon foundational concepts covered in the *Royal Rangers Leaders Manual*.
- Four training advancement levels will be available for leaders to earn. Each level builds upon the previous level.

1. **READY Leader** – A “Ready” leader has completed the *Ranger Basics* and *Ranger Essentials* training courses. Both these classes will be offered by certified instructors and ideally would be held at the local outpost or section. *Ranger Basics* will remain an eight hour class, however the content will change to reflect a more hands on classroom experience. *Ranger Essentials* will be a new RMA module that will be a one day class in length. Content will focus on discipleship, relationship building, and outreach opportunities. Leaders will also complete the “Ready” ticket. A “Ready” leader will be recognized by a “Ready” advancement insignia patch to be worn on the right sleeve of a leader’s uniform.
2. **SAFETY Leader** – When a leader has completed the Safety class plus a First Aid/CPR class from a recognized provider (i.e. Red Cross, Green Cross, etc.) and the Safety ticket. They will be recognized by a “Safety” advancement insignia patch to be worn on the right sleeve of a leader’s uniform.
3. **TRAINED Leader** – A “Trained” leader has attended either the new National Ranger Ministry Camp (or NTC) or new National Elementary Education Conference (or RKTC) and the Trained ticket. Successfully completing the “Ready” and “Safety” training levels is required to attain Trained status but will not be required to attend either of the new national training events, however, it will be highly recommended. A “Trained” leader will be recognized by a “Trained” advancement insignia patch to be

worn on the right sleeve of a leader’s uniform.

4. **ADVANCED Leader** – To earn the “Advanced” level a leader must complete the Ready, Safety, and Trained levels, and attend the World Class Outpost seminar, plus successfully complete two continuous training opportunities AND/OR two action camps (see Jr. Leadership Training for further explanation) of your choice and also complete the Advanced ticket. An “Advanced” leader will be recognized by an “Advanced” advancement insignia patch to be worn on the right sleeve of a leader’s uniform.

A training chart has been created to help describe Royal Rangers training opportunities and is located on the last page.

- National and district continuous learning classes will be created. This will give the national and the district the opportunity to respond to specific training needs. Many of the national continuous learning opportunities will be offered online.
- The new “Medal of Excellence” will replace the current “Leaders Medal of Achievement” (LMA). As mentioned previously, the LMA can be viewed as complicated and ineffective. Replacing it with the Medal of Excellence better signifies what Royal Rangers leaders should be about: Taking a boy on a journey. This journey should include success and growth for both the leader and the boy. The Medal of Excellence will be a national restricted item. It will be numbered and tracked like the Gold Medal of Achievement. The focus of the Medal of Excellence is twofold:
  - Ranger Development - Work with boys so they complete the highest award within their age group (Gold Trail, Gold Eagle, Gold Medal of Achievement, Expedition advancement track).
  - Personal Development - Complete personal training goals that prove a commitment to personal excellence and growth.

The Medal of Excellence emphasizes taking *you* and a *boy* (or boys) on a journey. It shows a level of commitment and dedication to both your personal growth as well as the growth of our rangers who are the future Christian leaders of the church. More information on the exact requirements for the Medal of Excellence will be available in Spring 2010.

## Rangers Ministry Academy

The current Leadership Training Academy (LTA) is based on a continuous training philosophy using classroom “modules” that a commander can complete in eight hours or less. This approach gives leaders the ability to customize a training plan that meets their unique needs making the LTA a life-long commitment to training! However, as mentioned in the “Leadership Training Overview”, many pastors see the current emphasis on the Leaders Medal of Achievement (LMA) and the classes required to obtain it complicated and too long. In order to gain better name recognition and reflect a broader image for leadership training, the LTA will be renamed Rangers Ministry Academy (RMA).

RMA will allow us the ability to better structure training content. All adult leadership training will fall under the RMA umbrella. There are currently two categories of training: classroom based (the current LTA) and event based (NTC, RKTC, or NRMC, NEEC, etc.). In the future, both classroom based modules and training events will fall under RMA. This will help leaders better communicate to pastors, volunteers, and potential leaders the training available to Royal Rangers leaders.

A training chart has been created to help describe Royal Rangers training opportunities and is located on the last page.

## National Training Events

- Partner with Girls Ministry to retool Ranger Kids Training Conference (RKTC). Over one half of all RKTCs scheduled each year cancel because they don't meet the minimum attendance requirements. We are working with the Girls Ministry (formally Missionettes) to develop a conference that will be exciting and fun yet offer classes both Royal Ranger leaders and Girls Ministry coordinators will find useful. The new RKTC called National Elementary Education Conference (NEEC) with a new patch design will be piloted in 2010 and released in 2011.
- Replace the current National Training Camp (NTC) and Advanced National Training Camp (ANTC) with a new national camp called the National Ranger Ministry Camp (NRMC), with the following emphasis:

- **Spiritual** – Men will be challenged spiritually and given discipleship training to continue the race to victory
- **Leadership** – Emphasis will be placed on leadership training that leaders will take back to their outpost and immediately apply to both Royal Rangers and their personal lives
- **Team/Patrol Method**, not just team spirit – Leaders will be instructed how to effectively implement the patrol method as a means to facilitate junior leadership development.
- **Activity Skills** – Ranger skills and fun activities will be covered, providing leaders with the skills needed to take their Ranger boys on exciting outpost activities outside their normal weekly ranger meeting.

The new NRMC with a new patch design will be piloted in 2010.

- National specialty camps – NTT, NCE, and WNTC – will be offered by districts as Action Camps. The last year districts will be able to schedule a NTT, NCE, and/or WNTC will be 2010. See Jr. Leadership Training for more information on Action Camps.

## Organizational Leadership Training

In March 2009, the national Royal Rangers office introduced a new training track for organizational leaders.

The purpose of Royal Rangers' Organizational Leadership Training is to challenge men and women, holding (or hoping to hold) positions of service at any level within their districts, regions, or nation, to grow spiritually, to develop well rounded ministry competencies, and to enhance their leadership aptitudes.

Here is a true axiom: “If you want to grow a ministry, you must grow the leaders.” If you accept the challenge to improve yourself through this process, you will experience the satisfaction of knowing you are helping Royal Rangers grow to its greatest ministry potential.

Completing the four Outpost Advancement Levels is a pre-requisite. Full information is available on the national website. ☞

# Rangers Ministry Academy

## EQUIVALENCY & TRANSITION SCHEDULE

### CHURCH LEADER TRACK

- Ranger Orientation Late 2011

### SUPPORT STAFF TRACK

- Outpost Committee Training Late 2011

### JUNIOR TRAINING TRACK

- Junior Leadership Foundation 2010
- Junior Leadership merits 2010 - 2011
- New/updated national guidelines for District Junior Leadership Development Introduced incrementally starting in 2011
- Action Camps Launch in 2011 using national guidelines  
*(Districts: Please do not launch until national guidelines are released.)*

### OUTPOST LEADER TRACK

- New Ranger Basics 2010
- New Ranger Essentials Early 2010
- New Ranger Safety Late 2011
- National Elementary Education Conference (new RKTC) 2011
- National Rangers Ministry Camp (new NTC) 2010  
*Held in 6-8 locations throughout the nation starting in 2010*
- World Class Outpost Materials will be updated mid-2009

Already earned your Leader's Medal of Achievement? (or plan to earn it before December 31, 2010?)

Here are the transition requirements —

1. Attend Ranger Essentials to get a feel for the new training methodology;
2. Read the new 2010 *Leader Manual* in its entirety;
3. Attend NTC or new NRMC, and/or, attend RKTC or new NEEC;
4. Attend WCO
5. Complete ticket requirements

The new Medal of Excellence will be a nationally restricted and numbered medal (like the Gold Medal of Achievement). An application with full requirement details will be available on the national website in 2010.

Training being phased out:

- The last year to attend ANTC = 2009
- The last year to attend NTT, NCE, WNTC = 2010
- *Attending any of these four events will each be equivalent to one Action Camp.*

### TRAIN THE TRAINER TRACK

- New Training Academy (replacing the current Instructor Certification Seminar) 2011  
*(In the meantime, districts should continue to encourage qualified leaders to become certified instructors and should continue to offer ICS.)*
- National Academy Updates/revision will begin in 2011
- Advanced Academy Updates/revision will begin in 2011
- Academy Instructor Updates/revision will begin in 2011

As we transition from our current to the new training system, please encourage leaders to continue their development now with what is available today. If leaders have, for instance, the opportunity to attend LTA modules, ICS, etc. they should do so. The national office is committed to a seamless transition; current training will transfer to the new, as illustrated below:

CURRENT TRAINING	EQUIVALENT NEW TRAINING
➤ Ranger Basics	<b>NEW</b> Ranger Basics
➤ Safety in the Church & First Aid/CPR	<b>NEW</b> Safety
➤ National Training Camp	<b>NEW</b> National Rangers Ministry Camp
➤ Ranger Kids Training Conference	<b>NEW</b> National Elementary Education Conference
➤ World Class Outpost	<b>UPDATED</b> World Class Outpost
➤ <i>Select</i> LTA Modules (2010)	Continuous Learning
➤ Instructor Certification Seminar <small>(certification valid only 2 years)</small>	Training Academy

### TRAIN THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRACK

- New Organizational Leadership Training Track March 2009

NOTE: The national office will endeavor to deliver according to this schedule but reserves the right to alter delivery dates.



# TRA

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*the* Support

*the* Junior Le

### Junior Leadership Foundations

Training for Discovery, Adventure & Expedition Rangers ready to serve in a new group leadership position.

### Local Leadership Merits

Two taught each year in a five-week-meeting format or in a retreat setting. Designed to develop leadership skills for Discover, Adventure, & Expedition Rangers.

### District Junior Le

— TRAIN District level training in the local leader flexibility with minimum core cu

## *the* Outpost

### OUTPOST LEADER ADVA

#### READY



#### Ranger Basics

Training for new leaders ready to serve in the outpost.



#### Ranger Essentials

Training for leaders prepared to deepen their knowledge and commitment.

#### SAFETY



#### Ranger Safety

First Aid/CPR training. Additional training to prepare leaders to safely lead exciting Rangers activities.\*

\*AVAILABLE AS ONLINE MODULES LATE 2010.



#### National Education

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## *the* Trainer



#### Training Academy

Training in teaching methods for potential certified instructors and those seeking recertification.



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# TRAINING

## Leader Staff Leader

### Ranger Orientation

Benefits/Value of Rangers training for pastors and those in church leadership.

### Outpost Committee Training

Training for current or potential Outpost Committee members and other support staff.

### Leadership Development Camps

**TRAIL OF THE SABER** —  
A program that reinforces the lessons offered in leadership training. Districts have great success with a common philosophy and curriculum, the "Trail of the Saber".

### Action Camps

Hands-on, high action camps for high school students and adult leadership. Training intended to prepare local leadership to deliver meaningful and fun local activities.

## Leader

### ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

#### TRAINED



OR



#### National Elementary Leadership Conference

Training for leaders in 2nd grade and above with excellence.

#### National Rangers Ministry Camp

Training to prepare adult leaders to mentor boys and young men through a diverse range of activities.

#### ADVANCED



#### World Class Outpost

Designed to develop outpost leadership through the use of best practices, strategies, and tools.

WCO + 2 CONTINUOUS LEARNING ELECTIVES



#### National Academy

Training in the disciplines to serve as a leader at leadership development events.



#### Advanced Academy

Training in the art of leading staff at leadership development events.



#### Academy Instructor

A member of the instructing staff at a National Academy or Advanced Academy.



## Medal of Excellence

Represents a level of commitment and dedication to both the leaders' personal growth as well as the spiritual and leadership development of boys and young men.

Earned by completing the four levels of Outpost Leaders Advancement and by taking at least one boy on a journey culminating in the earning of the highest medal in any of the four Ranger groups.



## Continuous Learning

Both national and district online and classroom training may be offered. Some training may allow the participation of junior leaders.



# Junior Leadership Development

## *Where is it and how is it done?*

by Steve Schultz, National Training Coordinator

**F**irst let me share how blessed we are as Royal Rangers to be a part a great fellowship of churches called the Assemblies of God. Dr. Wood and the Executive Leadership Team have expressed strong support of the Royal Rangers ministry and want very much to see it prosper and fulfill its vision and mission. As a matter of fact, one of Dr. Woods' five core values is to "strategically invest in the next generation" and that can be directly reflected in junior leadership development. We are also being encouraged to share the Royal Rangers ministry with other Pentecostal denominations, and independent churches. It is energizing to note that we are part of a much larger group than our own local church.

The Royal Rangers national ministry team under the direction of Doug Marsh has spent several months assessing the ministry. We have sought feedback (QLC) from not only the local, district, and regional Royal Rangers leaders but also from parents, boys, and pastors. This is a vital process that we will continue to use to strengthen our ministry. We must be a learning organization if we are to remain relevant.

We have a great heritage, influenced by many great leaders. Royal Rangers has influenced millions of boys in the world. If I may take a quote from our national director Doug Marsh, "We must not let our memories of the past be greater than our dreams for the future." The future of Royal Rangers and junior leadership must and will far surpass our past accomplishments!

The challenge to us as leaders is this: "*We must influence more boys and young men than ever and*

*do it more effectively than ever!*" Let's first identify one important word from this statement, *influence*. This can be described in this way: we need to *first evangelize, second equip, and finally empower the next generation of Christlike men to be lifelong servant leaders*. Can you think of a better way to describe junior leadership development? Let's next consider how we can do this "more effectively." We must continually evaluate our methods. Our purpose must not change, but our methods may need to be adapted to reach the broadest number of boys. Our methods must be adaptable to meet the interests and needs of the widest cross section of boys and young men possible. For example methods that might work well in the center city may not be as effective in a rural area. We need to be flexible and innovative as leaders.

With this in mind, we need to review not only our current junior leadership training but also our adult training to better equip and empower the local adult leader to develop his junior leaders. Both adult and junior leadership development need to blend together with a common purpose and goals. All of our training should assist both adults and young men to have these common values.

- Be committed Christ followers, reflecting the character, kindness, and zest for life exhibited by Christ.
- Be strong mentors, bringing others with us as we develop leadership in ourselves.
- Be Spirit-empowered models of Christlike manhood
- Be servant leaders: servants first, leaders second.

- Be committed team players who balance individual and team rights for the good of the whole.
- Be faithful (biblical, ethical, legal, moral, and wise)

These core values should be part of all our adult and junior training. A key to succeeding in developing these values in others is building positive relationships. We must be a relational organization; friendship is vital to building mentoring relationships. We must encourage building strong relationships **before** we can become mentors.

Next, the following statement must resonate as one voice throughout the nation!

**"We must be a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry!"** We must give the boys the opportunity to lead and by doing so they will take ownership of their outposts. Leadership development must start at the outpost level. That is where the most opportunities exist on a consistent basis to develop leadership skills. As John C. Maxwell states so emphatically, "Leadership is not developed in a day but daily." Currently, many of our local outposts are adult-led, and the boys have little input in the direction or plans of the outpost. This may seem easier initially for the leader because developing the boys into leaders takes time and they will occasionally fail. We must not fall into the assumption that "we can do it better if we do it for them." A good description of leadership is "the ability of getting things done through people." People are drawn to things where they can be a vital part, where they can have input and value. In the end, the boys can be the answer to an issue



found in most outposts—filling the leadership void. How many outposts have more than enough adult leaders? If we take the time and effort to develop our boys and young men to be leaders of the outpost, they can fulfill that need. You are also preparing tomorrow's Royal Rangers, church, and community leaders.

In order to help the local leader meet this need, we will be developing specific leadership merits that will be taught at the local level twice a year. They can be taught either in a five-week format or in a one-day or weekend format. These new leadership merits **must** be taught at the local level and never become part of the district junior camps. Wow, this is a strong statement, so let me explain further. The reason this is so important is

think we are diminishing the importance of training at the district level; we are just adding and blending the training that should come from the local level. Districts events will still be a vital part of junior leadership development, and we believe the districts will need flexibility in those events.

We plan to introduce eighteen new leadership merits, six each year starting in '10. These will instruct boys and young men on "how to be servant leaders." There are five universal skills required to effect positive influence on others that future men should learn to apply from an early age.

1. **Social skills:** If people like you, they will follow you.
2. **Equipping skills:** When you facilitate

What exactly will all the junior leadership development components look like? It is too soon to give a completely detailed description. A key area of future change will be when the national training events move to their new format. The current national specialty camps NTT, NCE, and WNTC will be blended into JTT, JCE, and JWC and will be called Action Camps. (See Adult Leadership Training for more information on this.) Action Camps will be offered at the district level, bringing important training closer to the local outposts. Action Camps may be offered more frequently, and with both men and Expedition Rangers able to attend, minimum attendance numbers may be more easily attained. They will also have some standardized guidelines to deal with the issue of men and boys camping together.

There will still be key district leadership events specific to Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers, and these events will focus primarily on spiritual and servant leadership development in our boys and young men. We will work closely with the district leadership to clearly define and develop these events, the Action Camps, and the Trail of the Saber.

We will continue to gain feedback from the field and work with key individuals to present the best possible leadership development plan. Timing for release of these components will be determined at the national level as the curriculum components become ready for implementation. Be sure that junior leadership development is a top priority of the national ministry office.

If you truly believe we must become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry, then we must provide the tools and training necessary to build leaders in our outposts. I hope you agree just how vitally important the local outpost leader is in developing future Christlike men. John C. Maxwell, in his book *Developing the Leader Within You*, states, "Not everyone will become a great leader, but everyone can become a better leader." It is important to understand that everyone is a leader because everyone influences someone. Whether your influence is positive or negative or how strong it is will be measured by others, not you.

Leadership is a long journey. We never complete that journey as we all should continue to develop and improve our leadership skills.

**Are you "READY" to take boys and young men on the full journey to Christlike manhood, resulting in lifelong servant leaders? 🙌**

## A boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry

If you truly believe we must become a boy-led, adult-facilitated ministry, then we must provide the tools and training necessary to build leaders in our outposts.

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that if our men send boys to the district to earn the leadership merits then the boys will return to their leaders, who because of lack of knowledge of the leadership merits may be incapable of helping the boys put into practice what they have learned. If the leaders themselves teach these servant leadership skills to the boys, they are not only learning but also obligating themselves to model and implement what they are teaching. The leadership merits profit the adult leaders as much as the junior leaders. So for that reason, we must build a firewall to ensure that the leadership merits are taught at the local level *only* and that the "Trail of the Saber" is taught at the district level and reinforces the leadership merits taught at the local outposts.

We will work with district leadership to adapt current junior training and include the necessary ingredients to meet the core values we have established. It will also support and reinforce the leadership merits, allowing additional opportunities to develop leadership skills. Don't

people's successes, they will flourish and, in combination with others, will make the cause flourish.

3. **Attitude skills:** As the adage goes, attitude determines altitude, and, yes, attitude is a choice—something boys need to learn.
4. **Leadership skills:** Influencing people so that together we find innovative ways to improve, grow, and accomplish shared goals.
5. **Service:** Seeing and meeting the needs of others.

Our emphasis will be on **empowering boys to be lifelong servant leaders**. The Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition age groups will be asked to complete two leadership merits per year with a total of six per age group to be completed in a three-year cycle. Once again let me emphasize the vital importance of these being taught at the local level by the local leaders. They will also be very interactive, directing our Rangers not only learn about but also "demonstrate" leadership skills.



# Royal Rangers and Uniforms

*by Ryan Beaty, National Programs & Outreach Coordinator*

**F**rom its inception, Royal Rangers has been a uniformed ministry. Uniforms are important; they provide a sense of belonging and enhance discipline. Military branches, for instance, have a variety of uniforms appropriate for their many duties: a spit-shine look for ceremonies, a formal look for galas, utility uniforms for fieldwork, etc. Sports teams place greater emphasis on the team name than on the individual name, creating a sense that members are part of something bigger than themselves. Whether for military personnel or sports teams, uniforms are important. They are also very important to Royal Rangers.

In recent years, however, wearing uniforms and uniform sales among Royal Rangers declined. One only needs attend a district camp to make this observation. Take a look at this picture of the 1982 National Camporama in Pigeon Forge, TN.

Can you find anyone out of uniform? Unfortunately, it is unlikely we will ever be able to capture such a photo again. Today's boys and young men want to belong to a team and a cause that is greater than them, but they also want options. Churches are asking for choices that will

allow them to leverage the benefits of the uniform. Churches know their communities and know which uniform(s) will enable them to attract and retain boys in their Royal Rangers outreach. We must be responsive. We must provide options.

Interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups have shown numerous causes for the declining interest in our current uniform. The style of the uniform is no longer appealing to a growing number of this generation of young men. Another issue is the functionality of the uniform. Royal Rangers has always been an activity-based program. The problem is that our uniform is no longer conducive for outdoor wear and for the many other activities offered. While our churches hold the U.S. military in high regard, some have expressed concern over the military look of the uniform; the look is very favorable in some areas of our country but a limiting factor in others. We are wise to provide a wide range of uniform options.

It is imperative the uniform continue to be a part of Royal Rangers. In order for that to happen, however, we must be willing to embrace some improvements to the uniform along with new

uniform options. Churches and Royal Rangers outposts need a uniform that embodies the wants and needs of the boys they minister to and the community in which they live. The traditional khaki uniform is not nearly as accepted in some urban communities as in most military communities. Churches and outposts need to have options. If a church wants to have the full khaki uniform, then that is the uniform for their church. However, if a church decides that a unique t-shirt and jeans or a customized hockey jersey with their outpost number and patrol name on it is the way to go, then that church should be able to use that as their official uniform and be a highly regarded Royal Rangers outpost as the church in full khakis.

A church also should not be penalized for its inability to pay for uniforms. Outfitting a large group of boys in uniforms can be expensive. A church should not feel like a lesser outpost if their boys can only afford a Royal Rangers t-shirt. It is not so much which uniform option that is chosen but that the entire outpost is their uniform of choice.

Remember that photo of the 1982 Camporama?



Remember the statement that we would never be able to capture such a photo again? Well, that is not entirely true, is it? Our ministry uniform is just a tool to reach boys for Christ. Our ultimate goal is to see boys uniformed in white. Perhaps in heaven, where it really counts, we will be given the opportunity for a group photo with the millions of boys, and girls from overseas, who are dressed in white, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. If providing churches a flexible uniform line will achieve that end, don't you agree it will be well worth it? The members of the national team and Executive Committee believe so and know you agree.

So let's take a look at the uniform line.

## The Formal Uniform

Royal Rangers has always had a formal uniform for special occasions. Traditionally, this has been referred to as the dress blazer. This uniform has undergone a makeover. It is no longer the uniform worn during award ceremonies but worn when representing Royal Rangers among pastors and business people. The new look of the uniform allows the leader to seamlessly transition into the professional world of ministers and business people with a sophisticated and modern look while also maintaining a uniquely Royal Rangers appearance.

**Jacket:** The Jacket continues to be navy blue; however, it does not require alterations. Any leader can use the navy blue sports coat he already has or go to any men's store to purchase one. Jackets may be either two or three button. No epaulets should be added to the shoulders, no insignias are to be worn, and no medals of any kind are worn. The leader may choose one Royal Rangers lapel pin of his or her choice (i.e., RR lapel pin, RRI pin, Pathfinder Missions, or other official pin). A pocket slide, which will hold both the Royal Rangers emblem and the individual's silver plastic nametag, is placed in the front left pocket. The women's formal jacket reflects the same qualities as the men's.

**Shirt:** The shirt is sky blue with no pattern. Women wear a sky blue blouse.

**Tie:** The tie has been specially designed by and distributed by GPH. It has diagonal red and blue stripes with a subtle embroidered Royal Rangers emblem at the bottom of the tie. This is not a clip on and no tie tack is required. Women are not required to wear a tie.

**Belt:** It is a black leather dress belt.

**Pants/Skirt:** Men continue to wear charcoal grey pants. Women also wear the grey pants or

may choose to wear a knee-length grey skirt.

**Socks/Shoes:** Men wear black socks. Women may wear black pantyhose or stockings with the skirt or black socks with the pants. Men and women both wear black dress shoes of their choosing.

## The Dress Uniform

The dress uniform is the new evolution of the traditional khaki uniform. This is the uniform that is worn for formal events, e.g., banquets, award ceremonies, etc. This uniform is what has traditionally been known as the dress khaki uniform. These uniforms will be available for purchase from GPH and are available for Adventure and Expedition Rangers and all leaders.

**The Shirt:** The shirt comes in long sleeve and has military pleats already sewn into them. A solid white Royal Ranger t-shirt will be worn under the dress shirt for an undershirt. Boys and leaders may wear the bolo tie of their choosing.

On the left uniform sleeve, the Royal Rangers emblem and the local office insignia (e.g., Outpost Chaplain, Patrol Leader, etc.) is to be worn. On the right sleeve, the geographic patch with the district name is worn. Directly below the geographic patch are the outpost numerals. Beneath the outpost numerals are the advancement level of the boy or leader.

The only insignia that is placed on the collar is for organizational leaders, i.e., regional coordinators, district training coordinators, etc. They are metal pins.

Above the left shirt pocket, the RRI pin, indicating you are a monthly ministry partner, is worn. The award ribbons, which should never number more than eighteen ribbons, is worn above the pocket and beneath the RRI pin. One awarded medal may be displayed on the pocket but not while the award ribbon is also being displayed. The patch signifying the highest level of training earned is worn on the left breast pocket.

The right pocket remains unchanged from the current uniform style. The FCF pin will remain situated above the group tag, which is placed flush against the top of the right pocket. The individual's nametag is placed on the flap of the right pocket. An event patch of the individual's choosing is worn, centered on the right pocket.

**Pants/Skirt & Belt:** The pants are long khaki pants for men and women. Women may also choose to wear a knee-length khaki skirt. The belt remains a khaki web belt with a brass buckle and tip.

**Socks/Shoes:** Men wear black socks. Women may wear black pantyhose or stockings with

the skirt or black socks with the pants. Men and women both wear black dress shoes of their choosing.

**Headgear:** Most often no headgear is worn.

## The Utility Uniform

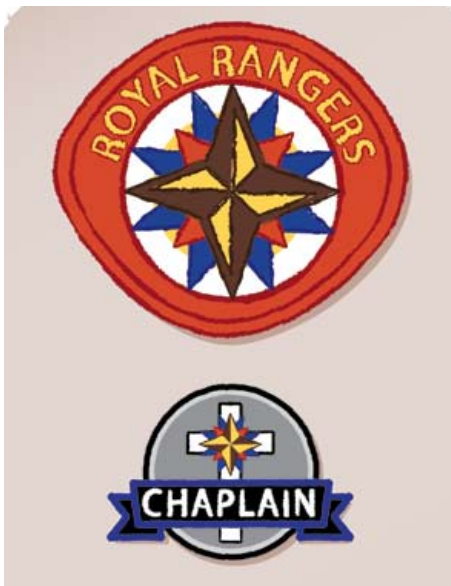
The field has requested a uniform that boys, young men, and adult leaders will find attractive and comfortable while engaging in fun activities. The utility uniform will accomplish both of these goals. It is rugged enough to withstand rigorous activities while remaining stylish enough for boys and young men to wear proudly. One of the most attractive aspects of this uniform is that patches that are routinely changed (e.g., local junior office insignia) can be fastened to the uniform with Velcro footprints. This option can be used in lieu of sewing them on. This should be a welcomed relief to those parents doing all that sewing.



UTILITY UNIFORM

This uniform is also the standard uniform for all age groups, Ranger Kids through Ranger Leaders. The Ranger Kids uniform is slowly being phased out (see transition plan below). This eliminates the necessity for parents to purchase a different uniform as boys move from Ranger Kids to Discovery Rangers, saving our families and churches money.

The Shirt: The shirts are made from khaki, wrinkle resistant, hi-tech wicking material. It is long sleeve with the ability to be rolled up and buttoned above the elbow. It has a flat bottom cut with vents in the back of the shirt. The shirt is most often worn untucked but must be tucked in if the individual is wearing his or her pins and medals. The pockets are welted but lie flat and closed by Velcro on the corners. An undershirt should be worn; however, there is no official color preference. Weather appropriate undergarments are also encouraged. When wearing the shirt untucked, it is recommended that no bolo be worn. While wearing the shirt tucked in, a bolo tie is required. The bolo tie is of the individual's choosing.



LEFT SLEEVE

On the left uniform sleeve, the Royal Rangers emblem and the local office insignia (e.g., Outpost Chaplain, Patrol Guide, etc.) are worn. On the right sleeve, the geographic patch with the district name is worn. Directly below the geographic patch are the outpost numerals. Beneath the outpost numerals are the advancement level of the boy or leader.

The only insignia that is placed on the collar is for organizational leaders, i.e., regional coordinators, district training coordinators, etc. They are non-metallic, embroidered patches.

On the left pocket, the highest-level training patch is worn. It is recommended that metallic pins only be worn during a council of achievement or other ceremony. The intention of this uniform is to have a comfortable uniform in which men and boys can be active without concern that pins will be pulled off, tearing the material.



LEFT POCKET



RIGHT SLEEVE



RIGHT POCKET

level Above the right pocket, the optional FCG patches can be worn. Each FCF advancement level will have its own patch design. Below the FCF patch and flush against the top of the pocket is the group tag. On the pocket can be an event patch of the individual's choosing. Nametags are only worn during councils of achievement or special ceremonies.

Pants: The individual has three pant options. 1) For Ranger Kids and any other Ranger who chooses, blue jeans are worn. The next two options can be worn by Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers and all leaders. 2) The solid navy blue RangerTact pants are a new cargo style pants, designed for outdoor activities with a modern style. The pants will have the Royal Ranger emblem sewn into the right pocket and other outrageous Ranger features. 3) The solid navy blue, high tech convertible pants will be made from abrasion resistant fabric. The Royal Rangers emblem will be embroidered on the right pocket and will be embossed on the web belt buckle.

Belt: A belt is always required, except when the activity dictates otherwise, e.g., backpacking, etc. When wearing blue jeans, a black, dark navy blue, or brown belt, matching your shoes is acceptable. Black or brown boots/shoes with matching belt are encouraged. Because Royal Rangers is a Christ-centered ministry, the type of belt buckle should reflect well on the ministry and on Christ. When wearing RangerTact pants, a black web belt with a chrome buckle is required.

Shoes: When wearing blue jeans, wear the shoe that is appropriate for the occasion (e.g., tennis shoes, boots, and sandals). Black or brown boots/shoes with matching belt are encouraged. When wearing RangerTact pants, black boots or shoes are required. Under no circumstances may pants ever be bloused in the boots.

Socks: When wearing jeans, the socks appropriate for the occasion are worn. When wearing RangerTact pants, black socks are required.

Vest: Vests for all age groups have changed to a navy blue canvas vest. Although the vests are optional, they are highly encouraged. They are worn only with outdoor camping uniform, the new utility uniform.

### Special Uniform

The special uniform offers a variety of options for the local outpost for numerous types of activities and personalization.

Business Casual: Polo shirt or long sleeve shirt with embroidered RR emblem, business slacks, shoes, and belt of choice.

Semi-casual: Polo shirt, long sleeve shirt, casual pants (such as blue jeans), and shoes of choice. Each new GPH catalog will offer a new trendy



design. As usual, GPH will always carry the standard navy blue polo shirt with the full Royal Rangers emblem.

Sports: We will make available a number of t-shirts that can be customized for the individual outpost. We will begin with three different sports jerseys of various colors, embroidered with the new Royal Rangers sports logo, that can be personalized for individuals, patrols, or outposts. When the line of sports is complete, there will be six to eight different jerseys. Hoodies will also be offered.

Working/Camping: T-shirt (available in a high tech wicking t-shirt with RR emblem), optional utility pants, shorts, blue jeans, and appropriate foot ware. The vest may be worn with this uniform.

### Other Uniform Items

Outerwear: A fleece jacket will be available to be worn with the utility uniform, matching in color and durability.

Headgear: Any Royal Rangers caps or hats, purchased through GPH, or other hats given at Royal Rangers events or training camps can be

worn. Other hats such as beanies, boonies, and outback style hats, may also be worn with the appropriate uniform.

### Uniform Etiquette

Royal Rangers follows the example set by the Boy Scouts of America when it comes to uniform etiquette:

“While Scouters may wear the insignia to which they are entitled, a ‘total display’ may not be in the best taste if the uniform looks over-decorated. Unauthorized insignia or incorrect wearing of authorized insignia is always wrong. Scouters must set the example for Scouts in this matter. The Scoutmaster who wears only his Scoutmaster emblem, council or community strip, troop numeral, and service star on his uniform is never guilty of poor taste.”

This was originally quoted in their 1959 *Scoutmasters Handbook* and continues to be their practice as stated in their handbooks. Leaders are encouraged to let their accomplishments be understated on the utility uniform and with decorum, accurately acknowledged on the dress uniform.

### Transition plan

The transition plan will be as follows.

- The new uniforms were modeled at the 2009 National Royal Rangers Council.
- The new line of uniform items are now available.
- A three-year transition to the new uniform items will be observed; Rangers can wear the old uniform items until July 31, 2011. This will allow Rangers to out grow or wear out their current clothing items.

We, the national team and Executive Committee, hope you are as excited as we are about these new uniform options. We believe uniforms are an important part of every Royal Rangers outpost and believe the best way to leverage the benefits of the uniform is to offer churches a variety of uniform options, allowing them to select the uniform(s) that will enable them to reach, teach, and keep the boys in their communities for Christ.

Let’s take the Royal Rangers uniform to the iPod® generation! 🎧

Current Name	New Name	Intended for...
Dress Blue Blazer	Formal Uniform	Adult leaders
Class B	Dress Uniform <i>(The class A uniform will be phased out over three years.)</i>	Adventure Rangers Expedition Rangers Adult Leaders
	Utility Uniform <i>(Ranger Kids uniform will be phased out over three years.)</i>	Ranger Kids Discovery Rangers Adventure Rangers Expedition Rangers Adult Leaders
Class C	Special Uniform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Casual</li> <li>• Casual</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Work/Camping</li> </ul>	Ranger Kids Discovery Rangers Adventure Rangers Expedition Rangers Adult Leaders

**NOTE:** The uniforms being phased-out (the Ranger Kids uniform, the Class A khaki uniform, and the Dress Blue Blazer) will NOT need to be retired until July 31, 2011. Most boys will have outgrown their uniforms by then, or worn them out.



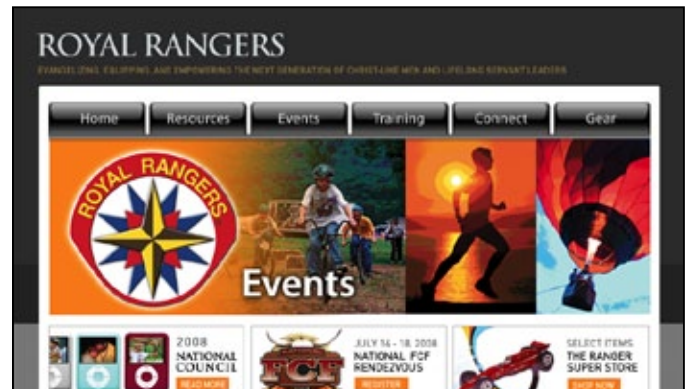
# Vision for Website and Communications

by John Hicks, National Communications Coordinator

It's an exciting time for Royal Rangers! God is at work in the hearts and lives of men and boys all across our nation through the ministry of Royal Rangers and is calling them to a deeper commitment and to a higher purpose than they have ever reached before. We all have the privilege of being a part of that great endeavor!

Today, as we consider the future of this great ministry, a vast number of opportunities are before us. Although Royal Rangers is the greatest tool available today for reaching the boys of our churches and our communities, there are countless ways in which this ministry can be improved and expanded. In order to see these opportunities become reality, it is vital that we work together as one great nationwide team. It is only as we agree together and pursue a common cause that we can ever become a powerful force for change in our nation and our communities.

One essential tool for facilitating this nationwide team effort is the Internet. The Internet has now become a core component of American life. Most American households now have Internet access at home, on the job, or at school, and many of us have come to rely on the Internet as our primary means of sharing and receiving information. The Internet provides a means for nearly instant two-way communication, available any time of the day, at a minimal cost. It is clear that the effective use of the internet is crucial to the success of this ministry. With this in mind, it is the goal of the national office to begin utilizing the Internet as the primary vehicle for communication with our membership in the field. Our goal is to provide a means for every Royal Ranger boy, leader, parent, or pastor to receive direct news and updates from the national office while also sharing their ideas and comments directly back to our office. We hope to accomplish this through an integrated use of our national website and electronic newsletters.



**New National Website** Our objective is to utilize the national website to serve three primary functions — to *inform, equip, and connect*.

**To Inform** One of the most common uses of our website today is to share information about the program—to inform site visitors as to the purpose and objectives of our program and to answer a visitor's common questions, such as "Who are you?" "What do you do?" and "How do you do it?" This is will continue to be a core function of our site in the days ahead. It is very important that site visitors be able to find the information they are looking for in a quick and simple manner. We are therefore in the process of restructuring our website to make it as easy to navigate as possible.

**To Equip** Another central purpose of our website will be to equip members for service and support them in their efforts to reach boys. Our plan is to develop online training programs where leaders can complete training at a time and place convenient to them. We want to provide new resources to help leaders understand their roles and perform their duties more effectively. We want to assist leaders in their personal and professional development, helping them to grow in leadership skills and to become better teachers, leaders, parents, and people of God. In order to be successful in developing boys, we must, likewise, invest in developing men, i.e., helping them to become Christlike servant leaders who will reach the boys of their communities and grow themselves in the process.





**To Connect** One of the greatest assets of the Royal Rangers program is the sense of community that is felt among our members. Many men and boys see Royal Rangers as their place of connection in the church, a place where they can learn, grow, compete, and be challenged. Our goal is to utilize our website as a means by which members all across the nation can connect with the national office and with each other. We want them to see Royal Rangers as a community, not just a program. When a person joins Royal Rangers as a boy or leader, we want him to feel as though he hasn't just bought a curriculum or joined a small group but that he has become part of a worldwide network of Spirit-empowered people, passionately pursuing our three fold objective of evangelizing the world, equipping the next generation of Christlike men, and empowering lifelong servant leaders.

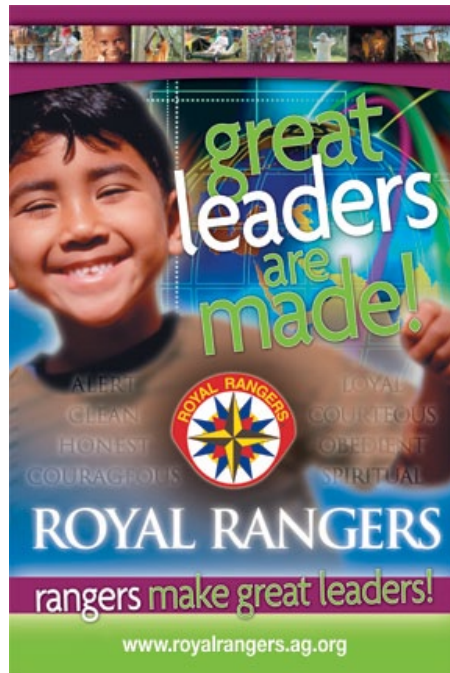
In addition to helping Rangers connect with one another, we hope to establish clear lines of communication between the national office and Rangers in the field. Feedback mechanisms, such as the QLC survey, regularly provide our office with experiences and viewpoints from around the country. Delivery mechanisms, such as RSS feeds and electronic newsletters, will provide members with the latest news and updates on a continual basis.

### Electronic Newsletters

To work in cooperation with our website, we will expand our use of regular electronic newsletters. These newsletters will incorporate much of the news and update materials previously shared in print via the *rLIFE* newsletter or the *Rangers NOW* magazine. Each newsletter will contain brief summaries of current "hot topics" with links back to our website for more information. Visitors to our website will be able to subscribe to the newsletters for free and be instantly connected to the network of Rangers nationwide.

### Annual Promotional Kit

As a benefit to chartered outposts, the national office has begun creating a general promotional package each year for use in promoting the ministry at the local level. The package follows a consistent design and theme while allowing for customization by outposts. All components are distributed in electronic format via CD to enable users to customize each item with the church's or outpost's information before printing. This enables outposts to create top-quality, professionally designed promotional materials, customized to carry the unique message of their church, at a minimal cost.



### Rangers NOW

Since the early days of this ministry, the *National Dispatch* and later the *High Adventure* have been some of the primary means of sharing information from the national office to leaders and boys in the field. The look and feel has changed a little through the years, but the overall purpose of the magazine has remained unchanged: to communicate the spirit of Royal Rangers, to disseminate program information and updates, and to provide leaders with resources to help them do their jobs more effectively. But the challenge has always been to produce a magazine that appealed to the broad spectrum of boys involved in Royal Rangers. High action or adventure topics that appeal to older boys may be of little relevance to Ranger Kids while crafts and handwork projects suitable for younger boys hold little appeal to older boys.

In an effort to provide a more valuable benefit to chartered outposts while keeping development costs to a minimum, the quarterly *High Adventure* magazine has been replaced with a new annual publication entitled *Rangers NOW*. Separate editions of *Rangers NOW* are now produced for each of the

four age groups (Ranger Kids, Discovery, Adventure, and Expedition Rangers). Two additional issues are also produced each year—one for leaders and one for general promotional or informational use. All six editions are produced annually and distributed to all chartered outposts at the close of the new universal annual charter period.

By providing separate issues for each group, this new publication may now be targeted to the special needs and interests of boys in each group. It also contains the latest program updates as well as information on new products and resources of particular interest to that group. A variety of general program information previously found only in the Royal Rangers handbooks is also included, such as the Royal Rangers pledge, code, motto, and points of the emblem. Information on the advancement trail and junior leadership development in the outpost and a uniform guide will progressively be included. Information about upcoming national events, such as Camporama and Rendezvous, will be included as needed. These pages will make *Rangers NOW* a useful tool throughout the year.

Together, we hope *Rangers NOW* will be a useful tool for the local outpost while allowing for annual updates to be incorporated each year.

**The Bottom Line** is our plan is to create a system of two-way communication between the national office and leaders and boys in the field whereby we can receive continual feedback on every aspect of the program through a variety of methods and media. This will enable us to continually adapt the program to the constantly changing needs of our society and our churches and help us to build a corporate vision to "influence more boys than ever, more effectively than ever." 🌟



**Are you READY to be a part?**



# Trends & Statistics among American Teenagers

by Ryan Beaty, National Programs & Outreach Coordinator

**W**e live in an ever changing, constantly moving, rapidly evolving world of culture and technological advancement. Young people are on the bleeding edge of every cultural shift and technological change. If we who are called to reach the next generation of Christlike men are committed to meeting this challenge, then we must ride the wave and understand it not paddle against. The gospel of Jesus Christ is both life and culture changing, but in order to present our message of re-love-olution, we must first understand what drives young men we are reaching for.

## The Home

According to US Government statistics, both the number of marriages as well as the number of divorces is on the decline. This indicates a number of things. First, people are waiting to get married, and secondly, couples are choosing to live in a state of cohabitation in lieu of marriage. According to the US Census Bureau, the average age of first marriage for young men in the United States is 27, which coincidentally is nearly 12 years on average after their first sexual experience at 15.7 years old. Currently, 11% of the US population is divorced (the highest in US history) while 25% of the total adult population has been divorced. It is alarming to find that among different religious groups those professing to be born-again Christians possess a higher divorce rate than any other portion of the population with the exception of Jews. The Christian rate of 27% is noticeably higher than that of Atheists/Agnostics at 21%. Current studies show that 63% of children in the United States will grow up with both parents in the household, the lowest percentage in the Western world. Currently, 23% of the population is growing up in a

home with only the mother as a guardian. Fatherless homes account for 63% of teen suicides, 90% of teen homeless/runaways, 85% of child behavioral problems, 71% of high school dropouts, 85% of youths in prison, and 50% of teenage pregnancies.

## Youth and Faith

The most common teen spiritual activity, like that of adults, is prayer. Overall, three-quarters of teenagers (72%) say they pray in a typical week. The next most common activity is attending a worship service at a church, a form of engagement embraced by half (48%) of today's teenagers. Roughly one-third of teenagers said they attend Sunday school (35%), attend youth group (33%), participate in a small group (32%), and read the Bible (31%).

Compared to American adults, teenagers are more likely to report engagement in corporate forms of worship and spiritual expression, such as attending church or participating in small groups, youth groups, or Sunday school. However, young people are less likely to pray than adults (72% of teens vs. 83% of adults) or read the Bible in a typical week (31% of teens vs. 41% of adults).



However, the research raises caution that teenagers' extraordinary appetites for spiritual activity may be waning. Since a decade ago, teenagers are less likely to pray (down from 81% in the mid-90's), to attend worship services (down from 53%), and to read the Bible (down from 37%).

As some of the nation's first digital pilgrims, the research showed that one out of every four teenagers (26%) had learned something about their faith or spirituality online in the last six months. This was true of two-fifths of born-again Christian teenagers (39%). Furthermore, one-sixth of teenagers (16%) and one-quarter of born-again teens (25%) said they had "a spiritual experience" online where they worshipped or connected with God.

The most common elements sought by young people were "to worship or make a connection with God" (45% described this as very important) and "to better understand what I believe" (42%). About one-third of teens said they wanted "to spend time with close friends" (34%), "to get encouraged or inspired" (34%), or "to volunteer to help others" (30%).

Other expectations of teenagers were less important, including learning about prayer (26%), listening to religious teaching (26%), participating in discussions regarding religion and faith (23%), being mentored or coached in spiritual development (21%), discovering the traditions of their faith (20%), participating in a study class about faith (19%), or studying the Bible (18%).

When asked to choose between a church that teaches the traditions and background of their faith or a church that teaches how their faith should influence everyday decisions and lifestyle, most teenagers preferred the latter (39% vs. 16%). However, underscoring the fact that spirituality is only superficial for many teens, a plurality of teenagers (45%) admitted they would not care for either type of church.

When it comes to what they have learned, the most common areas of content recalled by teens revolved around moral and ethical standards (65%) and relationships (62%), followed by faith traditions (55%) and personal evangelism (50%). Just one-third or fewer churching teenagers said they remember any helpful content related to the following topics: media, movies and television (35%); money and finances (30%); the supernatural world (28%); leisure

activities (27%); government and law (26%); art and music (22%); health issues (21%); and technology (9%).

Having looked at the research, it appears that the majority of evidence, therefore, demonstrates that the church's shortcomings do not lie with a lack of exposure to the gospel but with its inability to develop individuals who value the teachings of Christ above the conventions of the society in which they reside. So what do we do about it? How do we create a love for the teachings of Christ that makes teens and young adults stand strong when their peers bend and fall? Famed Christian author, Josh McDowell, and Chi Alpha Missionary to Kent State University, Jesse Cook, both agree that it is relationship. The way for young people to continue following Christ into their adult lives is to have a relationship with other Christ followers and to have seen a model of an adult Christian life lived out before them. The relationships they form in their first few days on campus are crucial to whether or not they will continue to connect with their faith. Most children are not adequately prepared to face the pressures of adult life, and if they never saw a model of how to depend on Christ, they have a greater chance of falling under the pressure. We must model our relationship with Christ in front of the boys we are mentoring. They must see that as adults we depend on Christ and have both a personal relationship with Him through prayer, bible reading, and worship and a communal relationship with Him through our relationships with the rest of His body. Adolescents need to know that living a life devoted to Christ can be done and that they have a place in the kingdom.

#### Sexuality

American teenagers under the age of 15 are more likely to not only have sexual intercourse but also have more partners and shorter relationships than their counterparts in any other industrialized western nation.. Over all American teens are waiting longer to have sex; 12th grade students who report having sex has declined by 6 percent over 10 years. American teens are replacing sexual intercourse with other sexual activities that are deemed "safer." Among 15-17 year old, 50% report to have had oral sex, and the number jumps to 70% among 18-19 year olds.

The teenage pregnancy rate declined by

28% between 1990-2002. Teenage abortions have dropped by 50% in the last 20 years to 34% of all teen pregnancies and currently make up 17% of all abortions. Teen childbearing costs the US government over 7 billion dollars annually in lost revenue, and 80% of all pregnant teens who decide to keep their children will live under the poverty level for at least 10 years.

Of all high school students, 14.4% of students report having four or more sexual partners. Among teens, 20% more boys than girls are sexually active. Among sexually active teenagers, 25% have a sexually transmitted disease or infection. Among all newly reported cases of sexually transmitted disease, 58% of them were 15-24 years old. Nearly 50% of all sexually active teenagers will inherit at least one STD/I by the age of 24. Everyday nearly 8,000 teenagers become infected with a STD/I.

Among high school students, 5% of boys and 11% of girls report having had sexual intercourse with a member of the same sex. Among American boys, the average age of initial homosexuality identity is 12 years old. The highest number of individuals with HIV/AIDS is young men who engage in sexual intercourse with other young men.

Boys between the ages of 12-17 are the largest consumers of Internet pornography while 20% of all teens have been solicited sexually while online—89% while in a chat room. The average age of first exposure to Internet pornography is 11 years old. Among churchgoers, 50% of all men struggle with pornography.

What do we do about this as we minister to boys? First of all, we pray. We pray for the young men we are ministering to that God would keep them sensitive to the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts. Secondly, we don't avoid conversations concerning sexuality but speak about them in ways the Bible does. We tell them of God's grace that sustains us and of our calling to remain pure until marriage. We embrace them when they make mistakes and walk with them to the foot of the cross. We encourage them to have healthy, godly relationships with the opposite sex and to only pursue romantic relationships on God's time.

#### Entertainment

US children are exposed to 8 ½ hours of TV, computer, video games, and other media a day often many at once. On average, boys



ages 8-18 spend 1 hour 15 minutes a day playing video games. Boys spend 25% of all their money on entertainment, and teenagers as a whole spend \$155 billion annually on entertainment, which is more than any other demographic group.

The top five grossing movies of 2007 were all aimed at adolescents: 1) Spiderman 3, 2) Shrek the Third, 3) Transformers, 4) Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, and 5) Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix. Only Harry Potter earned less than \$300 million at the box office while the other four all landed within the top 20 highest grossing films of all time. Of the top five DVD sales in 2007, three were targeted at youth: Happy Feet, Transformers, and Night at the Museum.

The top five grossing albums of the year consisted of two Disney Channel productions, one American Idol participant, and two music veterans. High School Musical 2, the most purchased album of the year, and Hannah Montana 2: Meet Miley Cyrus, which placed fourth in the rankings, were targeted completely at a teenage audience. The top five played songs of 2007 were "Buy U A Drink" by T-Pain, "Say It Right" by Nelly Furtado, "Irreplaceable" by Beyonce, "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Fergie, and "The Sweet Escape" by Gwen Stefani.

The top five video games of 2007 were World of Warcraft, The Sims, Runescape, Halo: Combat Evolved, and Halo 2. The top 5 television shows of 2007 were American Idol, Dancing with the Stars, Sunday Night Football, CSI, and Grey's Anatomy. Both American Idol and Dancing with the Stars are highly adolescent viewing population dominated.

This is all valuable information for organizational leaders. Media is not something that should be avoided. Organizational leaders should take clues from popular culture in an effort to attract young men to events where life change can take place. Organizational leaders should pray the Holy Spirit would give them creativity to relate to the young men in their area. For instance, a district may want to use the Transformers theme to teach young men they need to be transformed in Christ and to transform their world for Christ. A district could easily create camp themes, using American Idol, Pirates of the Caribbean, CSI, or LOST.

Districts should also be very in tune with popular contemporary Christian and worship groups. This is the music that

connects with young men. A district or section may want to invite a youth band from a local church to lead worship at their events or if the budget permits, bring in a popular worship group. Currently, among Christian worship groups, David Crowder Band, Shane and Shane, Casting Crowns, Hillsong United, Israel Hooten and New Breed, and Matt Redman provide the most well-known and recognizable songs. Reliant K, Toby Mac, Mercy Me, Third Day, and Sanctus Real are also very popular among youth.

### Sports/Outdoor Activities

Team sports are useful for teaching youth many important skills. The first of these skills is competition. In today's world, we are surrounded by competition. Adults face competition when they are applying for and keeping jobs; children face competition in academics and sports. Participating in competitive team sports at an early age gives children an opportunity to understand the healthy aspects of competition in a friendly environment. Students of all ages who participate in sports have been found to cope better with competition in other areas of their lives (Yan & McCullagh, 2004). Still, highly competitive activity at young ages (5-7 years)--for example, participating on teams that travel to competitions--may expose children to unhealthy values.

Team sports also help children's physical well-being. Students who are actively involved in sports are more likely to describe themselves as being in good physical health than students who do not participate in sports. Also, athletically active youth are more likely to be nutrition-conscious in their food choices than youth who are not actively involved in a team sport.

While the physical health benefits that sports provide youth are undoubtedly important, the social benefits may be what draw them to sports. Being able to spend time with their friends outside of school is more important than knowing they are physically active. Life skill gains through social interaction can be tremendous (Harrison & Naraya, 2003). Social interaction in team sports teaches youth to associate with their peers, solve conflict, and communicate effectively with their peers. Emotional growth is also important for youth. Sometimes, the emotional development of youth is hindered because of the physical and/or emotional absence of parents. Sports provide youth



with opportunities to interact with caring and supportive adults outside the family, which is a major protective factor for at-risk youth. The interaction young people have with their coaches help to improve self-esteem as well as lower the chance of depression.

Sports team membership can also help increase children's self-worth, especially when the emphasis is on group or team success rather than individual achievement. Youth of all ages, including those in high school, are likely to receive an end-of-the-season trophy for participating in the team sport. Receiving a trophy with their teammates is intended to help youth feel a sense of accomplishment, teamwork, and recognition.

Youth participation in club sports is showing a slight increase in young people ages 5-13 but a drastic decrease in participants ages 14-17. According to Michigan State University, children who participate in club sports (most often through youth organizations, e.g., YMCA, BSA, etc.) have a reduced risk of involvement in gang activities. It also has had moderate success in helping children with delinquencies work through their issues and conquer problems.

Enthusiasm for hunting and fishing among young people has been declining since the early 1990s. Angler participation rates among 18- to 24-year olds dropped to 13% in 2001 from 20% in 1991, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Today, just 9% of the country's 34 million anglers are 18-24, which is down from 13% a decade ago. Hunting has had similar declines with overall participation among 18- to 24-year-olds dropping to 6% last year from 9% in 1991. Those ages 18 to 24 make up just 10% of the nation's 13 million hunters today, which is down from 14% in 1991.

## Education

By the time they reach 12 years of age, boys are almost twice as likely as girls to have repeated at least one grade. Boys are more than twice as likely to be suspended from school. Boys are more than three times as likely to be expelled. A recent study of state-supported preschools found that preschool boys (ages 3-4) are expelled about 4 ½ times more than girls. Boys comprise the majority of permanent high school dropouts. In 2004, only 43% of college

undergraduates were men, a number that is expected to continue to decline as fewer men enter college. Once in college, males are more likely to withdraw from or leave school without completing their degrees. For every 100 women in America who earn a bachelor's degree, only 73 men complete the same degree. Women who earn master's degrees outnumber men by more than 30%.

## Health

Among boys 6-10 years old, 18.8% are considered obese, and among boys 11-19 years old, 17.4% are considered obese. The percentage of children who are overweight has increased from 6% between 1976-1980 to 18% in 2004. Despite being more likely to participate in organized sports or meet recommended guidelines for exercise and physical activity than girls, boys are also more likely to spend more than three hours a day watching television or playing computer games. Adolescent males are more likely to be overweight or at risk of becoming overweight, but they are less likely to describe themselves as overweight or try to lose weight either through diet or exercise.

Due to the dramatic increase of children and adolescents who are overweight or obese, the number of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes has also increased substantially from 5% in previous years to as much as 30%-50% in recent studies. Boys are more likely to be diagnosed with asthma and are more likely to suffer from hay fever or respiratory allergies. Boys generally miss more school due to injury or illness than girls. Boys are more likely to have chronic health conditions that limit their ability to walk, care for themselves, or participate in other activities.

Over 50% more teens suffer from depression than the general population in the United States, and boys both generally suffer more damaging effects and go undiagnosed more often. Most depression is triggered by the physiological changes occurring in the body of the teen, coupled with issues of poor self-image. Boys experience socio-emotional difficulties at a rate almost twice that of girls. (Socio-emotional difficulties are "moderate to severe difficulties with emotions, concentration, behavior, or getting along with other people.")

Boys commit suicide at a rate

approximately 3.5 times that of girls. For every 100 girls ages 15-19 who commits suicide, 549 boys ages 15-19 commit suicide. Evidence suggests that over 90% of children and adolescents who commit suicide have a mental disorder. Females ages 12-17 are more likely to receive counseling and treatment for mental health problems than males of the same age. Approximately 2/3 of adolescents and children with major depressive disorder also have another mental disorder. The most common disorders are dysthymia, anxiety disorders, disruptive or antisocial disorders, and substance abuse problems. Studies have indicated a possible link between inadequate maternal supervision/control and the presence of both a conduct disorder and depression, suggesting that parental behavior may sometimes influence the onset of both conditions. Children and adolescents suffering from depression feel sad, unloved, pessimistic (or hopeless) about the future and may be irritable, which occasionally leads to aggressive behavior.

Children suffering from depression tend to be indecisive, have difficulty concentrating, may appear lethargic, suffer from disturbed sleep patterns, or neglect their appearance or personal hygiene. In contrast to adult experiences of depression, depressed children are more likely to demonstrate anxiety, such as fear of separation or reluctance to meet new people, and somatic symptoms, such as headaches, stomach pains, or more general aches and pains. Bipolar disorder, in which periods of depression alternate with periods of mania, can first appear in adolescence and can be difficult to correctly identify due to the gaps between manic and depressive periods.

This information again calls us to be in constant prayer for the young men in our outposts. It also means that we cannot afford to say things like, "Oh, he's just a teenager." We must take depression and other issues like it seriously, speak to our young men honestly, and never hesitate to seek the assistance of a counselor, pastor, or law enforcement officer when necessary. We must recognize that we are not the experts and that we must sometimes call in help. It also means that we must pay more attention to the young people that God has entrusted to us. We are far too ignorant of the pain that adolescents face and can no longer afford it. We must offer our young

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men a place for safe community where they can communicate openly and honestly with godly mentors who care deeply for them and are there to love and disciple them on their journey. Our attitude has to be one of openness and patience even in the most troubling of circumstances.

### **Risky Habits**

A substantial portion of adolescent deaths come from unintentional injuries (e.g., vehicle crashes, bicycle accidents, etc.). However, surveys of high school students find that boys are more likely to rarely or never wear a seatbelt; rarely or never wear a bicycle helmet; and rarely or never wear a motorcycle helmet. More young males have reported driving after drinking alcohol than females have. Boys are over three times more likely to carry a weapon and ten times more likely to carry a gun, including carrying one to school; this makes boys more likely to be threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. Boys are nearly twice as likely to be in a physical fight or be injured in a fight, including fights on school property.

Use of tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco, is higher among adolescent males than among adolescent females. Alcohol use, especially episodic heavy drinking, is generally higher among adolescent males. Use of illegal drugs, including marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin, illegal

steroids, and ecstasy, is generally higher among adolescent males.

Boys are often initiated into risky behaviors at an early age; more boys than girls report their first experiences with sex, cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana occur before age thirteen. Boys are more likely to be the victims of serious violent crime, including aggravated assault, robbery, and homicide.

The fastest growing drug on the market is methamphetamine. It is taking the Midwest by storm, causing unprecedented damage among families. Meth use has surpassed cocaine use in states, such as Oklahoma, Missouri, and Nebraska, and there are more meth abusers in Oklahoma City and Omaha than in New York City or Detroit. It also has a strong foothold in California, Texas, and Illinois. Meth is highly addictive and can be manufactured using commercial materials found anywhere in the U.S. Meth's high lasts from 6 to 12 hours with 50% of the drug being removed from the body in 12 hours. This is compared to cocaine's high that lasts from 20 to 30 minutes with 50% of the drug being removed from the body in 1 hour.

Teaching children to avoid these drugs and educating them on the dangers drug abuse will have on the body is key in keeping adolescents away from drugs. It is also imperative that we teach them two principles: our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit and as good stewards of the temple, we should not put anything in our bodies that will harm us.

In the end, all of the preceding information should do two things. First, it should compel us to disciple the young men who are in our sphere of influence. We need to take personally our responsibility to train up those whom the Lord has given to us. There are young men in our cities who are within our reach that need to see Christlike manhood modeled. Secondly, it gives us an opportunity to identify doors of entry where the gospel can be presented and applied to their lives. We need to realize that we don't have to fight the schools, sports leagues, and video games; instead, we use those activities and others to reach young men with the gospel.<sup>1</sup> ✎

<sup>1</sup> Statistical information compiled provided by: US Census Bureau, US National Center for Health Statistics, Americans for Divorce Reform, Barna Research Group, US Center for Disease Control, New York University, The Associated Press, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, Focus on the Family, National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, USA Today, Nielson Ratings, Michigan State University, American Demographics, NARCANON, and Men's Health Network.