

Unsung heroes—reaching out

Boys need to be loved continued

of time, effort, and other resources to become qualified.

However, men who work with Royal Rangers year after year find the rewards far outweigh the sacrifice. The love and loyalty which the boys show for Christ and their leaders make it worthwhile.

God loves boys

God gave His Son as our Saviour to reach boys. When we realize that Jesus died to save boys, each boy we meet not only has immeasurable worth, but is a potential candidate for salvation.

Several years ago one of our ministers lost his son in an automobile accident. The pastor found it difficult to adjust to this tragedy.

Late one evening he was pouring out his heart before God with sorrow that only a loving father could know. In desperation he cried out, "But, God, he was my only son!"

At that moment God spoke to the preacher's heart and said, "Yes, I know how you feel!"

God gave His Son as our example to teach boys. God could have had His Son appear full grown, as in the case of Adam. But in His wisdom He provided that Christ would be a practical role model who was about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). He came as a baby; He lived for a time as a boy.

God gave His Son as our Lord to keep boys. Jesus is personally acquainted with their needs. He enjoyed the love of his earthly family and the admiration of others while a boy. Everyone was astonished at His understanding and answers (Luke 2:47).

Passing through boyhood himself, Jesus not only sanctified the exact age of every boy, he also blazed the trail in His growth years waxing strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and with the grace of God upon Him (Luke 2:40).

Jesus showed great compassion for children during His earthly ministry. He healed them, blessed them, and told us the kingdom of God was peo-

In 1982 a memorial to American servicemen killed in Vietnam was dedicated, many years after our disengagement from that conflict. I believe the honor was too little and too late. How often the truly heroic of our world are unappreciated, unsung heroes.

Even in the church, thanklessness is widespread. Leaders and servants of the ministries and helps and governments of our assemblies are seldom recognized and valued as they should be.

One little-noticed place of service is the ministry of Royal Rangers. The men and women who don the uniform of commander are a rare species.

Just being willing to wear a uniform sets them apart from the common flock. Some folk would be embarrassed to dress so differently, but the commanders know that Royal Rangers khaki gives them a common identity with the boys of their outposts.

Wearing the uniform with its emblems, numerals, badges, and pins is just one of many ways a commander


pled by them. He even took one boy's little lunch of loaves and fishes and performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 men plus women and children.

All over our country, boys are singing a little jingle that says God is still working on them. Recently I saw a T-shirt which declared: "Under construction: please be patient."

Boyhood is the time for life's fondest memories. Boys may not remember the amount of money we made or the kind of success we achieved in the business world. But they will always remember who loved them.

Thomas Moore must have had this thought in mind when he wrote:

*The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood years,
The words of love then spoken.*

Boys are all around us—we cannot escape that. They may need many things while growing up. But most of all they need to be loved. 

extends himself in pursuit of his goal to reach, teach, and keep boys for Christ.

Once a week he meets with the sons of the church members and anybody else's sons he can corral; and corral is an appropriate word, as any mother or father of a red-blooded American boy knows.

At these weekly gatherings the outpost commander and his lieutenant commanders (if he is fortunate enough to have lieutenants) undertake a ministry to the whole boy: body, soul, and spirit.

Games are a favorite part of each meeting, but the spiritual leader of youth must limit the time devoted to sport. There must be time for the soulful portion of these beings called boys. Knowledge of the compass, the map, knots, bandages, and CPR must be imparted. Self-reliance and self-confidence must be implanted and leadership developed.

The Royal Rangers code, motto, and pledge support and enhance Christian parental precept and example. Cleanliness, honesty, loyalty, obedience, and spirituality are held up as ideals and exemplified by the lives of these commanders—these saints in uniform

Counseling, Bible study, and devotion times are somehow squeezed into these short meetings. Spiritual things are never neglected, even on camping trips. Thousands of boys are being saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit in Royal Rangers each year.

Camp-outs, canoe trips, hikes, bike-a-thons, sports-a-ramas, pine wood derbies, and tours of zoos and factories are some of the activities led by the diligent commander. There are district powwows and even a National Royal Rangers Camporama.

The versatility of the Royal Rangers commander is amazing. Besides all of the effort already mentioned, he must keep at least one step ahead of the speedily growing knowledge of the boys. To do this, he takes leadership training courses, sometimes driving for many miles to classes held at other churches or in other cities.

This training is necessary because