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[Home](#)
[Articles](#)
[Features](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Callings](#)
[Archives](#)
[Home](#) > [Articles](#) > [Scouts told: Be 'lights' to the world](#) >

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+ [Thomas S. Monson](#)
 + [Conference](#)
 + [Leaders](#)
 + [Mormon Tabernacle Choir](#)

+ [Daily index](#)
 + [Almanac](#)
 + [Dedicatory prayers](#)
 + [First Presidency letters](#)
 + [Humanitarian efforts](#)
 + [Missions](#)
 + [Nauvoo](#)
 + [Scriptures](#)
 + [Sports](#)
 + [Suggestions for life's challenges](#)
 + [Temples](#)
 + [Transcripts of talks](#)
 + [User feedback](#)
 + [Video](#)
 + [World events](#)

+ [Contact us](#)
 + [LDS.org](#)
 + [Provident Living](#)
 + [Meetinghouse locator](#)

Scouts told: Be 'lights' to the world

Varsity teams find unity in 'On Target' adventure

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AMERICAN FORK, UTAH

July 17 combined all the elements of a nearly perfect Saturday morning for David L. Beck.



Photo by Jason Swensen

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, center, and Rod Fisher use a reflecting mirror to signal LDS Varsity Scouts stationed on mountain peaks across Utah County. Brother Beck used the Varsity Scout event to encourage the young men to fulfill their Duty to God program and, in Scout fashion, to do "a good turn daily."

The Church's Young Men general president found himself that day in the shadow of the [Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple](#), donning a green Scout uniform and talking to hundreds — if not thousands — of Aaronic Priesthood holders about their duty to God. The temple, Scouting and the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood constituted a powerful, even sacred, mix for Brother Beck and many others who participated in a Varsity Scout activity that stretched across several western U.S. states.

This year's edition of Varsity Scouting's annual "On Target" occurred at an ideal time for Brother Beck and other Young Men leaders. The Church's revised Duty to God program is in its maiden weeks, and "On Target" offered Brother Beck an apt opportunity to remind the Scouts about their personal sacred priesthood duties. The Varsity Scouts were not all gathered in one place. Instead, they were scattered across dozens of encampments on high Utah peaks encircling the Mount Timpanogos temple and in other sites in Idaho, Nevada and Arizona. It was impossible for Brother Beck to visit each clime, so the Young Men general president utilized the airwaves to deliver his Saturday morning message via ham radio in a pavilion built just a few steps from the temple. Meanwhile, Varsity Scouts by the score gathered around receivers in their respective mountain camps to listen to his words.



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Photo by Jason Swensen

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, center, shares counsel via ham radio to Scouts camping on mountain tops in several Western U.S. states.

"The great thing about Scouting is you can have a lot of fun and at the same time learn important lessons that will help you in your life to find success and happiness," said Brother Beck, speaking into a radio microphone.

One of the pleasures of any campout, he said, is to witness the morning sun as it rises above the peaks and brings light and warmth to all below.

Brother Beck referred to the Savior's words that His followers are the light of the world and that a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Young men and their leaders should be as a light to the world," he said. "Collectively, you should be like a city on a hill that cannot be hid. Individually and collectively, you should be an example of living the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan."

At the beginning of the Scout Oath, a young man pledges to "do my best, to do my duty to God and my country."

"Duty to God requires us to live the ideals of the Scout Law — we are trustworthy, obedient, clean and reverent," he said. "I hope today as you participate in this activity that you will reflect upon your life and how you are living the ideals of the Scout Law."



Photo by Jason Swensen

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, right, speaks with a group of scouts.

Young men who fulfill their duty to God, he added, are also — in Scout fashion — helpful, friendly, courteous and kind. "We help other people at all times. We are like that sun that comes on a cold morning on the mountaintop, warming the lives of those who we interact with. We do a good turn daily."

The youth leader spoke of the power of collaboration. Young priesthood leaders can accomplish much more when they work together. "Seek to reach out to others and include them in your lives ... think about someone that you know that you could reach out to and bless by connecting with them."

After concluding his ham radio message, Brother Beck stepped from the broadcast pavilion and looked high to the many peaks surrounding the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple. Varsity Scout teams were stationed on nearly every peak. They used reflective mirrors to signal to Brother Beck below, who returned the signal with a mirror of his own. Mirror reflections could be seen atop mountain peaks across Utah County. The reflections signaled unity among the Varsity Scouts while serving as a visible acceptance of Brother Beck's challenge to share their gospel light with others.

Brother Beck appreciated the symbolism of the signaling exercise. "These young men can and should be the lights of the world by the way they live and the way they reach out and seek to bless others' lives with friendliness and kindness."





Photo by Jason Swensen

More than 1,000 young men participated in the annual activity.

"They can have a lot of fun, but they can also reflect not only on signals but reflect also upon their lives and the good things they are doing and can do."

The young men of the Church, he added, have taken the offensive as they fulfill their duty to God and serve others.

"God has given them His priesthood and they can do great things."

jswensen@desnews.com

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