

*The Camping Movement of  
The American Lutheran  
Church*

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Volume 1

*A History of the National Camping Movement in  
The American Lutheran Church*  
Ralph Yernberg

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# *Introduction*

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Several years ago I set out to help record a few episodes of the camping movement of The American Lutheran Church, one of the predecessor church bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Paul A. Hanson, now deceased, served as the Executive Director of the Division for Life and Mission of The American Lutheran Church when it united into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. He had convinced me that someone ought to try to honor the history of camping because in a few short years the material would become more difficult to find and interpret. Paul believed that both Jerry Manlove and Jerry Olstad played an important role in the story.

Jerry Manlove served as Executive Director of Camping, Retreat, and Outdoor Ministries for the American Lutheran Church between 1969 and 1980. His involvement in church camping and youth work can be traced back to the fifties. Hanson believed that any history of camping in the ALC included Manlove's story. At the same time, Jerry would be among the first to acknowledge his debt to hundreds of dedicated camping men and women who laid down important foundations and walked by his side.

Manlove was part of a movement that he did not control. If you asked him, and I did, he would say something like "I was privileged to be at the right place,"

and then go on to talk about any number of people he had met along his journey. Manlove's interests and gifts swept him into an evolving process as outdoor ministries took on new shape and importance in the church.

Manlove's unique contribution was the inevitable networking that was part of the character of his personality. Manlove could see the connections between people and events, movements and processes. Few have this visionary quality. Through his leadership, camping became a recognized partner in the ALC with virtually every department - not just youth.

Hanson also had a piece of this. Hanson enabled Manlove to work, if not unimpeded, at least within a shared vision. It is truly remarkable that a few key people were placed together at the right time so that camping might flourish. Hanson would say, "maybe God had something to do with it." Manlove would chortle at Hanson's piety. Well into his retirement, however, Jerry began to think in terms of "providence." Hanson loved camping. He was its advocate for outdoor ministries. Under his leadership, camping was at home within an exciting congregationally based program division.

The story of ALC camping was brought to its conclusion under the leadership of Jerry Olstad. Olstad served as Executive Director of Camping, Retreat, and Outdoor Ministries for the

them into a written document that described this important work prior to the unification of the American Lutheran Church into the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1987.

Mark believed that a current camp director who worked closely with camp leaders might have a better chance of success. He passed me the torch and mailed me a box of files and stories, perhaps collected from thirty camps. The box also contained some early archival files of the work of The American Lutheran Church. I called camps not represented for additional stories, met with Jerry Manlove to collect more material and interviewed other camp leaders, including Hanson, Olstad, and a host of Executive Directors. I then waded through the minutes of the former Evangelical Lutheran Church camping

Ralph Yernberg, 2003

files (this ELC predates the former ALC).

I wish to thank Jerry Manlove, former Executive Director of Outdoor Ministries of the ALC, for his encouragement and patience. Jerry had hoped this booklet would be in print several years before it made it. He also spent many hours discussing the project, correcting names and spelling, and encouraging me to continue. Together we share regret that Paul A. Hanson was not able to see the final product. But fortunately, he saw preliminary drafts and was able to offer his advice and correction.

I also express my gratitude to Jerry Olstad for the long evening we spent visiting about his tenure during the closing days of the ALC, prior to its unification. As usual, Olstad was gracious and humble about his achievements.

support from professors, Bible teachers, and speakers who then traveled the country to serve as key inspiration at the various camps.

I became involved with this movement in the mid-fifties. In 1957 and 1958 Dave Brown and I met with camping pioneers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in a series of workshops that began in Lutherland near Seattle, WA, and ended nine events later at Mission Lake Bible Camp southeast of Wausau, WI. We led conversations that initiated the reshaping of Bible Camping in our church. A key component of that call was a strong suggestion that summer college and seminary age staff be recruited for full summers of service. Wilderness Canoe Base in Northern Minnesota and Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills of South Dakota were already doing this and others followed shortly.

Dick Borrud, of South Dakota, was most likely the first Director called to serve a camp of our church. He was probably the first person to hire staff to work the full summer season. From this beginning, the beat began. A.J. Bringle hired a summer staff with Cy Warminen serving as Program Director (Cy would serve a distinguished career in camps of the Lutheran Church of America and later the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America until his death in the mid nineties). I was honored to have been asked to train Bringle's first staff. This marked a key moment in the life of Bible Camping. Clergy, lay adults, and parents saw the unique contribution made in the life of campers by young adults who walked their faith alongside of campers.

During this period the program of our Bible Camps became more diversified with backpacking, canoe tripping, leadership camps, horse programs and vagabond camping. A wider range of children, youth, and adults were served. These programs were made possible because of the advanced training that summer staff members received. The maturity of returning staff members allowed for many program advances. Later it was learned that 70% of clergy and lay leadership in the ALC could point to their camp experience as being a defining turning point in their faith journey. Providence was again with us in many and marvelous ways.

When The American Lutheran Church was founded in 1960 four camps were brought into the Church from the former American Lutheran Church and fifty-four camps entered the church with their roots coming from the former Evangelical Lutheran Church. Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp represented the Lutheran Free Church. Eventually 65 camp corporations would be affiliated with The American Lutheran Church.

The four former ALC camps were more formal in their structure, having specific purposes and serving specific geography. Those with an ELC background tended to rise to the needs of the churches and volunteers who spawned them. Dave Brown, the first ALC Youth Director, told me once that any movement or cause in the ELC could raise \$5,000 in its first mailing. The mix of the old ALC, the ELC, and the Lutheran Free Church combined to give much synergy as camping began to find its

became the Executive of this division. Paul had an active relationship with camping since his seminary days. He was a participant and Board member at Green Lake Bible Camp, in Spicer, MN. When he served at Trinity in Moorhead, the congregation owned Camp Emmaus. Paul was an active supporter of this important ministry. When the Bible Camp Association was formed, Hanson followed David Preus (then the President of The American Lutheran Church) as the second President of the BCA. It was not much of an honor at that time, but he addressed that position with great enthusiasm. Under his leadership the Bible Camp Association came into its own. I was fortunate to serve as the Executive Director of Bible Camps under Paul for ten years.

When Hanson became the Executive of the Division for Life and Mission of the ALC, it was clear that we had an ally for the camping movement. That was a singular blessing when we began to move toward unification with the Lutheran Church in America to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It was important to him that we go into the ELCA with all of our camp

flags flying. And fortunately, Jerry Olstad, the Executive Director of our camping program in the ALC, was able to provide the necessary leadership to bring much of the structures into the new church. The work of a generation of camping leaders would thus continue.

We owe much to Paul Hanson. He it is who encouraged this history to be written. The great historian Arnold Toynbee has stated that "we forget our history at our peril." Paul, as well as many that have worked on this project, believed that deeply. Paul also insisted that many of his reluctant friends get off their duffs and make it happen. So this history is dedicated to Paul Hanson, a person who has spent most of his life lifting up the gifts of others.

On some lonely day, when you feel that life at camp has not been going so well, go off by yourself, sit quietly, and read this history. Begin, once more, to realize that you are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses who are saying, "You are not alone. We are with you. God loves you and is with you. Stay the course." Do this in recognition of providence.

Jerry Manlove, 2003

# CHAPTER 1

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## The Beginnings of Church Camping

### Early camping themes in America

Lutheran camping cannot be traced to a specific place or time. Nor was there a single camp that became a model for Lutheran camping in its early days. Social and spiritual trends in the early twentieth century had as much an impact on Lutheran camping as did the secular camping movements which can be traced back to the Civil War days.

The earliest recorded organized camping experience in America took place on the Long Island Sound in 1861. Frederick William Gunn, headmaster of a gunnery school for boys in Washington, Connecticut, led his students on a forty-mile hike and camped on the sound. No doubt the experience was in part due to the interest of the boys in the Civil War encampments. These reenactments may have led to the establishment of private camps. In 1876 a physician in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, seeking to improve health through physical fitness, organized a private camp.

Sumner F. Dudley founded the first camp owned by the YMCA. Located near Newburg, New York, the camp moved to Lake Champlain and remains the oldest continuously operating camp in the nation. Until 1892, it appears all camps were operated for boys. A private camp,

Camp Arey, reserved space for girls in 1892, and by 1902, three camps in New England were exclusively designed for girls. During the same years, organizational camping which served urban populations was established to serve portions of New York City, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. A camp for disabled children was established near Chicago as early as 1900. Most of these camps found focus on removing youth from urban areas to live in a "healthy, rural environment."<sup>1</sup>

To a degree, all camping had a "spiritual" theme. Early camps developed as alternative experiences for young persons who labored in city sweatshops before child labor laws took effect. The Chautauqua events in upstate New York provided a time apart from the city. The camp experience offered a chance to renew one's spirit in the wholeness and beauty of the wilderness.

Camp programs dealt with issues that confronted youth and taught important life skills, how to live in democratic communities and measured

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<sup>1</sup>*Basic Camp Management*, Armand & Beverly Ball, American Camping Association, Bradford Woods, 5000 State Road 67, North, Martinsville, Indiana, 46151-7902, page 3-4.

the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The site at "Carters Park" was located in June, 1931, and final arrangements for its purchase and its articles of incorporation were made in May, 1932. The first camp, June 12-18, 1933, hosted 116 people living in forty tents.

The model for organizing camp events during these early days in Lutheran camping, were centered on tasks that could quickly be organized by adults and volunteers. As a result, the programs were highly structured, relying on lectures and "teachers." Within a short time, these camp formats became "traditions." Recruiting volunteer cooks, guest speakers, and managing a host of annual details were conducted under the

direction of a volunteer pastor often given the title of "Camp Dean." Guest resource leaders led programs of Bible study and Christian life.

Early camp histories have recorded the names of these Bible Camp speakers and inspirational worship leaders. A cooperative network of persons engaged in the camping network developed; the names of these persons were shared across state lines so that new programs could take advantage of seasoned leaders. The programs grew quickly, and church and camping leaders began to seek assistance from the Lutheran Church to assist with administration, organization, and curriculum.

## Camping in the Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church<sup>2</sup> (originally the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America until its name change in 1946) responded to these programs by sponsoring institutes for Bible camp leaders. The institutes fell within the general responsibility of the Luther League department. The first institute was conducted in 1934 where its basic format took shape. The participants became the presenters, developing papers and positions that were placed before the audience for their reflection and discussion.

The participants in the early institutes of the ELC studied a variety of camping issues. Many had substantial experience in working with Bible camp programs. Dr. Jacob Tanner, for example, had already developed a reputation as a key Bible Camp speaker and many Bible Camps tried to schedule him for their summer programs.

The Rev. R. A. Ofstedal of Valley City, North Dakota, was viewed as one of the prominent and most experienced leaders in the camping field. His work at Devils Lake and Red Willow Bible Camps were well known. He would surface at numerous events providing input to meetings and making many pertinent suggestions as to the proper administration of Bible Camping in the ELC.

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<sup>2</sup> Information for this section is taken from the minutes of the Luther League Bible Camp Institutes held annually. The minutes, written in great detail, were taken by Miss Margaret Wall from the Luther League Office.

*"It is the considered judgment and decision of the General Bible Camp Committee that only in exceptional cases should Districts or Circuits, own camps." Rev. F. B. Anderson commented on "the danger of having too many Bible Camps and warned against so many camps that we kill it - - the Bible Camp Movement - - out!"*

A Rev. O. S. Rindahl stated,

*"confirmation and parish Bible Camp's are a physical impossibility in most of the parishes in our church."*

He was referring to the difficulty of location and distance. Rev. F. A. Schioltz (later to become President of The

## **Church camping programs evolve**

Programs remained similar from year to year, and often programs that were conducted in congregations continued to be brought to camp. Speakers were used in the morning sessions; prayer time, both public and private, was encouraged; worship events using hymns and songs of the local congregation were featured each evening. The most popular Bible Camp songs of 1936 included in order, A Mighty Fortress, Beautiful Savior, Just As I Am, Jesus Christ is Passing By (the theme of the Sioux Falls, SD, convention during the previous year), and Beneath the Cross of Jesus.

Meanwhile, new camps were being formed with remarkable stories of their beginning. On March 22, 1938, Green Lake Lutheran Bible Camp was

American Lutheran Church) replied that his confirmation and Junior and Senior Leaguers, averaging over 100 per year, traveled 90 miles each way without difficulty.

Another pastor, Rev. Kleven of Viroqua, Wisconsin, questioned how far the church should go in inviting young people to attend camps. He stated:

*"rough-necks and reprobates should not be urged."*

Discipline issues once again remained high on the agenda as Bible Camp standards and regulations began to take shape.

incorporated. The story is told by Paul A. Hanson:

*"Six preachers, among them Mel Knudson, later bishop of Southeastern Minnesota District of the ALC, wanted to buy a resort from the sheriff whose name was Peter Bonde. The price was \$12,000. The pastors had \$30 between them, \$5 each. They made a \$30 down payment with the understanding that they would pay for the camp over a six year period, \$2000 each year. None of them were engaged in camping. They were parish pastors who were lovers of young people and looking for a way to creatively minister to the church.*

*Well, they wrote President Aasgaard and asked what to do, and he said, don't do it. They wrote N. N. Ylvisaker and asked what to do, and he said, don't do it. Everybody they wrote advised them not to do it; so they went ahead and*

with these new perspectives for serving high school youth. The traditions of Lutheran camping were thought to be of sufficient quality as they were. As a result, Lutheran camping saw a subtle decline in participation and enthusiasm.

Over a five year period beginning in 1947, camp participation levels dropped slightly and then leveled out at an estimated 12,000 - 13,000 per season. (The ELC used surveys to determine participation and then projected totals since many Bible Camps did not respond to them). The average age level was a little over age 15. At the same time, many new camps appeared on the scene, utilizing the models that were established prior to WW II. Only a few camps dared to experiment with new forms to fill the needs of youth.

The Institutes, which were run by the Luther League department for camp leaders, remained important. Numerous concerns were listed in the minutes as appropriate topics for study. There was a concern that the camp Bible study hour was taking on new forms and ought to be clearly a study of God's Word. There was significant concern over the lower number of clergy that participated in Bible Camp programs. Leaders also began to request assistance in publicity and promotional materials that would encourage parents to send their children to camp.

Some leaders felt improved materials, hymnbooks, published tracts with youth themes, and Bible study program guides would solve many of the difficulties camps were facing. Individuals such as Pastor Mars Dale were elected to write a program for use at the camps. His

course for the 1947 season was titled "Scriptural Approach to Tithing." Feeling that the title might sound imposing to campers, participants at the Institute changed the title to the more exciting "Scriptural Approach to Giving."

In 1948, camp leaders met and determined that camp participation definitely was in a downward trend. (This seems to be a harsh assessment considering the abundance of new camps that had recently formed). The approved Bible courses, written to help generate camping interest received favorable comment but had little effect on registration. However, members of the Bible Camp Committee (a subgroup of the Luther League) made a notable observation. Camps that used young adults as counselors had very good results. In fact, so good were the comments that it recommended that counselors be hired to serve at camp locations which ran programs for many weeks in succession. This is the first recorded recommendation among camp leaders that would eventually lead to a trend away from volunteer counselors to a summer camp staff.

The Bible Camp Committee of 1948 also surveyed the Bible Camps across the nation and published a listing of weaknesses. Among the findings were the following: camp schedules tend to be too full; more recreational ideas for rainy days were needed; the campers were getting younger (15 and older was perceived to be ideal for camping); campers needed more involvement and the chance to express themselves; discipline continued to be a problem; there were too few pastors involved. A

held each January. The large participation at the convocation would assure a healthy discussion of the issues raised by the Bible Camp committee and they were correct.

Questions surfaced at the convocation meeting. Were Bible Camps to fall within the province of the Luther League? Yes, said the committee. Is there a "letting down" in Bible Camp work in this, a second generation of leaders? There was no agreement on this. Are we maintaining and creating high standards in our Bible Camps? Affirmative. Shall a study of the Bible Camp Movement be made? Yes. Shall a Bible Camp Director be hired? Negative, said the assembly. Instead the Bible Camp Board was enlarged to ten members with a representative from each district included.

The following summer registration picked up again. Program improvements seemed to result from some of the convocation presentations. There were

## **The birth of the Bible Camp Association**

The following year, on October 10, 1950, members of the Bible Camp Committee, now elected at the Bible Camp Workers' Conference held each winter, met in the office of Pastor Oscar Anderson, executive secretary of the Young Peoples Luther League. Also in attendance was the National Bible Camp Director, a new position that was held by Pastor E. N. Nelson. Pastor Nelson reported a number of interesting facts regarding camping. Registration statistics were now more accurate and 13,800 youth

more discussions within groups of youth during Bible study. Most of the camps improved upon their supervised recreation programs. Many included youth to serve on planning committees. The typical camp day began with a three-session morning of Bible Study, Missions, and Practical Hour.

The Bible Camp committee noted once again their frustrations with leadership. Pastors "are too busy to stay." The need for assistance in developing counseling staff and camp personnel was also identified. Plans were made for a January conference that had its focus in program: "Recreation and Campfires" by O. M. Bratlie, "Spiritual Psychology" by Merton Strommen, and "Bible Study" by Warren Quanbeck were a few of the planned addresses. Discussion areas would center on personnel counseling, music in camps, and parish and weekend camps.

had attended camp the previous summer. The average age was 15.2 years. Most camps utilized more discussion time and held supervised recreation periods. The morning format tended to provide a study period for Bible Study, missions, and a practical hour, the traditional format.

The committee's responsibilities grew out of the planned institutes that gathered concerned camping people each winter. The events were often scheduled to coincide with the winter convocation at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. The topics

agree to be a nominee for the first presidency of the Bible Camp Association that was being created.

Preus had been a participant in the camping movement and had along with Dave Brown (who later became the first youth director of the ALC) envisioned an organization which would be associated with the "far flung camping enterprise which had sprung up around the country." Brown and Preus knew that while many camps were doing fine work, others were more average. Still others, in their minds, were poor in quality. They wanted to bring the strength of the good camps to the assistance of the weaker ones.

David Preus agreed to run for office and was elected. Dave Brown and Ray Johnson continued to serve as advisors to the group. Reuben Jessup became Vice President and Dar Roa served as Secretary. Preus recalled that he believed he could count on a friend to assist him with practical advice for the fledgling camping organization. That friend was Jerry Manlove, a professional camping leader who was working with the YMCA in camp administration in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Jerry had been introduced to church camping people through a seminary student, Bob Nervig. At the time, Nervig was the only non-adult member of the National Luther League Board of the ELC. While at seminary, Nervig led a downtown Hi Y Club for Jerry who was employed in the St. Paul YMCA. Nervig encouraged Dave Brown and others to utilize Jerry's gifts in national gatherings of ELC camp people.

As a result, Jerry was elected to the first BCA camp board.

Preus had also developed an appreciation for Jerry Manlove that had begun through a friendship formed in a basketball league in which they both had played. Preus counted upon Jerry Manlove to offer a professional assistance he deemed to be necessary to the church camping movement.

Preus and Brown believed they could gather a few people together and form a vehicle that helped extend quality in camping. Manlove was asked to be involved in a concept called the "Bible Camp Caravans." Jerry agreed to give his vacation of four weeks to do a series of workshops across the ELC. Dave Brown hooked up with Manlove and the workshops began in Lutherland, in Washington State, and ended at Mission Lake Bible Camp, in central Wisconsin.

Nine workshops were conducted across the country which dealt with new ideas in camping, the hiring of summer long camp directors, employing college age camp counselors, and developing competency in camp boards. Manlove recalled,

*"it was in these workshops that the stories of what happened in the lives of people who came to camp began to surface. People talked about meeting the girl who became their wife at camp, their call to Christian service was sparked at camp, a renewal of their faith camp at camp...and I began to see all the possibilities. We began to break out of the cocoon of our past through these workshops."*

## Rumblings and ferment

By the early sixties, the signs of change in the church were becoming more apparent. Social dissatisfaction was beginning to ride the crest of the thoughts of persons working with young people. Church leaders began to experiment with new ways to walk with people who were different than those normally associated with congregations in the Lutheran church.

Academic ideas and personalities began to shape church leaders, too. The attempt to utilize disciplines beyond theological reflection resulted in energetic ministries. Creative, experimental, often without funding - these new ministries laid a base for the development in growth in camping adventures as a tool for challenge and change.

The church was also facing change. The American Lutheran Church was born and shaped in the early sixties. Those involved in the camping movement had built a strong base of operation in the Bible Camp Association. In the new ALC, the ELC foundations would be brought into the structure. New camps came into the new ALC from other denominations: the former ALC camps included Luther Memorial Camp at Onamia, MN, and Long Lake Bible Camp near Clintonville, WI. Lake Wapogasset Bible Camp near Amery, WI, was representative of the Lutheran Free Church which also brought its camping resources to the American Lutheran Church. These changes brought new

personalities into camping network yet the leadership base established in the old ELC assured that camping held a significant place in the life of the church.

Truly significant camping leaders were active in these days. Among them were: Dave Brown, the first Youth Director of the ALC, and Dr. Alvin Rogness, seminary president with his sympathetic passion for camping. Ray Johnson, an administrator and the second ALC youth director offered continuity to early camping in the ALC and assured its central position in youth ministry. David Preus the first president of the Bible Camp Association (ELC) later became President of the ALC. Paul Hanson became the first president of the BCA in the ALC. Dick Borrud served as a field service director for the ALC and as director of Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Jerry Manlove continued as a leader in camping by establishing the new ministry for New York City called Koinonia. Rev. Hamm Muus, a street worker for Plymouth Youth Center street worker developed Wilderness Canoe Base as an important link to urban areas of Minneapolis.

These were people whose ministries flourished with challenge and concern in the turbulent decade of the sixties. They wove through the debates and the church structures and the fellowship and the competition to establish a base upon which a great ministry was to develop.

The first meeting of professional camp people and the BCA took place in the late summer of 1960 at Lutherhaven just south of Winona, MN. From its first meeting, Hanson could recall a new wave of camping programs being articulated. Hanson reflected upon the first meeting years later and commented:

*"I knew the old schedule...and I don't object to that -- morning missions and morning Bible study...and evening vespers and afternoon fun. But, professionals...with great appreciation for the creation and also for the people of God, had notions about how we could utilize sites and*

## **New models for church camping**

These early meetings helped identify camping needs for the new church and the priorities of the BCA gained more focus. The BCA would expend much effort sharing the concepts of progressive programming that met specific needs of people in the years to come. It would also focus great attention on the development of professional leaders in camping.

Those involved in the early days of camping in the BCA remember it as a time of social change requiring great energy and creativity. There were three models of camping that illustrate these themes and each model was energized by creative leadership.

## **Camping in South Dakota**

Several years before the ALC was formed, a young pastor in Hayti, South

*program and facility to give people experiences that they could build on with respect to their Christian faith and life. And a concern that I had was to under gird that business of a camping professional who would be on the campsite."*

It was clear, too, that new patterns for church camps were developing in different parts of the country. These would serve as models to shape other Lutheran camps as well as serve as training sites for a host of young men and women who would learn the art of camp directing from professionals.

Dick Borrud, whose leadership at Outlaw Ranch in South Dakota prepared many young leaders to assume camping roles in the church, was instrumental in creating change. As a field service staff member, Borrud was involved in recommending changes to existing camp corporations. Rev. Hamm Muus articulated a new vision for relating camping to urban and social needs through the development of Wilderness Canoe Base at the end of the Gunflint Trail in northern Minnesota. Jerry Manlove fulfilled a similar role by leaving his staff position within the ALC youth department to become the first director of Koinonia in New York.

Dakota, interested in youth work, agreed to share some concerns and ideas about

facing major changes and renovations to

existing camp programs and facilities.

## Adventure trips at Wilderness Canoe Base

The third camping venture that served as an emerging model for camp organization was the high adventure canoe program at Wilderness Canoe Base. The story of Wilderness, however, began not on Fishhook Island in the midst of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of NE Minnesota, but on the streets of the north side of Minneapolis. This camping program was the result of a creative social ministry endeavor - Plymouth Christian Youth Center.

Wilderness was the dream of many people, including a number of young seminarians including Hamm Muus and Bob Evans who assisted in the street work of Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC). But the distinctive style Wilderness developed was shaped by Rev. "Hamm" Muus. In a recorded conversation, Hamm recalled the early days of the Wilderness adventure:

*"I go back and think about some of the persons who were engaged in...walk-along activities with troubled kids during the time when they were at the seminary -- people like Aus Anderson and Bob Evans and Jack Hustad and Ray Runkele and Curt Johnson and Ray Mickelthoon and a few others -- who actually during the time when they were at the seminary were actively engaged with kids from the depressed areas in the city..."*

Muus described their work in the neighborhood:

*"serving as big brothers or kinsmen...doing street work...working with families and walking with kids in their school situations -- walking along with them in their court situations...discovering something about the meanings of relationships with those who were poor."*

According to Muus the mid fifties was a...

*"kind of renaissance of understanding" where people were awakening to the "predominance of racism which has shot through our society" and a "gradual awakening among Indian people" of their "understandings of the love of the land."*

Muus sensed in the coming together of so many different social themes a new call to take seriously the meaning of discipleship. To the non-Indian, the traditional understandings of the rhythm of life were "futuristic." The call to walk with those who were hurting in the streets, or in their relationships, required a deep commitment and dedication. Wilderness Canoe Base was conceived of more as a commitment to the energies and sounds experienced on Plymouth Avenue than as the development of a camping program.

Thus the high adventure setting of Wilderness emerged as a place of relationships and personal testing. It was a ministry where the bonds between people might be strengthened, where the senses of life could be heightened. The canoe and paddle, the portage and the

Jerry also followed the work of L.B. Sharp, head of Southern Illinois School of Outdoor Education whose slogans like "walk gently on the land" and "mobile living units" influenced his camping style.

At Koinonia, Manlove's camping style was implemented in programs that relied on small tight-knit counseling groups living in wilderness settings. Camping was organized along primitive conditions, using tents and cooking over open fires. Campsites changed regularly so that the land could always recover. Simple multi use facilities were spread out over 1200 acres and there was a family campground and miles of hiking trails. Off site canoe trips, mountain hikes in the Appalachians, and other adventure based camping opportunities were developed.

Most significant, however, was the multi cultural intent of the Koinonia community. Koinonia in its early days became irrevocably linked to the city, particularly the Metro New York area. A wide range of youth participants representing a wide range of ethnic backgrounds received the benefit of

## **A generation of camping leaders**

President Hanson's second goal had to do with expanding the leadership pool for camping and for this he turned toward the use of professional camp directors for national activities, granting them a visibility they had not enjoyed in previous years.

In the fall of 1962, the beginning of a new era in camping could be seen. Dave Brown felt strongly about having

camping in Koinonia's wilderness. The two-week length of stay encouraged growth in Christian community and the interpersonal format created intense personal growth emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Koinonia became a model for this style of progressive, small group camping throughout the church. Variations of the Koinonia experience were useful to many camps, as they began to change programs that centered in conference style camps to take advantage of counselors and land based activities.

Thus when the BCA of the ALC held conferences for directors, these three programs - Koinonia, Wilderness Canoe Base, and Outlaw Ranch – were considered flagship operations with highly talented directors. They served as the models to other camps and produced new leaders from their ranks. Paul Hanson recognized a creative genius in the programs and personalities at work in these church camping models that would provide solid theological and practical application across the country.

dedicated camping leaders assisting the new church. Among his first decisions regarding camping in the ALC was to ask Dick Borrud to represent the new ALC as a field service director for camping on a part time basis, evaluating programs and making recommendations to existing camp corporations.

Meanwhile, through the efforts of Paul Hanson leadership development

Experimenting with the mainstreaming young persons with developmental disabilities into camping programs took place in the settings of South Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Chicago. Many camps followed the lead of programs at NeSoDak on Lake Enemy Swim as well as Green Wing Bible Camp in Western Illinois to involve developmentally disabled children in camp programs. At the same time, Arly Holmen was developing linkages with urban areas of Chicago, particularly the housing project known as Cabrini Green, to increase the number of urban campers in attendance and within the staff structure of Green Wing Bible Camp.

In parts of Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, and Wisconsin, a "Vagabond" program was implemented. Campers participating as "vagabonds" were often dropped off in rural country lanes with counselors. Their task was to return to camp, stopping along the way to volunteer to do chores in farmsteads in exchange for a place to set up camp. Relationships which developed were unique: campers learned to make home made preserves, helped in hay

## **Restructuring in the ALC**

Ray Johnson succeeded Dave Brown as the newly elected Youth Director. "I kind of assumed...that I was elected to help with the disarray of youth administration." Johnson was not new to youth ministry and camping; he had served in church administrative roles with Brown for years.

fields, shoveled out horse sheds, and then in the evening, sat around the campfire with farm families and neighbors. All this was done on the spur of the moment, with no advance planning between the farmsteads and the camps.

The key to the creative program movement in the early days of The American Lutheran Church was the development of leadership. As camping leaders came together in annual meetings, there was generally time to share creative programs. The camping profession began to grow from within. Counselors who returned year after year became camp directors in time. Many of the early camp director training events saw a host of young people looking for ways to become involved professionally.

Warren Salvesson (EWALU), Larry Peterson (El Camino Pines), Arm Paulson (Imago Dei), Mark Ronning (Metigoshe Ministries), Bill White (Michigan District Camping), Bob Newcomb (Southern California), Tom von Fischer (Ohio), and others led programs that developed new young leaders to fill future positions at camps.

Johnson was also aware that Brown had been promoting a full time field person for the BCA. Johnson believed this to be promising, particularly since it was a similar concept as was in use within the youth staff. Regional offices were also being tested as to their viability by the mid sixties; determinations as to whether the church would function adequately with

A significant step was taken when Paul Hanson was elected to serve as first and only Executive Director of the Division for Life and Mission. This division, the largest in the ALC, pulled together a wide range of programmatic ministries that related to the life and mission of the congregation. Paul's admiration of camping was certain to help shape the role of camping in this new approach to nurturing church life.

The Bible Camp Association also received a name change that better identified its new understanding of mission: Camping, Retreats, and Outdoor Ministries (CROM). Manlove had envisioned a ministry more expansive than residential camp programs. CROM would relate to the burgeoning increase in congregational tent and trailer camping programs, high adventure programs, and the great new trends in year round retreat ministries. In addition, Manlove would help professionals focus on outdoor education, year round school programs, and camp programs sponsored for senior adults and family camping. CROM continued to have an advisory committee to the Division with its membership chosen by camps in various areas of the country and by the Association of Camp Directors.

With Hanson at the helm of the largest division of the ALC, Johnson assuming a new administrative and coordinating role in the DLMC, and

Manlove serving as Executive Director of Camping, camping was firmly rooted in the church. It was allowed to maintain its "creative vitality" by having its own advisory board and remaining as a type of auxiliary organization. (Dr. Kent Knutson never saw the final result of his dream. Upon his untimely death, David Preus was elected President of The American Lutheran Church, another friend of camping).

It was this rich tradition and organizational structure that enabled church camping in the ALC to become the most creative and important outdoor ministry among the main line church denominations. During a time when camping in other denominations was waning due to lack of leadership and aging facilities, the ALC's ministry in camping was growing by leaps and bounds. It was a ministry which "was the envy of other churches."

David Preus shared these thoughts in a 1975 conversation cited previously:

*"Yes, I believe now as strongly as I have did...that with the urbanization of American and the bringing of people together into huge complexes, that the opportunity to retreat into camp settings to discover one another as human beings, to search Scriptures together, to be evangelical Christian people sounding out together the nature of our life and mission as Christ's people, in the kind of settings that the camps provide -- that just has to be as exciting a prospect today as ever it was."*

In each case, local camp directors served on the planning teams. Prior to the Fall Event the planning group would establish the purpose of each event and plan sessions and workshops in detail. Speakers were brought up to date on the focus of each event and warned to expect a rude reception if they were unprepared. Directors were lined up to lead various skill sessions such as "Family Camping" or "Counselor Recruiting Principles." Often small groups were built into the process the form a base for developing new relationships. New directors were welcomed and introduced to a network of friends.

The central focus of each event, however, was to provide theological substance for Camp Directors. To this end, a variety of resource leaders were used. Department leaders in the ALC were often used to provide biblical content to the fall event. For example, Mons Teig, Director of Worship, Bob Hoyt, Assistant to the President, and Darrel Trautman, Director of Evangelism each served as theological leaders for events.

Seminary or college faculty members also were popular contributors to the development of camp directors: Al Rogness, President of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Ralph Quere, professor from Wartburg Seminary; Dubuque, IA, Charles Anderson, professor of history at Luther Seminary and Herb Brokering, part time instructor at Luther Seminary were warmly welcomed by directors.

Sometimes camp directors would provide biblical or theological context for the fall event. Bill White, director of

camping for the Michigan District, served as guest theologian for the 1974 event at Tecumseh Woods, MI. Mark Ronning, Metigoshe Ministries, ND, was often asked to serve as chaplain and worship leader. The talent of many directors would be unleashed through their involvement in song leading, workshops, and hosting responsibilities. The training events held each fall provided a significant forum for Manlove's concern for theological reflection.

A second way Manlove encouraged personal growth was to develop a series of thoughtful mailings to Camp Directors. His comments were presented in the format of letters, rough paragraphs, and visionary think pieces. Copies of pertinent articles were placed in the mailings for directors to reflect upon.

For example, Manlove wrote an article in 1970 for The Lutheran Standard titled "A New Vocation for Farmers" that was later shared in one of his camp director mailings. Drawing on experiences from the Mennonite community, Manlove shared a dream for involving farmers in a rural urban exchange program.

*"The American Lutheran Church is still largely a rural church. Its farm families have done a splendid job in supporting the overseas ministry of the ALC...In the past few years our attention has been turned toward our growing urban areas. We have been particularly reminded of the "shadow" part of our population who live in the ghettos, who are marginal income people, who are differentiated against because of skin color."*

to reflect on the value that might preserve the natural resources of the camp for future generations.

Environmental interest was also peaking at this time. Many camps began to experiment with energy efficiency and retrofitting after participating in an environmental conference held at Koinonia in New York. Following the conference, Good Earth Village in Spring Valley, MN, constructed an earth sheltered dining lodge using volunteer workers. Utilizing a wood augmented heating system, the camp reported annual heating costs of under \$70.

Following the passage of the Youth Camp Safety Act, Manlove was most concerned that the camping leaders understand "why" they believed in promoting safe camps. Manlove sent, in his mailings, material collected from a wide range of sources.

Quoting from Dr. Rogness, Manlove wrote,

*"we have a responsibility for trusteeship of the earth and of our brothers."*

Quoting from Mark Ronning, he added:

*"one has the uneasy feeling that in many of our Christian undertakings we operate so much by faith we forget that human beings still drown, get cut, run over and killed...A spiritual awakening is of no value if the person isn't alive to share with someone else."*

Although caring for people's safety is of vital importance, Manlove urged camp leaders to understand it as a Biblical

mandate, sharing Psalm 8 as interpreted by Les Brandt: "You have assigned me the fantastic responsibility of carrying on your creative activity." Partly as a result of these theological reflections, the importance of rethinking policies on camp safety began to ripple through ALC camping in the mid seventies.

Perhaps Manlove's most pronounced theological premise was not fully articulated in the early days but could be seen in the community that was developing among the camp directors. Throughout this period, Manlove was reflecting on his theological understanding of the Greek term *laos*, or "people of God." Manlove's special love of the laity and their vocation brought a unique perspective to camping.

Outdoor ministries were historically a program where clergy and laity worked together to develop their camps. But their program roles were often debated in small groups. In some camps, clergy roles had dominated the program. Manlove emphasized the importance of engaging all of God's people in theological reflection and program leadership.

Many camping leaders were lay members of the church. Arly Holman, Deb Yandala, Dave Brunkow, and Dean Ryerson all served as directors in key locations. These lay leaders were used in a variety of ways at the Fall Event, including leading worship and providing devotions and theological reflection. And lay leaders were recruited from other non profits for church leadership. John Walledom (Luther Park in Chetek, WI) had worked for the Girl Scouts, and Jerry

- from Board led decision making to Staff recommended decision styles.
- from the Board doing day to day tasks and running the program to the Board setting policies and requiring staff members to implement those policies.
- from lecture oriented learning hours to small group experiential education and Bible Study.
- from indoors, large group activities to outdoors, small group living.
- from Camp Directors to Executive Directors.
- from extension of congregation programs to regional congregational gathering resource center.
- from untrained planning and fund raising skills to camp directors trained as financial executives.
- from camping as a volunteer movement to camping as an enterprise that uses volunteers.
- from a program that required great congregational resources to one that provided resources to congregations and the community.
- from single site camps to multi site organizations.

Although these movements represent only a few of the changes that occurred in camping over a period of time, they demonstrate the emerging shape of church camping which would become the norm. This new image for camping became formal when the Bible Camp Association changed its name to

Camps, Retreats, and Outdoor Ministries (CROM) to represent its more expanded focus. As Camp Directors began to understand themselves in new ways, Board members began to perceive their directors with new skills and abilities. Many new Board members were surprised to learn of the complexity of their Bible Camps.

During the early days of Manlove's term, there had been a need to convince many Boards to begin the process of serving a new generation of people by making changes in their operations. Among the most significant changes was the movement from operations led by Boards to a professional year round staff. In some cases, this suggestion met significant resistance at the Board level.

Once a camp had extended itself in hiring a full time director, Manlove had to find ways of developing their talent and abilities; in a way, he needed to show a Board that their decision to hire a director was a good one. Two of the more successful ways to do this was in the creation of spring skill training workshops and the development of Evaluation and Board development teams.

The spring training workshops were initially established to provide advanced training for camp directors. A critical topic was selected and training resources designed to focus on practical applications for camp staff members. Often the resource leaders were from outside the camping network. The spring training workshop was designed to bring to camping new ideas from recognized experts in specific professional fields like financial development, planning

Committee to serve as links to the council. The three members of ACE also met with the group and Manlove provided staff services. This was a unique arrangement in the church, for other than the Youth Advisory Board, the CROM committee was the only officially recognized entity that was not directly controlled by The American Lutheran Church. The Camp Directors and camp

### **The enabling of professional support**

Executive Directors in The American Lutheran Church were in need of professional support and encouragement. Many of the camp locations were in isolated areas and few camps, other than those in the Midwest, were located close enough to each other to develop support systems. As a former camp director in the early years of church camping, Manlove knew the importance of providing personal and professional support to Executive Directors. Generally, the morale of the executives was excellent because as a group they felt they were involved in a ministry which was essential to the church. But many were frustrated with the lack of awareness which many local church leaders expressed toward outdoor ministries. For example, few parish pastors and church leaders recognized the demands of the fall, winter, and spring responsibilities of camping leaders.

The approach developed by Manlove and the CROM National Committee included providing personal and professional support to Executives through theological and professional

boards could elect their members without polity restrictions.

This model would be of great significance when camping leaders of the ALC would begin conversations with their co leaders of the Lutheran Church in America prior to the formation of a camping structure that would serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America in 1988.

training opportunities. Because of the specialized responsibilities of camp directors, there was a lack of understanding among other church professionals about their tasks. It was not untypical to hear, "what do you do now that summer is over?" Some pastors who served in camping were viewed as taking time off from the real ministry of the parish.

Many camps that were just beginning to expand their services operated their programs with only a few staff. An Executive Director might be charged with personnel, committee and board work, program writing, public relations, layout of brochures, as well as preparation and clean up of camp facilities. It was not uncommon to find camp directors, both clergy and lay, assisting with repairs to dishwashers or mowing a recreation field. The mixing of duties often led to confusion in understanding the roles of Executives by church leaders.

Camp executives, however, understood the various tasks that were needed to operate a camp. A common

Music and story telling held a prominent place in the fellowship.

During a spring event at Lutherdale, the participants visited a restaurant called the White Horse near Lauderdale Lakes. One director asked permission to play piano while the others sang. A long time customer called his wife and said, "You won't believe this - there's a bunch of preachers and camp people here drinking and singing all your favorite hymns - you'd better get on down here and join in!"

Once, a group of directors were attending a conference at Metigoshe in North Dakota. Visiting a local establishment during a cold windstorm, Executive Director Howie Weness from Southern California sang *Summertime* from the musical, *Porgy and Bess* to the accompaniment of a jazz pianist. There was another evening in a Civil War tavern on the Pennsylvania border near Koinonia where snap-up bar stools undid an unsuspecting camp director. Trout fingerlings were enjoyed by all in a nearby Trout Farm. Directors can also recall Pastor Jim Liefeld, Director of Badlands Bible Camp, telling the story of the \$5000 bull with constipation.

Transportation snafus can be found in the stories of many Executive Directors. Pastor Jeff Barrow, Indian Sands, recalled serving on an Evaluation Team and being stranded in a northern Minnesota "white out." The group slept for two days on the floor of a local gas station in a small town. A number of camp staff organized a site seeing trip during a Boston training event. They rented private cabs only to get lost

somewhere near Marblehead after visiting the House of Seven Gables. The cab drivers turned their vehicles and maps over to the directors to get them back to Boston where the cab drivers were treated to a steak dinner. The record for miles covered in one event went to a group of directors who spent a week stuffed into a small car while doing a Site Design for the camps of Texas.

Camp executives who were involved in providing leadership for the events prided themselves on the food they set before their colleagues. Ernie Lantz once treated Fall Conference participants to an exotic menu that included shark and barbecued goat. In Wisconsin it was likely to be immense cheese plates surrounded by brats. At the same time, participants were taken to local spots to enjoy the kitchens of colorful establishments.

Camps had ample opportunity to show off their facilities. There were silent retreats in bare retreat houses, living in cold cabins with frozen water pipes, trudging through three foot deep snow drifts during a "short walk to your cabin," climbing into tree houses in Idaho, staying overnight in a covered wagon, and enjoying the public address system in the wee hours of the night at Green Lake's new Chrysalis Center.

Many of the directors developed a reputation during the annual events. Mark Ronning was recognized for his spontaneous spirit and theological depth. There was the notorious humor of Ernie Lantz and Bob Keuhner. The vocal chords of Manlove, von Fischer, Wennes, Ronning, and the deep bass of Arden Norum blended long into the evenings at

Onamia, MN. Both camps had built beautiful adult centers, among the first in ALC camping. The vision of these early camp building projects was impressive; at the same time, moving forward without the benefit of ably led campaigns to provide the necessary capital jeopardized the program operations. Camp corporations were quickly learning of their need for professional assistance.

As new facilities were added, additional staff was required. The camps developed substantial budgets, at least from a church perspective. Many camp budgets ranked among the largest Lutheran budgets within the district. Camps also became employers of large numbers of summer staff. This meant executives needed to be trained in state personnel laws and develop skills in hiring, training, evaluating, and releasing seasonal staff.

Directors needed to learn skills to develop promotional brochures, filmstrips and multi media shows, budgets, staff applications, and Bible study materials. They often found themselves working with many state and local governmental agencies. At one camp meeting, the participating camp directors identified 47 state and local governmental units to which they had to relate to on an annual basis. These included the health inspector, government food commodity person, OSHA inspector, building and zoning commissioners, and a variety of natural resource persons such as the well inspector, water quality person, and shoreline improvement person.

At the same time, directors were expected to visit local churches to preach,

speak, and make camp presentations. They were called upon to help with pulpit supply and to serve as workshop leaders for youth assemblies.

Manlove addressed these problems early in the life of the ALC. Regular workshops were presented that addressed contemporary concerns. Many Executive Directors became active members of the American Camping Association and held key leadership roles in the areas they served. Jim Cherry, the Executive Director of Wilderness Canoe Base, served as the Standards Committee chair and later served in many national roles. But Manlove also believed that camp directors had to develop more expertise in a wide range of topics not covered through ACA participation.

Among the greatest concern to camp boards and staff was in the area of financial development and fiscal management. Large debts brought on by the movement from summer facilities to year round retreat centers meant that directors had to become better equipped to manage large budgets and gain experience in fund raising.

During the ten year period of 1970 - 1980 it was estimated that over 32 million was raised by camp directors for ALC camp facilities. Directors needed to become quickly versed in annual funding, capital fund drives, and endowment and trust vehicles for long term support. Many of the Camp Boards established professional relationships with site planners and financial development firms. Two special friends of camping emerged early on in this process.

education and helped assist many camps to develop programs that public school systems would use during the school year. Dave Davidson (EWALU, Iowa) was called upon to help Boards rework their administrative patterns.

One of the most significant linkages which helped camping address the issues brought about through growth was with Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL), whose corporate office is located in Appleton, WI. Manlove invited Marty Koeneke from AAL to serve as an observer at the joint Lutheran camp director event held at MarLuRidge in Maryland. Koeneke was impressed with the spirit of the directors and was determined to assist camping develop new skills to complement the programs that were so effective in the church.

Koeneke approached Manlove shortly thereafter suggesting that Jerry write a grant to assist camps in specific areas for which they would not normally receive help or assistance. Thus began a long relationship of support from AAL that assisted camp directors and boards to receive advanced training in marketing, financial development, planning, consulting, and market research.

Typically, AAL provided support to outdoor ministry centers every three years. Support came through a national grant used to help underwrite the costs of a large training event for directors and board members. Individual camp grants were provided directly to each camp to be used to augment the theme of the year.

Through AAL, camping was able to provide extensive resources to camps in a timely and sensitive way.

A relationship with Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, MN, was also fostered. Support to camps through grants and local branch activities assisted the growing organizations to complete special projects through volunteer activity.

It is significant to note that the camping leaders of the ALC maintained their commitment to their basic roots. There was a spirit among camp executives that never forgot the importance of their mission with young people, families, and the rising senior population. ALC camps continued to recognize themselves as extensions of local congregations and they were willing to try new approaches so that more people could be involved. Programs for urban areas, day camps that brought camping to distant neighborhoods, and campership programs were responses to a perceived need and a theology that included Christian service and outreach.

The rising "professionalism" of Executive Directors did not remove them from Christian service and their basic love of outdoor ministries. This unique character of the spirit of camp leaders could, in part, be traced to Manlove's ultimate concern that church camping be firmly grounded in theology, particularly the Scriptures, before any movement toward professional skills could be realized.

colleges began to host elaborate "camp fairs" to help directors locate staff. In the seminaries, studies indicated that a high percentage of students had chosen church vocations because of their camp experiences. More significant was the large number of laity whose congregational service was enhanced through their camp experiences.

Other changes in program service also lent support to the new name. Jerry Olstad, Executive Director of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Portland, OR, began to work with congregations to develop a unique summer offering in local communities - the "Traveling Day Camp." Although day camping was not a new concept in professional camping circles, it was in the Church. Olstad sent teams of staff into congregations to run week-long camps for children. The day camps looked like a spin off of the Vacation Bible School programs, but it had significant differences. They used a trained college age staff that brought a fresh energy to the experience. The staff also provided new resources and a style that was based upon the small counseling group pattern familiar to camp programs. The day camps often took short trips to parks or to the beach and added nature study, hiking, story telling, the camp music program, and experiential learning models to the day.

Day camp staff leaders were housed in the homes of church members. This helped develop close relationships with parish members. It became the first step in a long progression of outdoor ministry experiences as children looked forward to attending camp after

participating in day camp. As camps followed this model, many camping programs opened residential programs for younger ages, developing progressive programs that had increasing challenges for each grade level. The day camp model became a prime focus of camps across the country within a few years of its inception in Oregon.

In Ohio, California, Minnesota and New York, environmental education programs were growing. These programs served students in grade school and middle or junior high schools. Using the camp facilities during mid week periods, camps began to acquire staff to serve as teachers and train volunteer naturalists to provide small group experiences in creation learning for the participants. The focus on "Camps, Retreats, and Outdoor Ministries" known as CROM seemed to express the vision of outdoor ministries well.

Creation theology added much dialogue to the theological focus of the camp director. It developed as the years passed and eventually worked its way into camp programs. Luther Memorial Camp in Fulton, Ohio, became the first camp in the ALC to specifically hire a full time outdoor education director, Ms. Deb Yandala, in 1976. Yandala's contribution to camping was major: Manlove was able to tap her expertise for a wide range of workshops, writings, and events. By the early eighties, camps throughout the country were planning outdoor education programs for parochial and public schools, as well as confirmation classes and church groups within their associations.

tion area for two to five days to host town meetings, interview Board members and staff, review site plans, and generate new ideas for programs. They quickly grew to become one of the key program offerings of CROM. Over a three year period, more than 70 evaluations, retreats, and design programs were instituted.

Among the most important functions of the OMACS, however, were to stay in touch with camp operations within their area. The early OMACS spent much time contacting other directors via phone or by making visits to the camps during their camping seasons. They, in essence, became roving

### **Manlove steps down from camping**

Manlove resigned his position in 1979. He gave a year's warning to the division. Manlove felt tired from the large amount of travel required of the position and desired more time to invest in his personal life. While camp people were used to change, Manlove's resignation brought concerns about the future. A substantial search process was launched whereby a committee which included ACE president Tom von Fischer was established.

Meanwhile a series of "farewell" parties were initiated by camp directors and the DLMC. Camp directors and staff met for their annual Fall Event in 1980, held at Camp Onomia near Onamia, MN, where they planned to wish Manlove a bon voyage. The spirit of the event was filled with emotion. Not only was it to be a farewell, but the committee to select a new director to replace Manlove was

ambassadors of quality camping, spreading out the leadership base of the Church. Early OMACS included Bill Wilkins of Camp Fredrick in NE Ohio, Bob Newcomb from Inland Empire Ministries in Coeur d'Alene, ID, and Ray Engh from Lutherdale in Elkhorn, WI. Mark Ronning from Metigoshe Ministries in Bottineau, ND, Ron Nielsen at Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria, MN, Jerry Olstad from Portland, OR, and Ralph Yernberg from Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN, also served as OMACS. The OMACS were valuable additions to serving the increased personnel needs of larger camp programs.

entering its final stages, and Paul Hanson, Executive Director of the DLMC, who was to make the final selection, was present to meet with each of the candidates.

It was quickly apparent that most everybody knew which candidates were being considered. The members of the selection committee met with the candidates in a small meeting room located in the entrance of the Dining Hall for final interviews while others made elaborate arrangements for the farewell banquet. An evening of entertainment was planned for a "roast" of Manlove including a full complement of zany activities and stories. As the moment arrived it was opened with little Billy Smith running on top of the tables dressed with a huge paper m'ache "eyeball" over his head. Special songs were sung with verses memorializing

focus of the new director would be to enlist support for advanced training.

Another trend he would need to address was the institutionalization of camping. Camps of the ALC grew out of an historical "movement." Their programs were designed to respond to parish and church needs. Their leaders were gathered informally and were often considered independent. But a new day of litigation, concerns for liability and safety, attention to new safety and health regulations and a host of organizational concerns would result in a reshaping of organization life for camping. The result of this activity would eventually be a move toward established camp corporations that were equipped with staff and financial resources to maintain its survival.

One other program trend would be awaiting Olstad. While programs for all ages and year round programming had

been dealt with during the Manlove tenure, Olstad would be looking at some subtle variations. Many camps were changing their focus; some were moving toward specialty type camps (hockey camps were offered by Camp Vermilion) while others shied away from wilderness adventures which seemed to be handled regionally by organizations that were competent in these programs. Residential camps lifted up confirmation camping and added exciting musicals and drama events to their weeks. Several organizations were developing variations in retreat ministries; they continued to serve youth and families but now added elder hostels for retired adults and training events for church professionals to their schedules.

These efforts forced organizations to enhance their program resources and hire more program specialists. These issues would occupy and shape the remaining years of camping in the ALC

not have a formal board for its camps and retreat centers; LCA polity held camping within its Division for Parish Services.

Early talks brought forth some interesting dissimilarities. For example, many of the LCA camp directors were responsible to synod bishops and their camps were programs of the synod. The association model was by far the most prevalent form of ownership in the ALC. The financial support of camping also was different in the church bodies. ALC directors were used to operating as individual non profit agencies that required the solicitation of annual funds through direct mail. LCA polity often limited such practice, preferring to move support through synod benevolence budgets. As a result, the amount of money attained to support camping in the LCA was often less than that of the ALC. This was particularly true in the area of capital funding, though synods often expended large capital gifts for camp development in the LCA.

LCA camps were expected to manage solid programs that met their operating obligations. ALC camps often subsidized the programs through donations, reducing the cost of camping to the participant. There was fear expressed from directors on both sides that the patterns they knew would be changed in the structure of the future church that was being created.

Olstad's dedication to the job was based upon his awareness that unification would and must take place within camping. There was little choice other than to find a way to reach consensus. He was often called upon to encourage the

camp leaders to reach consensus. Many of the directors from the LCA were likewise willing to work toward unity in outdoor ministry.

To help with this process, Olstad called upon key people in the ALC camps, asking them to serve on a Transition Team that would meet and work through details of camping in the new church. These persons included Duane Hanson, director of Bethel Horizons, WI, John Walledom of Ewalu, IA, Bob Newcomb from Hayden Lake, ID, Deb Yandala from Dayton, OH, and Dean Larson from Green Lake Bible Camp in Spicer, MN. Other ALC persons to serve on the transition team were Bob Quam of Christikon, Billings, MT, Wayne Jarvis from Texas, David Brunkow of Lutherans Outdoors in SD, and Paul Evenson from Torrance, CA.

The LCA participants in the transition process were led by Rev. Paul Howells, the LCA staff person from the division under which camping ministries was organized. Those on the transition team included Paul Briggs, a Board member from Lexington, NC, and Don Johnson of Camp Calumet in NH, Jack Swanson from LOMC, Oregon, IL, and Sharon Fox from Pine Lake Lutheran Camp in Waupaca, WI. Dave Castor from Cary, NC, Don Olson from Rainbow Trails in CO, Wayne Williams from Caroline Furnace in VA, and Roy Miltner from Des Moines also served on the team.

This group of people established a series of meetings that would lead to unification of camping efforts in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

*responsible for our future. All we do must be planned in cooperation with congregations, synods*

*and regions, keeping in mind the goal of the ELCA."*

## **Changes in camp leadership**

During these years unification themes occupied enormous blocks of staff time. But at the same time, changes were occurring in camping leadership. Many experienced directors like Wayne Jarvis, Art Vorhes, Bill Vogel and Jim Cherry were either retiring or moving to related fields. The sudden death of Mark Ronning created a feeling that change was to be permanent. The attendance at the national meetings included a host of new directors each year. They brought great gifts and new ideas to the camping field. At the same time, they presented new challenges for they sought increased opportunities for training.

Most people chose to become professional outdoor ministry staff because they were enjoyed camp programming. Preparing these new leaders for administrative roles was time consuming but deemed to be of great importance. New directors were seeking a balance so that those equipped programmatically could also be taught to be adept at personnel, financial control and risk management.

As new people began to assume expanded roles in church camping, they provided a new pool of leadership. Margie Fiedler became the first female Executive Director for Inland Empire Outdoor Ministries in C'oeur d'Alene, ID. Pastor Paul Leslie moved from Metigoshe Ministries to Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota and was succeeded at

Metigoshe by Pastor Marsh Drege. Jeff Barrow became director of Camp Indian Sands in WI, Gary Stevenson came to LORMS, TX, and Keith Johnson with LCSC in CA were people who had served in a variety of camping positions and now were assuming expanded roles in the church.

Another trend in personnel was also noticed. Many camp corporations were filling full time year round program positions. Dave Eliassen at Green Lake, Steve Lee at El Camino Pines, CA, and Tom Hind and Sherri Holmen at Imago Dei Ministries were examples of Camp Directors within large camp corporations. Whereas in previous years, intentional staff communities with young adults committed to nine months of service made up the work force, more full time, year round positions were being created. In fact, more new positions would be gained in camping at a professional staff level than the traditional "Camp Director" or "Executive Director."

To advance training for professionals, Olstad instituted a new format of an old idea. A new director workshop was held at Green Lake Bible Camp's new Chrysalis Center and staffed by resource leaders such as Armond Ball (from the American Camping Association), Jim Cherry (ACA standards chairperson of Minnesota), and other directors who had demonstrated skills in specific areas such as personnel, program,

The fourth mark of Olstad's work in the ALC was the subtle shift in program trends experienced by camps. Some camps were unprepared for the difficulty they experienced filling "wilderness" style camps. Campers, in general, seemed to be seeking more comfort in sleeping accommodations. The true high adventure programs maintained strong support and participation, particularly Rocky Mountain backpacking trips led by the western mountain camps, Boundary Waters canoe trips, and many travel camps. But local Bible camps that used tents (now looking old and outdated compared to the new line of high tech equipment) began to suffer in participation levels. A recession in the early eighties also caught a few camps off guard, and in 1981 and 1982 camp statistics showed a decline in use.

Church camping did not give up on senior high ministry. On the contrary, new ways to serve the congregation were found. Through the ALC youth leaders, a program called Congregational Youth Associates (CYA) provided youth leaders to congregations led and trained by camp directors. At Green Lake in Spicer, MN, for example, Dean Larson and Dave Eliassen worked with a number of CYA's who served in local churches while finding support and resources for ministry through Green Lake.

Camps also began to offer "servant events." Work camps have often been used and most camps provide opportunities for youth to help during camp clean up days. But the servant event has its focus in a theology of

Christian service, building bridges between people who represent various economic and ethnic backgrounds. Sky Ranch in Ft. Collins, CO, developed a wide range of servant camps cooperating with the Denver Urban Servant Corps, Habitat for Humanity, and the Wind River Indian Reservation. Outlaw Ranch began servant camps on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Servant events were to mushroom in the years to come.

At the same time, a real surge of interest in "high comfort adult centers" was felt by the camps. Facilities capable of handling adult groups, senior citizens, and a wide range of meetings and conferences had been built or were on the drawing board. Among them were the Watson Center at Lutherdale, Green Lake's Chrysalis Center, and the beautiful facility dedicated to adults at Koinonia. Some camps floundered in administering these facilities, discovering that once a youth group was booked into the facility the group seldom wanted to return to the old youth cabins. The camps that specialized in these programs also felt a need for expanded winter staffing, often met by a small community of college age persons who were seeking time for reflection and renewal in their lives.

These groups of staff were called "intentional staff communities." Many of them discovered that the reality of the job was long hours, dishwashing, bed changing, and domestic work that surprised them. Seeking program involvement, these staff struggled as the camp corporations experimented with how to serve guests in a Christian

for ministries which were often taxing and exhaustive. Likewise, camps were experimenting with foreign student staff members. Many camps offered accommodations for visiting pastors from

other countries, not knowing they were in many ways recreating the experiences sought after during the "Mission hours" of the fifties.

## Camping in the closing days of the ALC

As the date for unification of the ALC and the LCA approached, Jerry Olstad was notified that he had been selected as the new Director of Outdoor Ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The organizational structure recommended by the LCA/ALC team of camp directors had been approved and appropriate budgeting promised to continue a form of the OMAC system (to be called Outdoor Ministry Specialists). Camp corporations were beginning to discuss merger in areas where ALC and LCA camps were located near each other. New configurations of program service had already been drawn up in many of the camps.

But at the same time, not everything felt good prior to the formation of the ELCA. Camp directors were leery of the changes they might have to make depending upon the election of local bishops and whether new relationships to synod or to congregations might be imposed upon the camp corporations.

At the local level, camp programming seemed unaffected. Yet a new day was dawning, and a long and cherished tradition of camping was drawing to a close. The American

Lutheran Church closed its camping doors sometime in early December of 1986. The phone was disconnected and documents from twenty-five years of work were shipped to the ALC archives.

To those who were part of the camping movement, the memories remained vivid - of the people who built the camps, of the ideas that spawned incredible creativity, of the pain and tears of programs gone awry or budgets unmet, to the joys of a community based upon the conviction that God works wonders in the outdoors.

In reflecting back on the movement of camping during his career in the American Lutheran Church, Paul A. Hanson had as much perspective as any person as to the value of camping to the congregation. People who knew Hanson and his emphatic nature will enjoy his comment given to me in the course of an evening conversation:

*"So much has happened and so many things that might have happened that would have been upsetting have not happened and I'm not going to say it's a panacea and that it's all perfect. But I am going to say that the camping movement in our church has really returned a hundredfold on the investment!"*

- 1943 Riverside Bible Camp, Story City, IA 7/4/43  
Flathead Lake Bible Camp, Kalispell, MT
- 1944 Camp Minne-Wa-Kan, MN 7/30/44
- 1945 Lutherdale, Elkhorn, WI (3/24/45)  
Lutheran Memorial Camp, Fulton, Ohio  
Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, MN (11/6/45)  
Lutherhaven, (Inland Empire LOM) Coeur d'Alene, ID  
Badlands Bible Camp, Medora, ND
- 1946 Luther Point Bible Camp, Grantsburg, WI (July incorporation, 1947  
groundbreaking, 1950 - first camps)  
Camp Lutherwood, Bellingham, WA (10/28/46)
- 1947 Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp (Lutheran Free  
Church)  
Ingham Lake Bible Camp, Milford, IA  
Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp, Slayton, MN (12/29/47)  
American Lutheran Memorial Camp, Onamia, MN  
(later known as Camp Onomia)
- 1948 Camp of the Cross, Felton, CA
- 1949 Long Lake Bible Camp, Clintonville, WI (name later changed to Imago  
Dei Village)
- 1950 Camp Chrysalis, Kerrville, TX  
Camp El Camino Pines, CA (2/21/50)

Imago Dei Ministries, Clintonville, WI (created when Mission Lake Bible Camp, Shadow Lake Bible Camp, and Long Lake Bible Camp merged).

- 1964** Circle R, Ashland, NB
- 1965** Metigoshe Lutheran Bible Camp, Bottineau, ND (history of camping in state park since mid 30's, a site was purchased and incorporated in mid sixties)
- Lutherock, Boone, NC (incorporated, land donated in '57)
- 1966** Sugar Creek Bible Camp, Ferryville, WI
- Tri - C, Anacortes, WA (mid 60's)
- Camp Frederick, New Columbiana, OH (September 14, 1966)
- 1967** Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries, Cincinnati, OH
- Camp Amnicon (land purchased in 66, Camp Amnicon Foundation established in 1967)
- 1968** Green Wing Bible Camp, Amboy, IL
- Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota, Inc. (includes Outlaw Ranch, NeSoDak, Atlantic Mountain Ranches)
- St. Olaf Retreat Center, Devils Lake, ND (May, 68)
- 1969** Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville, WI
- Good Earth Village (The Founders Association), Spring Valley, MN
- Crossroads Ministries, SEM District, ALC, MN
- Pathways Lutheran Bible Camp Ministries, MN (9/30/69)
- Camp Fridland, Hoodland, OR (late 60's)

## Sources

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Although this historical report is based partly upon my personal experiences, there were several sources for obtaining information.

There are few books that include information about outdoor ministries or church camping centers. Most of the standard books on contemporary Lutheran history fail to mention camping. E. Clifford Nelson's *The Lutherans in North America* (Fortress Press, 1975, 1980) discusses the "camp meeting" of the early 1800's and recognizes that Lutherans were never quite taken up in these evangelistic events. There may be a few camp events mentioned in conjunction with Luther League activities. As a career camp director aware of the significant ties between camps and the health of youth ministry I find it interesting to note how little outdoor ministries is mentioned in the historical works used in academia.

Significant source material was available to me through the bound records of the annual camping institutes of the ELC. I am most thankful for the very careful note taking of Margaret Wall, the recording secretary of these events. She captured not only the decisions but wrote descriptions of presentations that enable a researcher to gain a sense of the spirit and issues that were addressed. It is fortuitous that these excellent notes have found their way into the official archives of The American Lutheran Church at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

Several boxes of interesting material, including copies of *Sparks* (a newsletter sent to camping people), minutes, Manlove's musings and mailings to camp directors and old brochures and photos have been preserved. I also located a number of articles printed in *The Lutheran Standard*, the official magazine of the ALC. They have been helpful in assisting with the chronology of the camping movement and in providing colorful stories.

Another source of information I found helpful were the camping vignettes provided to me by Mark Gardner (see the introduction). These stories of the individual camps related to the ALC were written or provided by camp directors or former Board members of the camps. Since only half had been collected, I have continued to contact the missing camps for information and conducted dozens of interviews with directors and Board members to edit as many as I can. These stories will be published in another volume.

My favorite source of information was provided through interviews with the people involved in the story itself. I had the great fortune to have been given a cassette tape that included a conversation between Paul A. Hanson, David Preus, Thor Skeie, Jerry Manlove, Dick Borrud, Hamm Muus and Joe Bash. These men spent an evening in Minneapolis in 1975 reminiscing about the early days of camping.