

The Camping Movement of The American Lutheran Church

Volume 1

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

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Introduction

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

American Lutheran Church between 1981 and 1987. What Jerry brought to the ALC was a faithful and perceptive patience. He had an ability to work through systems and see beyond the barriers that were often created during the process of church unification. His contribution to ALC camping and the mark it left in the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America cannot be underestimated. That Olstad was selected to continue his leadership into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, established in 1987, attests to the wisdom of that unified church.

My research kept taking me back one step further into the past. What was meant to be a "report" became a journey in research. I became impressed with the spirit and foresight of the people engaged in the Lutheran camping movement. I tried to trace the source of their ideas. I discovered that the early minutes of pioneers in Lutheran camping began to sound familiar to those told by current camp directors. The roots of our movement were found in many places and national trends had a powerful affect on the shape of camping and its growth.

This led me to take on the recording of individual camp stories. I have accumulated a large collection of individual camp histories that have been useful in helping to write this story. I also hope to one day publish these stories for they mark the immense contributions of hundreds of thousands of Lutheran lay leaders who built and paid for the camps through their deep commitments and hard sweat. I believe it would be tragic if the Lutheran camping movement today

moved forward without a working knowledge of these important roots.

I wish to thank those who have been part of this story. It is impossible to mention the thousands of person who have helped establish our Lutheran camps or made significant contributions to the ALC camping movement. While I could not tell all their stories, I did include selected vignettes that are representative of the values they shared in common. Some camp stories are included because they are representative of how it was done. A reader familiar with a favorite camp may feel left out. It is my hope to publish specific camp stories in a future work.

Camping has changed the life of the Lutheran Church. It has produced a generation of leaders. It nurtured and, some would argue, grew the youth programs of our church. I sense in its historical record a sweeping theme, perhaps a spiritual phenomena. I am amazed that the development of our church camps was completed in a few short decades. The determination of lay and clergy leaders who built our camps is remarkable. They believed that faith in God could be nurtured most effectively through camping.

I am deeply indebted to those who began this project. Mark Gardner, a former camp leader and editor at Augsburg Fortress Publishing House in Minneapolis, began the work while serving on the outdoor ministry staff of the former American Lutheran Church. Paul A. Hanson encouraged Mark to collect histories of the camps associated with the church. The intent was to gather

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

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.

Ralph Yernberg, 2003

Foreword

In Recognition of Providence

Providence is one of those "dated" words, seldom used in modern conversation. It may be that most people associate providence only with a city in Rhode Island or with the college located there. But providence is a word with a rich history in theology. It refers to the mysterious ways God orders our lives, individually and corporately. It refers to the way God is working out his plan of salvation in the "nitty gritty" of history, despite the forces of evil which stand against him. The role of providence is summed up by Paul in his letter to the Romans, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). I have no special insight into the plan of God and, even when I think I can discern it, I often do not understand it. Yet I believe in it. I believe in providence.

Pastor David VanKley, Custer Lutheran Fellowship, South Dakota

Certainly providence has been a part of what many of us have seen take place in the Outdoor Ministries of the Church. It can be explained no other way.

As you read the stories of the camps of the church - their beginnings, the obstacles of depression and bureaucratic caution, the endless struggle for financing and the small groups of people who had the vision to move forward - it becomes quite obvious that providence was there. God's spirit was "in the midst" of the movement.

In the American Lutheran Church as well as its predecessor bodies, Outdoor Ministries, then called Bible Camping, was a movement. Movements tend to seize the moment and begin at a very local level of church life. In the beginning they are often called "pipe dreams." There was no strategic planning for most of these early

endeavors. Usually it was a person, most times no more than six, who had a vision of what this idea called *camping* could mean in the life of the church. I think of names such as Fred Schoitz, later President of the ALC, and Rudy Ofstedahl, a rural North Dakota pastor, as examples of those who had a vision of what camp could mean in the lives of youth.

Camping began in the early days as more of an idea. Early camping leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) would meet at a Bible Camp Workshop just prior to the convocations at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN, on an annual basis. The volunteer sponsors would gather youth staff, professors, and camping leaders together to discuss programs, buildings, camp fees, menus, Bible Study, and potential speakers. These early gatherings solicited morale

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

way in The American Lutheran Church. But in most of the years of the new church, camping was still perceived as a "movement" within the church. Once camps were included in the annual year book, thanks to the efforts of Dr. George Schultz, Director of Finances, the camping movement was at least legitimized as a partner with other ministries of The American Lutheran Church.

Early in the history of our camps, it was noted that ALC camps had developed existing relationships with the Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. Before any talk of unification, camps were already working across synod lines, particularly in the Western part of the United States. Early church leaders worked together because they knew they could do better work united than apart.

In *Leading without Power*, by Max DuPree, the author notes several marks of the movement. They include a collective state of mind and a public and common understanding that the future can be created, not simply endured. Movements are easier to recognize from the inside. There is a rhythm of innovation and renewal. There is a sense of urgency; movements are never casual. Movements require a high sense of creativity. One of the beauties of a movement is the clear commitment to substance over bureaucracy. Movements tend to create a wonderful breadth of mind in the people involved. There is also the existence of disciplined routine in the midst of the freedom generally associated with the movement.

Of course, we have to consider that movements tend to deteriorate into mere organizations. One of the signs of this deterioration is when leaders begin to make tradeoffs. When the organization prefers comfort to ambiguity. When control of program replaces the challenge and when the job description becomes more important than individual gifts, the movement becomes stressed.

Fortunately, God has blessed this rag tag camping army with much more than we could have imagined. Leadership appeared as it was needed. Camping volunteers continued to be open to the direction of the Holy Spirit. A solid theology served as a foundation for what we were about. Prophets who questioned the status quo materialized. Management people appeared to teach us how to better handle budgets, personnel, fund raising, and capital campaigns. Visionaries met us to encourage us to serve a broader slice of the church and the community. Boards continued to ask for development, support, and training. Our partnerships with the Districts of The American Lutheran Church blossomed. And to think, it all began with a small group of folks who had a vision of what this camping movement might be. These were the people who risked much to claim these ministries for the Church.

In the late seventies The American Lutheran Church was reshaped. Outdoor Ministries was put under the supervision of the Division for Life and Mission. Providence would enable this to take place under the leadership of Paul Hanson, a parish pastor from Trinity Lutheran Church of Moorhead, MN, who

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 form, 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

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."¹

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

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

one's fitness and health in order to be equipped for personal achievement. The milieu of forest and lake, wild sounds and outdoor breezes provided a laboratory for

assisting young people to grow as human beings, learning to be both self confident and compassionate.

Camping among church predecessor bodies

Among the predecessor church bodies that comprised the former American Lutheran Church, camping had many roots. Evidence of interest in camp programs can be traced to the early 1920's. Creative pastors and church leaders would take small groups of youth to a cottage or resort for fellowship and inspiration. When these events repeated themselves each year, increased participation required greater organization to accommodate sleeping, dining, and meeting.

In 1922, the Iowa District Sunday School Committee first suggested forming a Bible Camp for adults at Lake Okoboji in northwest Iowa. The first camp was held in 1924 with 40 teachers attending. A large tent was set up for a Sunday meeting and 500 people attended the event. Camps were held in 1925 and again in 1926, when the effort was incorporated as part of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (UELCA). Lots were purchased on the lakeshore in 1927 and a chapel built to accommodate meetings. By 1931 small dormitories had been built, making summer camps a possibility not only for Sunday school teachers but also children and youth.

The same pattern was followed in North Dakota when Rev. R. A. Ofstedal

camped by the shoreline of Devils Lake during a district Lutheran League convention with campers from his Edmore parish in 1926. During the following year 14 boys went to Devils Lake for four days. The camp was moved to Red Willow Lake with 25 young persons attending in 1928, each of whom paid \$1.50. The campers were also required to bring food supplies for the commissary. The idea of establishing a camp was prominent because those who gathered at Lookout Point on Red Willow Lake prayed annually for a permanent home. The land was finally purchased in 1939.

The depression had an interesting effect on organized camping in the church. In the rural Midwest, often in the midst of the "dustbowl" states, camping trips were seen to offer unusual opportunity for young people. Following these difficult years, parents who wanted to provide meaningful experiences to their children encouraged camping opportunities. To go to a camp under the supervision of a pastor or adult volunteer was considered a unique blessing unavailable during the depression.

Luther Park Bible Camp north of Chetek, Wisconsin, was established after an extensive search for a permanent convention hall by the Rice Lake circuit of

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 Church² (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.

² 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.

At the 2nd Annual Luther League Bible Camp Institute in 1935 over 100 pastors and youth leaders attended. Among the presentations given was Rev. J. L. Kildahl's "Spiritual Emphasis." The pastor from Webster, South Dakota, who had founded NeSoDak Bible Camp near Lake Enemy Swim in Waubay, SD, stated:

"there should be a spiritual atmosphere in every Bible Camp that the hearts and souls of everyone present would be in tune with the heavenly message."

Already there were requests for quality Bible study programs that met the needs of the various ages that attended camp. Rev. O. G. Malmin of Minneapolis spoke on the topic "Planned, Progressive Curriculum." Malmin's vision for Bible camp programs was expansive:

"in curriculum building two primary objectives must be kept in mind, namely (a) the curriculum must show balance and (b) the curriculum must show continuity and progression."

Dr. Jacob Tanner was a popular figure among the early leaders in the camping movement. He was a recognized Bible scholar who could communicate with young persons. He suggested to the gathering that by...

"Bible Emphasis we mean the work to open up the Bible to our people, to lead them into the thought-world of the Bible for the purpose of developing Christ-centered personalities with a Christ-centered world conception."

By this time, many of the Bible Camps of the Evangelical Lutheran Church had developed a common format for program. Rev. Waldo Ellickson who directed camp programs at Badlands Bible Camp in North Dakota followed a simple three-session format each day. Each was a 55 minutes session followed by a brief prayer session. The first session was to study Old Testament lessons, the second was reserved for the New Testament, and the third was to deal with contemporary or other issues.

Bible Camps were encouraged by the institute to conduct breakfast devotions, allow for ample discussion time within each morning session, allow space for private devotion, and hold an evening inspirational service.

The Institute also served as a forum in which rules and camp discipline issues were discussed and approved. Typical camp problems included maintaining correct behavior and dealing with issues relating to who would be allowed to attend and under what circumstances. Some camps used private resort cabins and had difficulties getting all participants to show up at the designated place for their morning sessions. Others felt that persons who were not part of the camp group should not be allowed to drive in for the evening for they tended to disrupt the camp programs. These types of issues occupied much time in early institute conversations.

Early Institutes also questioned the advisability of owning or leasing camping properties. At the 3rd Annual Luther League Bible Camp Institute, Rev. Muus announced:

"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. Schiotz (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

did it, which was a kind of an old ELC tradition.

Anyhow, over the next 7 or 8 years, they filled that camp and they spent many weeks of their summer as a part of their vacation, ministering to young people who had no money and a lot of time. And a lot of things happened at those camps. That was a great experience in terms of community and fellowship and young people associating with each other.

Now, 35 years later, I suppose that camp is worth \$250,000 in terms of investment...and that's what a couple of preachers did who had the courage of their conviction and deep faith."

The changing times of camping

That so many camps could begin in such a short period can, in part, be traced to national trends in youth and evangelism as well as to the results of the war. World War II brought significant changes upon the Lutheran camping scene. During the war, some camping programs were postponed due to gas and tire rations and a few of these were never again reopened. Many of the leaders and volunteers were engaged in the war effort that made it difficult to fill the leadership needs of the camps. Yet the attendance in camping programs remained high during these years.

The end of the war brought more changes to camping, indeed to all of America and Canada. Many of the GI's went on to college and seminary. They carried within them a global perspective as they had seen and heard about various parts of the world. The rise in world interest had the practical effect of

Other camps established during this period included Mission Lake Bible Camp, Wittenberg, WI (1942), Riverside Bible Camp, Story City, Iowa (1943), and a large number of camps following the end of World War 2: Lutherdale Bible Camp, Elkhorn, WI (1945), Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, MN (1945), Lutherhaven Bible Camp, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (1945), Luther Point at Grantsburg, WI (1946), Shetek Bible Camp, Slayton, MN (1947) Camp of the Cross, Felton, CA (1948).

changing one of the morning Bible Camp sessions in many of the camps to the "Mission Hour."

But there was also a new social and educational awareness. Although there is considerable debate as to when the concept of the "teenager" was created, following WW2 a better understanding of adolescence and their needs became part of the Christian education scene. Where once there had been a clear distinction between childhood and adulthood (adults worked), now there was a recognized in-between time of adolescent growth and development.

Many camp leaders recognized these needs and sought to find programs that would address them. Among those needs were self esteem issues, social participation, group building and vocational assistance for youth. Most camp programs, however, did not respond quickly to what was happening

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

few youth leaders began to question the effectiveness of the camps in meeting needs of youth.

At the 1948 Bible Camp Institute, Pastor A. L. Abrahamson, who served as the Luther League Evangelist, was asked to address the concern "that the Bible Camp programs were dying." Reviewing the beginning of camping and the progress made to that point, Abrahamson provided four stunning reasons for the trends. First, camps and their leaders were "letting down on the spiritual emphasis." The Bible Camp program should never have strayed from its essential role in spiritual development, according to his report.

Second, Abrahamson felt that camps were "letting down on the bars of discipline." It appears that Rev. Abrahamson felt strongly about firm

discipline in the camp community. Points three and four were similar: "Plain unpardonable carelessness" and the "carelessness of pastors." It is unclear as to the response to his thesis, but there was agreement when he stressed that the single important question in camps should be "Are you facing Christ?"

Pastor Oscar Anderson proposed that a person be designated to direct the Bible Camp movement. But Abrahamson took it one step further when he recommended that a professional Bible Camp person be employed by the Luther League to study camps. The group also agreed to ask Professor Gerhard Frost of Luther College to write a course on Christian Service for the summer of 1949. Dr. L. N. Field was asked to write a course on Church Worship for 1950.

From committee to association

In 1949 camp attendance increased over previous years and this was considered a positive sign since it was a youth convention year. The average age remained at 15.13 years. Surveys from camps indicated that the schedules remained heavy and unvaried, with significant problems in discipline being the result. The program prepared on Christian service and vocation was used in only 17 of the camps (there were 114 recognized camps in 1949, few of which ran programs throughout the entire summer). A few leaders felt that a unified camp spirit was needed within the Bible Camp movement. But the worrisome

trend noticed throughout the Bible Camps was the crying need for more clergy.

A number of decisions were made to help alleviate these problems. I. O. Kronstad was asked to prepare a campfire manual. A Bible Camp poster and tract for parents was to be printed by the Luther League office. The Lutheran Herald was to have an article titled "An Open Letter to Deacons" stressing the need for camp clergy. Pastor Stoa was asked to write this article.

The Bible Camp committee also agreed to hold a meeting in conjunction with the seminary convocation, which was

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

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.

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

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

for study began to change during these years. Many of the presentations utilized teachers of the church and recognized leaders of the National Camping Association, the former agency that evolved into the American Camping Association. One primary question that was often raised in the minutes was the relationship between camping and the church at large.

At the January, 1951, camp workers' conference Theodore Huggenvik from St. Olaf College delivered the address "The Place of the Bible Camp in the Church." The relationship with the church was enhanced through a wide variety of support systems including ELC assistance with mailings, publications, staff from the Young Peoples Luther League, and space and time at seminary convocations.

Individual camp leaders were also beginning the quest for a formal Bible Camp Association. In 1952 and 1953 conversations began in earnest with the Bible Camp Committee. Pastor Carlyle Holte, National Bible Camp Director, chaired the 1953 meeting that agreed to investigate the legal aspects of the association so that elections could be held. There was also considerable discussion as to whether a portion of each camper fee should be used to help fund the Luther League activity. The Luther League had, after all, hired a person whose time was shared with Bible Camp work: "...the Bible camp program is and should be more integrated with the Luther League program."

The unique feature of the Bible Camp Association was its open

membership to "any Bible Camp Corporation holding property for any regional or local group affiliated with The Evangelical Lutheran Church." The Bible Camp movement, so supported by the ELC, was moving toward a linkage with camp boards, particularly the laity that loved and supported their local camps. In fact, the structure was originally written so that "there shall be an approximate equal division of lay and clergy on the Board of Directors." This did not make the final version, however the Bible Camp Board added it in 1956. Also, each camp board was entitled to two voting delegates.

The constitution was accepted in full at the January, 1954, meeting of the Bible Camp Association. The group also recommended that the constitution be brought before the General Convention of the ELC in June. Pastor M. A. Braaten, Gordon Rasmussen, and Fred Westphal were asked to make the presentation.

It was not until January 14, 1957, that the Bible Camp Association held its Constitutional Convention. The meeting was called to order by Pastor David Brown, Associate Youth Director of the ELC. Dr. Fredrik Schoitz, President of the ELC gave the opening devotions.

Meanwhile, in Vermilion, South Dakota, Pastor David Preus received a phone call from C. Hinderlie, the youth director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.³ Hinderlie asked if Preus would

³A taped conversation between David Preus, Paul A. Hanson, Thor Skeie, Jerry Manlove, Dick Borrud, Hamm Muus and Joe Bash in 1975 provides interesting recollections of the early days of camping in the American Lutheran Church.

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."

In the initial meetings of the BCA, Preus also recalled encouraging Manlove to write a handbook on camping in order to solve problems that were identified in many of the camps.

"We tried to make it sound to Jerry like it was because he knew so much. The truth of the matter was that we were just looking for a handbook as to how we could help make camping an exciting affair for the young people and their leaders who were using the camps at that time." Dave Brown and the BCA Board asked Jerry for this booklet which was entitled "A Church Camp at Work."

The 1957 budget totaled \$3000. By the end of the year, however, newly elected treasurer Jerry Manlove reported that only 15 camps had provided support of \$965.30 with expenses of \$1,922.79 - a \$1000 deficit. The camps were asked to donate \$1 per camper in the coming year.

Other data was obtained from camps in 1957. The prime camping weeks of the summer was the last week of June and the first week of July. The camper to counselor ration was 10/1, the lowest being 5/1 and the highest being 30/1. An estimated 22,000 campers attended programs, and the median age was now 14.5 years. The average cost to attend camp was \$12.50 per week.

The BCA also had an impact on the winter workshops. Camping phrases brought into the church from professional camping circles began to appear in the annual workshops. Manlove led a discussion called "Progression in Camping" at the 1958 event.

"Progression in camping means giving to campers a series of new experiences...progression in camping means offering to different camp ages different kinds of camp experiences so that campers will have something to look forward to yearly."

But a primary theme that seemed new to the camping world was the emphasis on interpersonal relationships in addition to educational activities. According to Manlove:

"supervision <is> the key to successful camping...The key may not be the fireball speaker. The key...may be the person with whom the camper has the most intimate personal contact, the person he spends the most hours with...The pastor who is supposed to execute some kind of supervision in a counseling way...and who leaves and then returns and leaves again can hurt the week and the campers for whom he is responsible."

The formation of the Bible Camp Association in the former Evangelical Lutheran Church was an important step in the development of camping. Few people involved in that organization could foresee the dimensions that camping would take in the church. Yet in those few years prior to the formation of the ALC, the principle of sharing strength with those searching for quality and the importance of developing leaders became foundations for the new ALC. As people like Preus, Brown, Manlove, Dar Roa and many others began to meet and formulate a new vision, camps across the country began to identify with this movement which would continue into the ALC.

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.

CHAPTER 2

The American Lutheran Church - Early Days

The Bible Camp Association finds a home

The Bible Camp Association that had been developed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church was brought into The American Lutheran Church upon its formation in 1960. There was little to compete with the structure; camping in the old ELC was well established with numerous camps spread across the country. In The American Lutheran Church that preceded the ALC of 1960 there were several large camps that came into the new structure: Luther Memorial at Onamia, MN, Luther Memorial in Fulton, OH, and Long Lake Bible Camp in Clintonville, WI to name a few. The Lutheran Free Church that became part of the ALC brought Lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp in Amery, WI, as its contribution to the camping scene.

The BCA fell into the church structure under the portfolio of Dave Brown in the Division of Life and Mission in the Congregation. The Division itself was very comprehensive in its program scope. Brown, the first Youth Director of the ALC, later kidded Paul Hanson by describing the Division's role as "the life and mission of the whole world and the universe and the space age and all the rest."

Paul A. Hanson was elected to serve as President of the Bible Camp

Association. Despite its early success in its predecessor Evangelical Lutheran Church, the BCA was still a fledgling organization known to include independent spirited personalities. Hanson would later quip that the Bible Camp Association was placed in Brown's portfolio "as much as by default as by request."

Paul A. Hanson, a pastor from Wilmar, Minnesota, had historic ties to the camping movement. Green Lake Bible Camp was built through the involvement of hundreds of dedicated volunteers, among them Paul's father, Rev. A. E. Hanson. Paul had, in a way, grown up surrounded by the camping spirit and had felt its power in the lives of young and old alike.

Hanson's first goal was to "get the camping association legitimized by the church and...into the structure with a kind of budget." Dave Brown fought to increase the budget from \$3000 to \$30,000. The organization became listed in official documents. Regular meetings and elections at district meetings were held to further increase its visibility while attracting Board members who were representative of a wide range of camping ministries in the new church.

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. Pastor "HAM" 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 when he left his position with the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit to become the first director of Koinonia in New York.

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

camping to the Board of NeSoDak Bible Camp on Lake Enemy Swim, a camp owned by six circuits of the ELC. Pastor Dick Borrud believed this historic camp had gone through an era. It had lived through a generation of campers and was facing a crossroads in its ministry.

Although the site needed physical improvements, Borrud envisioned a new structure of leadership that would grant the ministry more continuity. Borrud knew that many camp boards were essentially facility-oriented groups. The weekly deans that were concerned with program were often working with woefully inadequate budgets and had great difficulty obtaining quality counselors. In some weeks, counselors included high school sophomores as well as grandparents. In a few cases, camp deans arrived late and parents might be forced to stand in lines looking for someone to give their registration money. The camp board took Borrud seriously when these concerns were raised and asked Borrud to become its director.

Following his directorship at NeSoDak, Borrud accepted the call to serve as director at Outlaw Ranch in the Black Hills of SD and developed a program that became well known for its creativity, theological depth and well trained leadership. The mystique of Outlaw Ranch, with its horses, Black Hills cooking (with highly creative and nutritious meals which were carefully planned), well trained staff and wide range of campfire, musical, devotional, and recreational activities, became well recognized as a new standard for other camping ministries could emulate.

While serving in this capacity, Borrud was often asked to study other camping programs and make recommendations. One of Borrud's significant contributions to the life of ALC camping was the review and study process he used to challenge camp boards and owners to consider serious program and leadership issues.

As a "field service director" for the ALC, Borrud reviewed camps throughout the country he noticed similar kinds of problems. Many boards were primarily concerned with their facilities yet faced enormous challenges to make improvements due to lack of funds and year round staff to manage them. There were unsafe program conditions due to lack of extended staff training and lack of safety policies. Camp programs were often stymied because of last minute planning. Borrud's reports were often not favorably received, for they often advised major changes in staff structure and involved major budget adaptations.

But the value of these reports often came in the challenge they provided to camping leaders. They forced board members to think in new ways. They encouraged the development of camping leaders. They promoted the management of camp by Camp Directors or Program Directors instead of Camp Managers. They placed an emphasis on quality of experience. And, whereas Koinonia and Wilderness Canoe Base could be described as new organizations that were being built from the benefit of new camping theories, the work of Borrud was often directed toward camps that were

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 "HAM" Muus and Bob Evans who assisted in the street work of Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC). But the distinctive style of Wilderness Canoe Base was shaped by Pastor Muus. In a recorded conversation, "HAM" 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 Runkle 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..."

Pastor 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 "HAM" 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."

Pastor 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

lingering voice of the loon all served to create space and experience and commitment to those who seek changes among the hurting.

Wilderness brought together a wide range of people in their camping adventures - youth from detention

centers, kids from the streets, the homeless, those with learning disabilities. Many were placed in trips along with youth groups from parishes. All shared in the kind of experience which challenged one's vision and broke one's fears, so that change might commence.

The Koinonia Community

From its inception, Koinonia was a unique linkage between urban parishes in New York City and a large acreage 80 miles away near the Delaware River. The camp program was based on a small group progressive camping experience in the midst of an incredible wilderness of forest, rock, creek, and mountain lakes.

The camp association (Martin Luther Camp Corporation) was formed in 1962 when Marie Ronning, a member of Our Saviors in Staten Island, NY, left her estate to the congregation. The parish, under the leadership of Rev. Bob Nervig, offered a \$100,000 gift toward a new camp if a group of churches would agree to participate in funding the camp. \$440,000 was reached over and above the challenge gift. The Koinonia Community was thus born.

During the formation of the camp association, Nervig called upon his former employer from the YMCA and asked Jerry Manlove to assist in evaluating the property and advising the new Board of Directors. Jerry had already established his credentials as a volunteer in ELC camping during his Camp Caravan days. He was then employed in the Youth

Division of the ALC as a regional staff member working in the Chicago area.

When it came time to select a camp director for the new camp, Nervig and the Board approached Jerry to serve Koinonia. Manlove's work in the ELC camping effort and his professional camping experience with the YMCA provided the new association with a proven camping leader.

Manlove was clearly in the school that promoted intentional living in small self-contained camping units. His interest in camping also promoted sensitive land use and a minimalist view of facility development so that future generations might know and experience the Lord's creation. In his masters program at the University of Minnesota, Manlove had been encouraged by Giesla Knopka (his Jewish professor who had fled Germany shortly before Hitler) to recognize the importance of "therapeutic group work with children." His degree requirements had included a close look at group processes and relationship building in church work, themes upon which the progressive program of Koinonia could be developed.

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

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.

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

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

among camp directors was gaining ground, both in the quality of trained personnel and within the structures of the church itself. Scheduled events were held quarterly, camp director's workshops became annual events, field staff began to work with camp boards on a more regular basis, and new program ideas surfaced.

Much of the early memories and reflections of people involved in camping speak of this increase in leadership among camp folk, often in whimsical ways. Thor Skeie, the president of the BCA following Hanson, recalled the following:

"(The) comradeship that we experience in the camping movement is one that will be a part of my life...I can remember the meeting we had out at Outlaw Ranch. I believe it was in the latter part of September when the snow was just beginning to fall, and we were quartered in some of Borrud's famous A-frames, and just freezing to death and watching the snow through the open roof and arguing as to who was to put the next log on the fire."

"...there are other things -- the airplane rides where we would get together and sing and...bring it to the attention of other people around that we were a happy bunch of people who knew what it meant to profess Christ as Lord, but also who knew what it meant to be a part of life as a result of this relationship with the Christ, we knew how to enjoy life in the out of doors as well as in meetings."

It was during the decade of the sixties that many new directors were added to the roster of full time camp staff. Along with their arrival came major experiments in new thoughts and forms in church camping. Metigoshe Ministries

near Bottineau, North Dakota, led by Pastor Mark Ronning became a unique model for the dream of total community involvement in Bible camping. No longer was it simply a Bible camp, but it involved an ecumenical ministry to summer cabin people and worked with special populations. When Metigoshe eventually built a retreat center for year round use, the same facility served as a church center for the community, and held a host of community activities throughout the week, including a learning center for mentally retarded adults.

In Texas, Rev. Wayne Jarvis was determined to find new ways to serve people who lived great distances apart. To serve parishes spread out across Texas and Louisiana, Jarvis directed programs at three sites. When parishes in Louisiana still expressed concern over the great distance involved, Jarvis packed a camp into a bus and pickup truck and brought it to them. The mobile camp included a trained staff, tents, a full kitchen, and program gear. In other years, the camp would stop at other locations, including the famous sands of San Padre Island along the Texas gulf coast.

Other camping professionals were equally involved in the development of new programs. Rev. Bob Newcomb led an association of parishes in Southern California. Involved in a concept of the BCA called "Crisis Ministry" Bob and others were encouraging camps to increase involvement with African Americans, Native Americans, migrant workers, and people with exceptional needs.

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

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.

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.

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

national and district levels were significant issues.

Johnson's recommendation was that upon the resignation of Dick Borrud as a part time field service worker for camping, the next person to be elected should be considered the Executive Director for the Bible Camp Association, and also to have the title of Associate Youth Director for the ALC.

The effect of this recommendation was to pull camping into the mainstream of the church's structure and place it firmly within youth ministry. Many people had continued to see camping as extra curricular, but this move provided camping with a relationship that would have great impact on church life.

The second effect was that camp directors became excellent "consultant and strategists as we thought through youth ministry facing us in the future." Johnson's recommendation also assured that camp directors, board members, and youth people would be in touch with each other and engaged in "personal dialogue between what was happening in each of the fields..."

It was at the February 2-4, 1969, meeting of the Bible Camp Association National Board that the issue of a full time Executive Director was debated. Johnson arrived in the morning session to explain the structure of the BCA in the ALC under the umbrella of the youth ministry. The National Board of the BCA voted to "establish the office of Executive Director of the BCA of the ALC, with offices in Minneapolis. This person is to serve on the staff of the Board of Youth

Activity as Assistant Director of Camping."

A subsequent motion followed this. "Urge approval of the Board of Youth Activity of the ALC of resolution to call Jerry Manlove as Executive Director of the BCA of the ALC."

Jerry's election to serve as the first Executive Director of the Bible Camp Association brought impressive skills to the position. Manlove was committed to the church and as a lay person and deeply interested in its theology, particularly on the ministry of all of God's people. In areas of administration and finance, he was skilled in budgeting, fiscal control, and fund raising. His primary focus was leadership development and the enhancement of full time camp directors and board members.

About the same time, it had been the dream of Dr. Kent Knutson, President of The American Lutheran Church, to restructure the programs of the church to better serve the needs of congregational life in a changing society. By organizing all the congregational programs into one large division, it was believed that enhanced coordination would encourage creative ministries. During the reorganization many of the old systems were dismantled and new strategies in which camping had a central role were developed. It took a number of years to enact the great organizational changes required for this endeavor, but by 1974 and 1975 the programmatic venture of the church became the focus of the Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation (DLMC). Camping found its home in this division.

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 DLMLC, 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."

Chapter 3

A new shape for ALC camping

Leadership in outdoor ministries

With Jerry Manlove at the helm of ALC camping, The American Lutheran Church was to enjoy steady growth in the field of camping, retreat, and outdoor ministries. In time, Manlove would establish a camping philosophy, promote quality programs at the outdoor ministry centers of the ALC and develop a pool of dedicated camping leaders.

Four themes characterize these early years in American Lutheran Church camping. First, there was a concern for developing a theological and biblical framework that would provide church

camps with a clear foundation. Second, a new paradigm for church camping by which camping leaders might steer their ministries would emerge during the coming decade. Third, Manlove created a solid enrichment program of conferences and events to support and encourage the efforts of professional camp leaders. Finally, as the need to develop expertise among camp professionals became apparent, specific training in financial development, planning processes, and personnel management were developed.

The concern for a theological and biblical framework

The continuation of annual events for camp directors during Manlove's tenure included the placement of theological and biblical study at the center of the events. It became a common for camp directors to join together each fall at a National Camp Director's Workshop, referred to as the "Fall Event."

The fall event incorporated a guest theologian to provide a biblical framework for the time together. Worship events were led by camp directors and workshops hosted by camping leaders or special resource guests were offered on a variety of subjects.

Ample time for fellowship and personal enrichment provided time for support and friendship.

Since the first camp leader's event held at Lutherhaven near Winona, MN, a tradition of hosting the events at a different camp each year was begun. Event sites included Camp Vermilion at Cook, MN, Green Lake Bible Camp at Wilmar, Camp Chrysalis in Texas, Lutherhaven at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Lutherdale Bible Camp at Elkhorn, WI, Tecumseh Woods in Michigan, and others as the years passed.

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."

Manlove's suggestion was that farmers turn their unused barns and facilities into lodging for parishes to enjoy.

"You have the environment for meaningful work...and the opportunity to be a missionary to a kid who needs you desperately. This is the 'match up.'"

This was not just an idea in theory. Manlove experimented by taking a number of urban youth to his brother-in-law's farm in Iowa. Manlove later reflected that although he knew all about responsibility for equipment, he was still frustrated as he watched his son ruin the brakes on a perfectly good tractor. Manlove admitted there was more to creating a program than having a good idea.

"I remember hearing someone say, 'When God invested himself in history he also invested his smarts.'"

The regular mailings from the camping office, which were ably edited by Edna Loddigs, his faithful secretary and office manager, contained numerous biblical and theological concerns. Often Jerry's comments would ramble through ideas until the question became plain:

"As we were driving away from one of the sessions in the car...I began to put a theological statement together and tried it out on the group. They thought it might be worth sharing with you...What does it mean when we say that we are a Church of the Word and Sacraments...and that Outdoor Ministries are a part and parcel of this same Church and this same ministry? Could it

say that...in baptism something remarkable happens? I am claimed by God, the Creator. I am redeemed. Because of this baptism...The Word calls me to look at all of life differently. It calls me to look at creation with awe and wonder, with attention to hues of colors that are somehow clearer and brighter and deeper and richer. My redemption calls me to a deeper relationship with a Redeemer. I look at Creation through the eyes...of the Creator. A river speaks to me with lyrics, the majesty of mountains causes me to sing doxologies, deep forests speak of an enchantment which causes my spirit to cry and sing. The smells of earth and tree and swamp and flower say to me that GOD REIGNS. The butterflies, the running deer, the tiny any call me to celebrate life...and death...and...life. I see creation differently because of my baptism...my redemption...and my life with Christ."

Manlove's theological concerns were diverse and resulted in many positive actions. From Manlove's perspective that land is at the heart of outdoor ministries came a focus on the Old Testament perspective of the value of land and the year of jubilation when all land rests from its burden. Ralph Quere, Wartburg Seminary, spoke on the holiness of land and related it to strip mining and environmental care during a subsequent Fall Event. The result of this reflection was a formal response from the Outdoor Ministry Committee to approve design teams to work with camp boards considering site development.

The purpose of the Design Teams were to offer trained camp leaders who would evaluate sites and make recommendations to camp boards prior to capital expansion. This enabled a Board

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

Olstad (Pathways, N. MN) had been employed with the Boy Scouts. From the YMCA came Dave Davidson, director at EWALU. Manlove lifted up the role of camp managers and caretakers as active witnesses to the Gospel in camp life. Erling Lundeen, caretaker at Green Lake

Bible Camp, often served as a devotional leader. In later years, Jerry would speak on behalf of the entire ALC as head of "Discipleship in Society," a movement to assist all of God's people to explore the full meaning of their Baptismal covenants.

The development of a new paradigm for church camping

Between 1965 and 1980 there was a major shift in the manner that the camps of The American Lutheran Church conducted their programs. A new paradigm for outdoor ministries was developed during these years as the camps continued to grow in size and offer expanded opportunities for congregations. Jerry Manlove provided strong leadership to camp directors and camp board members in order to help foster the great changes that camps were undergoing. Many of the new leaders in church camping were developed through the ALC training events, workshops, and from within the camp programs themselves. The new directors had often served on staffs under the supervision of early camp leaders. "Leadership development" was a key phrase used by church leaders to help the camping movement gain momentum.

A new shape to camping in the ALC would emerge but the changes were often subtle. The movement could be characterized by a rising professionalism among camp leaders. Volunteers were still needed at the camps, but decision-making powers were often given to professional camp leaders who were trained in camp management. It is

important to note that controversy often resulted from these changes. Clashes were common when directors tried to institute what they had learned at national training events at their local camps. Not all camp boards were willing to change quickly to follow national trends.

To illustrate the changes that took place between 1965 and 1980, a number of observations can be made about the shifting perspectives of camp operations. These perspectives were, of course, different from camp to camp, but as a whole they represent a picture of the changing paradigm of the camping movement within The American Lutheran Church.

- from a limited summer youth programs to a year round program for youth, families, and adults camper participants.
- from a focus on youth to an interest in all ages.
- from summer youth cabins to year round, adult conference and retreat facilities.
- from volunteer staff to paid summer counselors and a complement of winter retreat staff.

- 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

processes, working with special needs, conflict management, futurism, and Board development issues.

A second feature that helped move camps to a new paradigm for ministry was the Board development workshop program. Manlove recruited selected camp directors and board members from various areas of the country and trained them to provide training and evaluation processes to local camp boards. For example, a Board Development workshop would consist of a Camp Director and Board member leading a weekend retreat for the Board and staff of another camp corporation. During the retreat, the two would assist the Board to identify its purpose, its structure, and review the roles that were assigned to its committees and staff.

Other services provided to camp boards included Camp Evaluations, Camp Design Teams, and Financial Development Workshops. In the Site Design process, four selected directors or camp staff members would interview camp participants in *town meetings* to determine program needs. They would also review the buildings and grounds of the camp; take an inventory of land and local outdoor resources that were available for program and present recommendations to the Board of Directors or governing body for development of a site. Through this concentrated week-long study, camps were encouraged to raise their vision for ministry and view themselves as a resource and partner in congregational ministry.

Because of the rising skill level of camp directors and the expanded vision of camp boards, the programs offered by camps of The American Lutheran Church began to change in many ways. Camps were quickly encouraged to provide services to congregations throughout the year. Camp Executive Directors became resources to district wide youth programs, were invited to lead workshops for area pastors or youth leaders, and fostered inter agency cooperation. Their visibility increased dramatically in the life of the whole church as District and congregational leaders began to view camps in new ways. The model of serving as an "extension of the local congregation" was greatly expanded between 1965 and 1980 as congregations capitalized on the skills available to them through the local camp executive.

At the same time, the National CROM Committee took on new visibility and significance within the church. The committee that once set policies for its own Executive Director became an active agent for change among directors. The new CROM National Committee also streamlined its partnership with directors, Board members, and the church. The Executive Directors formed an Association of Executives (ACE) that elected three executives from across the nation to serve on the CROM National Committee.

The structure of the CROM National Committee consisted of an elected camp board member representing each of five geographic areas. In addition, two members from the National Church Council served on the CROM National

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

theological theme was the nature of Christian service. At a spring gathering of directors, one participant complained:

"Pastors in our churches don't seem to understand that in addition to raising money, writing a camp program, finding and training our summer staff, developing materials for our board meeting, and organizing work crews, I occasionally mow lawns and roof buildings."

Although some church leaders may not have understood the new camp directors, the directors took great support from one other. They struggled with programs that attempted to do too much with the financial resources at their disposal. Their ideas for developing their camps generally were often grandiose. They struck out on new ground, often working with unpopular programs such as mixing youth with disabilities with "regular church kids" or introducing African American children into a rural camp setting. It was not uncommon for camp directors to be severely criticized for working with programs of diversity or hiring counselors who came to camp with their long hair and bib overalls during the hostile days of the Viet Nam War crisis.

By the early seventies, the fall event was felt to be the most significant way in which camp directors were provided personal support and friendship. According to Mark Ronning, former director of Metigoshe Ministries, the fall events made him aware that others had the same struggles and fears as did he. It was a time of sharing, of seeing old friends, of acknowledging changes in families and life interests. Directors

began talking about a "network" as if this professional group took on a larger than life quality. Many directors struggled with traditional boards and lack of funds or felt a little support and recognition from local pastors. The fall event was a time to become rejuvenated, to gain perspective and share trials and joys.

Manlove managed to provide numerous occasions for personal support and affirmation. In the early days of the ALC, a "big brother" program was initiated. Seasoned directors were assigned a new camp director who was located within a few hundred miles. A relationship was developed: visits, lunches, a chance to recruit counselors together, phone calls and advice on how to handle an issue currently before the Board.

This relationship became lasting. New directors often commented on how willing their colleagues were to share ideas, printed resources, programs, and advice. "I was surprised by the lack of competition, it was as if anything I wanted was already being worked on by someone, and I could have it." Paul Hill, director of Lutherdale Bible Camp southwest of Milwaukee, WI, recalls telling his board, "every resource I've given you, some other camp director has given me."

The fall event and the spring training sessions became well known for their fun and fellowship as well as their troublesome late evenings. Groups of camp directors would gather together and plan "cracker barrels" where refreshments, camp songs, church hymns, and laughter lasted late into the evening.

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

many training events. The stories and friendly kidding of Bill and Sally White entertained friends around the table. And the pranks of Dave Brunkow, Dick Iverson, and Neil Sorenson from Lutheran Outdoors of SD staff became legendary.

If some parties got out of hand, it may have been a sign of the emotional needs of the directors. Camp leaders reached out for support and sometimes with desperation to one another. The stress of maintaining marriages in the midst of challenging schedules and the ongoing shortage of funds was a heavy burden to several. Additional stresses caused over concern for the safety of campers or from those who had experienced serious accidents at their

camp needed to be shared. And the need to find competent summer staff on limited budgets added to the weight felt by many executives. In the spirit of friendship, camp directors supported and befriended one another.

Manlove reflected on these experiences following his retirement as national director of outdoor ministries. "A lot of people thought that stuff just happened. It did, but it didn't. We chose people carefully. We didn't put those evaluation teams together without thinking - there was always a new person, there was always a female, there was always someone taking on a new role. And that's how we built community. We made people work together and perform."

The concern for developing expertise among camp professionals

Many people might assume that camp directing was a role reserved for young adults who enjoyed working with young people in outdoor settings. Many camp directors became professionals precisely because they were effective youth leaders or camp counselors. Few chose to work in a camp setting because they felt it was a professional position that required administrative skills, marketing abilities, or fund raising skills. Most camp directors were simply gifted youth workers.

Although their love of youth ministry would never cease, new directors learned quickly that the job was something entirely different.

Pastor Paul Hill, director of Lutherdale Bible Camp shared this observation:

"I remember coming to Lutherdale. I was so excited about all these new programs I was going to design. That's why I did it. And then on my first day on the job, I learned that I had \$35,000 in unpaid operating bills in my desk drawer. Then the bank called and wanted to know when we were going to pay something on our \$700,000 debt!"

Hill's experience was not unique, though at the time, the Lutherdale debt was the largest in ALC camping, having earned the honor by outspending the American Lutheran Memorial Camp in

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.

One of the primary needs for camp corporations was the development of high quality land use plans. The ALC Site Design Teams were helpful in making Boards aware of the need for site planning, but the professional planning skills of men such as Paul Fjare were clearly necessary prior to a fund campaign. Paul was a partner of Brauer & Associates, a firm used in the early days of the ALC to study camping in its various states and regions. When the company ended its legacy, Paul Fjare continued to provide services to camps through his own organization called Land West, located in Pueblo, CO. Numerous camps such as Luther Crest Bible Camp in Alexandria, MN, and Luther Park of Chetek, WI, used Paul effectively for camp layout and land use.

Dr. Bob Gronlund and his financial development firm (Gronlund & Associates) assisted with camp capital fund campaigns. Because of his success with outdoor ministry centers, Gronlund became recognized as the primary financial resource person to contact when anticipating a capital campaign. As the need for financial development services in camps grew, Pastor Dick Sayther, from Sugar Creek Bible Camp, Ferryville, WI, joined Bob and the company became Gronlund & Sayther. A few years later, Mr. Dave Brunkow, from Lutherans Outdoors of South Dakota became a partner in the firm. Gronlund, Sayther, Brunkow & Associates (GSB & Associates) became the premier financial development organization to work with camping in the American Lutheran Church.

Manlove sought to develop a new language among the Executive Directors to assist them with understanding financial management. Bob Gronlund was asked to conduct financial workshops for the executives at a skill training event. Gronlund laid out the model of the three legged stool that became a prominent part of camp financial management. Executives learned that there was a need for regular ongoing support of annual needs, a periodic need for major capital expansion of facilities, and a long term need for endowed giving that would under gird the permanent mission of camping.

The principle of the three legged stool is common language among non profit organizations but to Executive Directors and camp boards it was a new means of understanding responsible fiscal management and resource development. Speaking a common language, directors were able to offer their Boards new insight into methods of financial support. The development of giving clubs, memorial programs, direct mail campaigns and major gift strategies quickly spread throughout the camps.

Manlove also developed an additional network of professional program leaders to share their recognized skills with other camps. Sally White (Pleasant Hills, Michigan) was a recognized leader in the special field of family and adult camping and often visited with camp leaders and boards who were interested in expansion of family camping. Deb Yandala (Lutheran Memorial, Ohio) was nationally recognized in the field of environmental

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.

CHAPTER 4

Changing of the Guard

Expanding the vision of camping

It was the dream of Dr. Kent Knutson, President of the ALC, to create a church that was more effective in its witness and service to congregations. The buzz word in the national offices in downtown Minneapolis was "restructuring." The untimely death of President Knutson prevented him from seeing the final results, but the impact was felt in many circles. To those involved in the Bible Camp Association, a change of terminology and focus took place. The Bible Camp Association evolved into "Camps, Retreat, and Outdoor Ministries." This progression was natural and logical to Manlove, for camping was reaching out into many new arenas of service.

Building facilities for retreating involved much more than the recycling of old cabins at the ALC camps. New and modern facilities that served young and old alike, with growing program staffs that served groups and provided theme retreats took camping into a truly year round mode. The "retreat" was provided with space, facilities, time, program, and staff attention during the late sixties and early seventies.

By the mid seventies, church camping in the ALC had established itself as one of the most significant ministries to

the church at large. It was recognized as having a major impact on the lives of youth. Its wilderness programs and adventure based activities, as established by Wilderness Canoe Base, Sky Ranch in Colorado, and Christikon in Montana, were unmatched in their power to bring outdoor high adventure learning processes to bear on Christian outreach.

Many camps were also experimenting with family camping and both Outlaw Ranch in Custer, SD, and Pleasant Hills in Michigan were dedicated to family camping. Many camps sponsored worship services in local state parks as programs of outreach.

Equally important was camping's link to the congregation, the church at large, and the colleges and seminaries. Congregations had begun to accept the leadership of camps in the area of district youth ministry, utilizing both program and facilities for a wide range of events. Training seminars, youth gatherings, and educational workshops were held at camps using camp staff.

The connection with colleges was important. Thousands of young persons reported working in church camps, providing service to young people and their congregations while providing support for their education. Church

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.

The introduction of the OMAC

Within the structure of the ALC, camping was also firmly rooted. Former BCA president David Preus, the Vice President of the ALC, became acting President and was elected at the next convention to serve as President. Jerry Manlove continued to provide outstanding leadership to the governing board. Camping had its own advisory Board, with two representatives from the Division of Life and Mission Board along with Camp Board representation (one from each of the five areas) and camp director representatives (three persons elected by the Association of Camp Directors). This was a unique structure to the ALC whereby a specific group could choose its own representatives to serve on the Board. The Association of Camp Directors (ACE) convened annually at their Fall Event to deal with specific issues affecting camp. The organization was open to all year round Camp Directors. Its first President was Tom von Fischer, Director of Camping for Luther Memorial Camp in Fulton, Ohio.

In 1976, due to assignment changes in the Division for Life and Mission, Manlove introduced the idea of Outdoor Ministry Area Coordinators, often referred to as "OMACS." The Division of Life and Mission in the Congregation, through Manlove, would contract with the Board of Directors of five camp associations to purchase a percentage of their Executive Director's time. The OMAC assignments were significant, each

of whom worked within a geographic area.

The OMACS first agreed to serve with Manlove to act as a Personnel Committee for CROM. Annually a major portion of the OMAC meeting with Manlove would be devoted to reviewing professional staff positions, openings, people who were ready to move, and assess staff support situations. The OMACS maintained contact with the camp directors in each of their respective areas, and were available for consultation and advice.

A second assignment for the OMACS was to develop planning committees to design area wide CROM events. These events would draw a broader base of camp people than the national events. The area wide events often took place at one of the camps in the area and included programs and small groups for property managers, food service staff, office assistants and program directors.

The OMACS also led Board Development Workshops, Evaluation Teams, and Design Teams. These activities had been developed in the early seventies to assist camp boards to gain increased expertise in organizational management, design of camp properties, and evaluation of their programs.

The teams, which included four members, some of whom were directors, trained board members, or volunteer experts, would move into a camp associa-

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

Manlove's unique habits and well known sayings. (Manlove's most quoted saying was a quote from Will Rogers: "You'd better take care of the land cause they ain't making it no more.")

Wayne Jarvis, a gifted carver, presented Manlove with a beautiful carved statue depicting a voyageur with a canoe. From all the directors came a quilt with each square from a different symbol from each camp. Ralph Yernberg showed an old filmstrip developed by Manlove in his early days called "Gladly the Bear I Crossed." The words kept getting mixed up to "Gladly the Cross-eyed Bear." In a ceremonious moment, Jim Liefeld, Badlands Outdoor Ministries of ND, on behalf of the directors, presented a hand tooled saddle to Jerry that had been crafted in Medora, ND.

The evening was long and rich in memory, and to Manlove, it was a send

A new agenda for Lutheran camping

Chief among the areas Olstad was to address was the rising conclusion that the American Lutheran Church would most likely unite with the Lutheran Church in America to create a new church. Olstad had the qualifications and experience to work with such a new configuration. As director of the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association in Oregon, Olstad had experience in an organization that was pan Lutheran. He had attended LCA camp director gatherings and had developed a reputation as an able organizational shaper. He would play a pivotal role in creating a new

off from his valued colleagues. The day after the Fall Event was over, Manlove went back to Minneapolis for his "official" retirement party, planned to take place in the Central Lutheran Church banquet room in Minneapolis. A few directors decided to join in. Dave Brunkow and Dick Sayther walked into Augsburg gift store, charged a couple of clergy collars to Manlove, donned their garb, and joined in the party.

Although Manlove was to be missed, church camping in the ALC was to move forward under capable new leadership. Jerry Olstad was elected to serve as the new National Outdoor Ministries Director. Jerry's task would also be enormous for many new trends were beginning to have a major impact on camping.

organization that would find its way into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, when it formed in 1987.

Other trends were equally important. The American Lutheran Church was on the verge of losing many of its camping leaders. New leaders were needed, and many were ready to assume these roles. But the recruitment and training of new directors was essential to quality camping programs. Although the OMAC's provided support to area wide training events, which assisted in the development of new leaders, a primary

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

CHAPTER 5

Advancement in camping in the ALC

Transition in leadership

Jerry Olstad's leadership was to be tested in the early days of his new position as Outdoor Ministries Director. Among his first tasks was to develop a supporting cast and address his counterparts in camping in the Lutheran Church of America. In the opening days of his tenure, little change was made in the staff. Edna Loddigs agreed to stay on for a short time to help with Olstad's transition period. The OMACS also agreed to remain, at least tentatively, on the leadership team. Pastor Bill Crouser agreed to serve as OMAC on the West

Coast, filling the spot vacated by Olstad when he became Executive Director of CROM. Bill joined Ralph Yernberg, serving at Imago Dei Ministries in WI, Bill Wilkins from Camp Frederick in OH, and Mark Ronning from Metigoshe Ministries, ND. Within a few years, Duane Hanson of Bethel Horizons would succeed Ralph Yernberg, and following Ronning's death, Dean Larson, President of the Association of Camp Executives, would play a more active role with Olstad to assist with duties in the Midwest.

The process of unification

Of primary concern to Olstad was the upcoming unification of the LCA, ALC, and AELC. Although good working histories and joint cooperation in the events funded by AAL laid a basis of common mission and friendship, little had been done to lift up a structure whereby true unification might begin. Both ALC and LCA camping leaders felt it was best to pursue what would be beneficial for camping in the new church rather than wait to be told where it fit.

As early as 1980, Olstad began laying down the groundwork with his

LCA partner for unification. The LCA church wide staff structure assigned camping to the portfolio of Rev. Paul Howells. Paul also held other educational responsibilities in the church wide offices of the LCA. In addition the LCA camp directors elected area camp directors to represent certain sections of the country. Though these positions were voluntary other than for expenses, the people elected were recognized as camping leaders and in some cases acted in similar capacities as did the OMAC personnel which were paid positions. The LCA did

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.

A series of joint meetings

At the first meeting held in Las Vegas, NV, the directors were able to describe variations of camping structures and funding: how camps were owned and managed, the merits of synod funding verses association funding, single church camps, leadership development and so forth. "I felt we'd never get off the mark if we would sit and argue which was best," said Olstad. Instead the members began to lay out a vision of what they would like to see. Mark Burkhardt, representing the LCA camping ministry in New Jersey, joined the team playing an important role as a student of history. He had studied camping in the predecessor churches of the LCA and offered valuable guidance to the historical processes of merger.

The second meeting was held in Florida. Olstad recalled, "The one point of agreement at this meeting had to do with the amount of time spent on the beach." At this important meeting the participants dealt with the issue of national structure. Concern was expressed that it might be presumptuous for the camps to present an organizational model to the Commission of Seventy which was organizing the new church. Nonetheless, the executives developed a formal structure and Olstad utilized people involved in camping networks to make contact with commission members.

In 1987, after a series of meetings, the plan worked out by the camp executives was presented to the planners of the new church. The structure was very similar to that used in the CROM model with special attention toward

"inclusivity" and involvement on the governing camp committee by laity, people of color, and board members from various regions.

The plan was accepted in its entirety, with the church adding its concern that the liabilities presented by camps be somehow divorced from the church at large. In other words, association ownership in the new church would be one of the preferred models since it limited liability to the synods while maintaining strong ties to the church through its "church controlled agency" function. This theme would play a major role in camping in the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In one of the first newsletters produced by the ELCA Outdoor Ministries, Jerry Olstad reflected upon the value of the struggle which took place among the directors prior to the unification of the church bodies.

"With all (the camping structure) in place our leadership has been able to spend time working with other program areas in discovering the importance of Outdoor Ministries as a resource to congregations... As we move into the 1990's we will be asked to look at ways to help the Church address some major issues, such as: How can camps and retreat centers help congregations deal with leadership development, education, spirituality, environmental awareness and evangelism?"

"We will still be called to address youth, our 'bread-and-butter' ministry. However, we must discover new ways to help program the 300,000 who use our facilities the other 9 months... The Church will call us to be more

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,

fund raising, and long range planning. At this meeting, a number of Canadian directors showed up to give an international flare to the event. Since this event, representation from Canada has been more common and helped build relationship between the American and

Becoming an institution

The fact that training events took on more specific administrative focus was a sign of change in camping. The "movement" known as camping was quietly becoming "institutional." The small camp was discovering that it needed skillful leadership in order to survive. Directors who were financial developers, planners, personnel directors, and knew the difference between cash and accrual accounting were at a premium. Those associations that found such leadership flourished; those that did not often faced large deficits. One fact illustrates this change: during the ten year period of 1975 to 1985, twenty two camps conducted capital expansion programs raising more than \$32 million dollars for improvements.

The need for support to new camp directors was also made difficult by rising costs and travel expenses. During Olstad's term in the ALC, the design and evaluation team process which had been a key component of the seventies became more difficult to fund. Camps were asked to bear total costs of transportation, making the evaluation expense prohibitive

Canadian Lutheran camp leaders. Many camp leaders remember the Canadian sponsored event in Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada, that took place following the formation of the ELCA as a time of great friendship and hospitality.

in some cases. With the importance of litigation concerns, Olstad felt that outside professionals might have more effect on the study process. Professional designers were asked to assist with the process.

In 1987 a new program was launched within the camping network called "Growth in Excellence." Funded through a national grant from the camping friends at Aid Association for Lutherans, a major five year program that included Board members and camp directors was launched. The program began with a training event for directors and board members held at the YMCA's Snow Mountain Ranch near Granby, Colorado. Experts in the field of planning, organizational structure, and personnel developed a series of tracks which would help camp corporations move toward increased excellence in their organizations. Camp involvement in the American Camping Association was also listed as a high priority, since meeting ACA standards would assist many camps in basic improvements to facility, program, and staff.

Subtle shift in camp programming

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

environment. The age old question of the difference between camp retreating and motel work rose to the forefront again.

It was also as the ALC was drawing to a close when a new phenomena hit the camping scene - day camping. As mentioned previously, day camps had been run successfully in many parts of the country in the past. Oregon camping had pioneered a systematic program when Jerry Olstad served as camp director. But in 1982, something new was happening. As if exploding, nearly every camp corporation in the nation had to develop day camps.

The phenomena can be linked to a number of parish frustrations. Chief among them was the difficulty church leaders had in developing vacation church school. Parents who once taught were often working or unwilling to rearrange busy schedules to conduct VCS programs. Seeking help from camps seemed natural, since the camp offered creative staff, music, and effective programming.

The camps responded by offering day camping in a congregation or a local park. By 1985, participation in day camping had risen past 25,000 children across the nation. Along with this increase in a totally new program came the need for additional staff. Camps began to note great difficulty in locating enough summer personnel to provide the needed services. Demographics showed a decrease in available college age youth - yet in order to conduct day camps, over 250 additional staff members were needed. The inevitable law of supply and demand saw camp staff wages increase dramatically during these years.

The response from the ALC was encouraging. Olstad organized specialized training sessions in various parts of the country. In addition to new director workshops (today offered as "schools" by an Education Committee of the Association of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Professionals), day camp consultations, conference center workshops, and the like were organized. To support staff who had served for many years, yet were important to the well being of camping in the church, Olstad offered career renewal opportunities. Seminars to consider career development were held through challenge trips in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

Global education was also enhanced during this period. A series of familiarization trips for camp director took camping leaders to East Germany, Slovakia and other areas to develop travel programs for adults through outdoor ministries. These were led by Herb Brokering, long time friend of camping. The most successful director to use this program was Pastor Duane Hanson of Bethel Horizons, Dodgeville, WI, whose organization sponsored annual trips with Brokering to develop friendship in Eastern Europe.

An important result of the international experience was the development of a host of foreign young adults who were brought to America by camps to serve as ambassadors of their church and country. This important program of building bridges of understanding continues as of this writing.

Through these efforts many long term directors found renewal and support

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!"

Chronology of Camps Related to the ALC

- 1922 Iowa District Sunday School suggests forming a Bible Camp at Lake Okoboji
- 1924 First camp held at Miller's Bay, Lake Okoboji, Iowa, for training Sunday School teachers (United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)
- 1926 Camping programs at Red Willow Lake, ND
- Incorporation of Lake Okoboji Bible School Association of the Iowa District of the UELC.
- 1927 Camp Colton, Colton, OR
- 1928 Camps held in the Badlands, Medora, ND
- Encampments at Brushy Creek, Round Rock, TX
- 1932 Luther Park, Chetek, WI 5/14/32 (purchased 12/21/31)
- 1933 Lake of the Woods Bible Camp, MN
- 1934 Camp Emmaus, Park Rapids, MN 9/2/34
- 1935 Camping outings on Lake Metigoshe, Bottineau, ND
- 1938 Green Lake Bible Camp, Spicer, MN 7/1/38
- 1939 Red Willow Bible Camp purchased, ND
- Chicago Circuit Luther League Camps, late thirties
- 1942 NeSoDak, South Dakota
- Mission Lake Bible Camp, Hatley, WI 5/1/42 (later called Imago Dei Waypost)

- 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)

- 1951 Christikon, McLeod, MT
- 1952 Camp Knutson, Brainerd, MN (deeded by congressman Harold Knutson as a summer retreat for "neglected, unfortunate, deprived and handicapped children to ALC, deeded to Lutheran Social Service, 1978)
- 1953 Luther Heights Bible Camp, Ketchum, ID (established as a tri-Lutheran camp with ULCA, ALC, and Augustana Synod)
- 1954 Lutherhill, LeGrange, TX
- Camp of the Cross, Garrison, ND (May, 54 purchased, April, 55, incorporated)
- 1955 Camp Indian Sands, Neshkoro, WI
- 1956 Shalom Bible Camp, Grand Forks, ND
- 1957 Wilderness Canoe Base, Grand Marais, MN (part of
Plymouth Christian Youth Center, Minneapolis, MN)
Lutherock, Boone, NC (land donated)
- 1958 Outlaw Ranch, Custer, SD (5/30/58)
- 1959 Camp Vermilion, Cook, MN (2/18/59)
- 1961 EWALU, Strawberry Point, Iowa
- Metigoshe Ministries, Bottineau, ND (early 60's)
- 1962 Koinonia, (Martin Luther Camp Corporation) Highland Lake, NY
- Camp Logos, Pine City, MN (early 60's)
- Shadow Lake Bible Camp, Waupaca, WI
- 1963 Sky Ranch, Fort Collins, CO
- Atlantic Mountain Ranch, Custer, SD

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)

- LOMO of Oregon, Portland, OR (late 60's)
- 1972** Klein Ranch, South Dakota
- Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Association, Seattle, WA
- 1975** St. Olaf Retreat Center, Devils Lake, ND
- Lutheran Association of SW Camping, Round Rock, TX
- Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, Inc., Ashland,
NB (merger of Circle R and Carol Joy Hollings, LCA)
- 1976** Miami Valley Outdoor Ministries, Cincinnati, OH
- 1982** Lutherwood Camping Association of the SW, Las Vegas, NV

Sources

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.

I have cited this taped conversation several times in this book and consider it an historical treasure.

Additional interviews took place with Jerry Manlove, Paul Hansen, Jerry Olstad and many former directors, including Dean Larsen, Arden Norum, Bob Nervig, Dave Davidson, David Brunkow, Dick Sayther, Margie Fielder, Gary Cockrell, Bob Kuehner, Tom von Fischer, Jim Liefeld, Dave Eliassen, and a host more. Those representing Boards and staff included Dave Brown, Ray Johnson and Ray Engh (who has a particularly fine understanding of the importance of Boards in the history of camping and would suggest I may not have given them enough credit).

I have been involved in outdoor ministries since 1966 when I held my first summer camp counselor position at Camp Vermilion. I have since served as the Executive Director of Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, MN and Imago Dei Ministries, Clintonville, WI, now known as Crossways Camping Ministries.

I mention my work in church camping only because I have experienced many of the events of this story in a personal way. As an 18 year old counselor, I was fortunate that my first staff training was under Dick Borrud's leadership. I have used his ideas many times since. Rev. Hamm Muus was my camping mentor during my seminary days and walked by my side as a young intern directing Camp Logos near Pine City, MN. It was a life shaping experience to learn from him.

Jerry Manlove and I have worked closely together more times than I can count. Those who know me understand that our relationship is beyond a working one – we are like family. I have also kept mental notes and written journals of my experiences and may have drawn liberally from my own memories. I simply feel fortunate to have met the key figures in this story in a personal way.

There are limits to oral history. I have little doubt that stories I have heard were embellished. Those whose personalities are more extroverted may also get more space than the faithful servants who worked in the backgrounds.

Nonetheless, when taken as a whole, I believe these sources contribute to a story that has a truth that rises to the forefront. It is my prayer that the *message* of camping's historical roots may somehow be preserved. Though we dare not return, it is sometimes nice to know from where we have come.

Ralph Yernberg, 2003