

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAMP NORLAND AND THE PEOPLE OF
THE NORTHERN ASSOCIATION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.
HOW DID IT ALL COME ABOUT ?

The only explanation is the mysterious and miraculous hand of God, constantly guiding his faithful servants.

The story of Camp Norland situated in Kipling Ont., beside a most beautiful lake named Deer Lake is one of people and the way in which the Lord has seen fit to use them.

Summer of 1961 on a beautiful afternoon, my husband Len and I were sitting inside the old log house, enjoying our daily afternoon coffee break. We heard a car coming in the yard, and in came a fine blond hair, blue eyed good looking young man. His name was Bill Lewis. Bill was Pastor to our Church that summer.

It didn't take him long to let us know the purpose of his coming to see us.

The *Northern Association of Baptist Churches* were now convinced that a fundamental Christian camp for children and youth, where religious instructions on a sound systematic basis, whatever one's own religious views was needed.

It is difficult to ignore the fact of religion, an extremely powerful and important act. God created more than pews, steeples, organs and Sunday mornings. The Christian study of any of the Creator's world, must be coloured by relationship to the Creator.

Our farm centered along this lake called Deer Lake, overlooking many cottages and homes. Deer Lake would be considered a good place for the location on such a camp as mentioned.

Now there were three key people. First Mr. & Mrs. Lewis who came to talk with us, and also Mr. Stade. They were the first to approach us on this matter of a camp site.

Len and I prayed about this land and also for the purpose of a Christian Camp, where divine teaching would be taught, we continued in prayer to God that He would be the one to decide the location for such a camp.

I want to make known that this farm has a history well to be remembered.

Kipling began when some people from Sweden and Norway first arrived to Canada in 1894-96. and settled around the little lake, coming to a new country with little or hardly any means for survival. They were the people who started this community now known as Kipling Ont.

The very first families to arrive were of Baptist Faith. Mr. & Mrs. E. Rosene and Mrs Ingrid Hoglin and son Arvid and daughter Karen, and Mr. & Mrs. Westin.

The owners of this farm were Mr. & Mrs. Hans Thoraldson. Mrs. Thoraldson was daughter to Mr. & Mrs Rosene.

After five years of conducting prayer meetings and Bible study and also a small Sunday School class in the homes, they now believed it to be the time to join in with a Convention Church. On May 26, 1902 such a meeting came to pass.

When Len and I bought the farm from the Rosene's in 1949 after 20 years with no one living in the log house it was a

miracle unbelievable that upstairs, in an old steel trunk we found books, minutes, and also a history written by Mr. H. Thoraldson after 25 years of service of the church. To-day we have records of all proceeding acts of this church then known as *DEER LAKE SCANDINAVIAN BAPTIST CHURCH*.

The roof was leaking very badly and everything was in a mess. This old trunk kept so much of the history of the beginning of time in Kipling. Only God had His divine purpose in keeping and securing all the history found in this trunk.

I have often asked " *Why Lord did you place so much of tremendous value to my finding ?* " It could have all been destroyed by rain or weather as the place was unfit to live in. What comes to my mind is the book of Proverbs in the Bible, Chapter 9 verse 1 King James " *WISDOM HATH BUILDED HER HOUSE. SHE HATH SET UP HER SEVEN PILLARS* " & verse 10 " *THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS UNDERSTANDING.* " Nothing can be removed from me, but that God has had a purpose in keeping this farm for the purpose of proclaiming His divine Love for the advancing of His message of saving grace through Jesus His Son .

Camp Norland is built on *Holy Ground*.

When finally all was settled and completed amongst the churches, and in the first year of operation on their own property, we consider the tremendous move that took place in a few short weeks. The great and nearly impossible financial burden, the many problems with materials and battles of construction. We look at the Camp to-day and realize we are witnessing a living miracle of God. " *IT WAS SAID* " it couldn't be done but by the *Grace and Power* of God upon the leader and their staff members it has been done.

How well I recall the first years of camping. To most of the adult staff it was just an existence. The men built platforms and army tents were put up on the field which housed the campers and councilors. Every night it poured rain in buckets. The rain leaked through the holes of the tents, and the women tried to mend some and we dried them in front of fire places and kitchen stoves.

The kitchen was the only room with a finished roof on. It rained so hard that my husband Len went to Ontario Hydro in Warren and asked for some tarpaulins, so that we could have a roof over our dining table. This worked out very well and the children enjoyed themselves. Nothing seemed to spoil their fun. This was in July & Aug. I remember hearing some saying " *Should we continue the camp or close down the entire operation ?* " Some were concerned about the parents' reaction to the safety of their children.

To-day looking back at it, I'm convinced that if we had yielded to temptation and closed down, admitting defeat we might never have been able to get the camp operating again. After much prayer they all felt that God called the camp into existence and it was our duty to continue, and continue it did.

Even tho the first years, we were really roughing it, it was also a time of great blessing and spiritual victory.

It was interesting to see the interest of the churches who had faith in the operation of a Christian Children's camp.

There were some who opposed to the operation, but majority always wins.

The material for the building came from Elliot Lake. The night it arrived it had to be unloaded and the floats must be returned back to Elliot Lake before morning, if not it would cost another day. My husband Len spent all night with his tractor hauling the logs from the main road into the camp site. Not knowing what was going on, I just took and lit my old coal oil lantern to venture out in the dark to see what was happening, however I found him and all was well with the help of a few men. There was no electricity on the farm at that time.

The men and the women all worked very hard. In the spring when mosquitos and black flies were becoming a nuisance in the bush, work was begun.

The enthusiasm and support for this camp increased with evidence of progress. Everyone got involved in the building of the camp. It was overwhelming to see so many men giving their spare time to work so hard every weekend, and when opportunity came to them they would take off to Kipling to donate labour and continue work on the camp.

All was done by the Churches, the people, the friends and neighbours of the Northern Association.

At this time I must make mention of one special person to Len and myself, Judson Stade. To us he was a saint of the Lord, also his wife Joy. From the beginning of the camp site, till he left we were very close friends. It was a delight to fellowship with him. I cannot remember that at any time there would be anything said between us that would in anyway disharmonize our friendship.

To all the dear ones that God has taken from us we must not forget their courageous ambitious humble hard work toward Camp Norland. They were of the key people of this camp operation's development.

Many changes have taken place here at Camp Norland since 1962. We are very lucky to live in this country our Canada.

We should be thankful to those who challenge themselves to be a part of God's works.

The eleven summers I was involved with the camp I saw the need and what it meant to give guidance to girls and boys of all ages. Could God work as well at the new camp location as He has before at the other place? Could God do it again?

Although the total number of spiritual decisions will never be completely known on this side of Eternity, but looking ahead exciting things we believe He is going to do in the years before us as Jesus carries His Coming.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY
GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE.
GOD BLESS CAMP NORLAND

HILDER ACKERLAND

P.S.

My apologies to those whose feelings may be hurt from either being included or excluded in this writing. There are always both the guilty and the innocent who are affected in a writing of this nature. However I cannot vouch for the one hundred per cent accuracy.

There were many people from all the churches in the Northern Association I did not know. Very few ever came to visit with us in our church.

Having said this I cannot speak for anyone else but myself. I was pleased to have a part in the involvement to the procedure of what was to plan for a camp site.

My remembrance of the first campings are very dear to me, and the memory of everyone who was at the first opening day of camp.

Finally a special tribute to those pioneering days of 1962.

SOME OF THE MEN WHO FIRST WORKED AT BEGINNING CAMP NORLAND

*Rev. J. Stade
Mr. Earl Cartwright
Mr. Louis Squirrel*

*Mr. Cameron Alexander
Mr. Charles Schrum
Mr. Nils Johnson*

This was read by Hilder Ackerland at the 100th Anniversary of the Northern Association of Baptist Churches at Camp Norland September 12, 1992.

CAMP NORLAND UPDATE

Camp Norland is located on Deer Lake, half way between North Bay and Sudbury. It began in 1962 as an outreach ministry of the *Northern Association of Baptist Churches (B.C.O.Q.)*. Since that humble beginning, it has become the premier summer destination of hundreds of young people and adults.

Nestled amid the pines on seventeen acres of lake front property, the Camp has access to some of the most beautiful scenery in Northern Ontario. The nearby woods, lakes and streams provide homes for all kinds of aquatic and woodland creatures and plant life.

Activities at Camp Norland are designed to develop a young person's mental, physical and spiritual dimensions. Its natural setting affords an excellent opportunity for people to experience the wonders of God's creation. Daily Bible studies conducted by professional and lay leaders help campers to gain a better understanding of God, themselves and the world around them.

Camp Norland's primary purpose is to bring people into a closer relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore every member of the Camp's ministry team, ranging from the custodial staff to the spiritual director, is expected to hold to Christian beliefs, doctrines and values. Whether volunteer or paid, everyone is dedicated to glorifying Jesus Christ at Camp Norland. Consequently the Camp has some of the most committed young people that a person might ever want to meet.

At present the Camp is engaged in *Summer Camping Ministry*. However since 1988 it has been upgrading its facilities to include a year round Retreat Centre. When completed, the Centre will consist of an 18,000 square foot, three level self-contained winterized building. On the top floor will be a large open dining room that will seat 150 people comfortably. On the main floor will be 22 bedrooms that will provide overnight accommodations for 60 guests. The rooms suitable for meetings and recreational activities. It is anticipated that the Centre will be operational by July 1994.

In April 1992 Camp Norland became incorporated and now operates under the name "*CAMP NORLAND CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES*."