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A ZIPLINE THROUGH A SANCTUARY Confirmation Camp at Lutherlyn

Butler, Pennsylvania | Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

BY *Jacob Sorenson*

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

In addition to a national survey, researchers from The Confirmation Project visited congregations, using the research method of Portraiture to understand how confirmation and equivalent practices are practiced in congregations. Portraiture is a method of inquiry that shares some of the features of other qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, case study, and narrative, but it is distinctive in its blending of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life. Portraiture first came to prominence in the works of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot. This Portrait is one from a gallery that can be found at www.theconfirmationproject.com/gallery.

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ABOUT THE CONFIRMATION PROJECT

The Confirmation Project seeks to learn the extent to which confirmation and equivalent practices in five Protestant denominations in North America are effective for strengthening discipleship in youth. These denominations include the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church in the USA, and the United Methodist Church. It seeks to provide Christian leaders with examples of good practice and with strategies that are effective in helping young Christians grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Strengthening discipleship includes nurturing faith in Jesus Christ and facilitating youth encounters with Christian traditions (Scripture, creeds, confessions, and practices) to support lifelong Christian vocation. This project is funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. and housed at Princeton Theological Seminary.

A ZIPLINE THROUGH A SANCTUARY -----

I was on my third (and last) pair of footwear. It had rained every day so far, and the rain would continue off and on all week. Everything was wet. I was in sandals this time. They dry quickly and are easy to hose off. A thunderstorm knocked the power out on the first night. Another had rolled through the previous night, and a light rain persisted most of the morning. Now, however, the rain had mercifully given way to some rays of afternoon sun, which were shining in diagonal beams through the tree canopy.

I looked around. The benches were vacant, but the amphitheater could easily seat a couple hundred people. It was set into a hillside, and a creek was babbling happily nearby. The sunbeams shone on the stone altar and the rough-cut wooden cross at the front of the worship area. The whole camp community would gather here for closing worship on Friday, the last day of camp. The place would be filled with singing, laughter, and sacred words passed down through the ages of Christian history. Now it was quiet and peaceful. The campers were scattered in small groups across the 660 acres of Camp Lutherlyn, engaged in afternoon activities with exotic-sounding names like zip lining, gaga ball, and mud whomping. But the amphitheater was tucked away amongst the trees. It was a place set apart. It was...



Lutherlyn Amphitheater

“Holy,” the 8th grade girl had replied. I had asked her to describe the camp experience in one word or phrase. Her answer came to my mind as I sat in that place of worship. What makes camp holy? I looked around at the beautiful sanctuary and took in the surroundings. It was peaceful and still. Then a loud voice from behind the trees to my right interrupted the stillness: “ALL CLEAR?” An answering shout came from far to my left: “ALL CLEAR!” Then came a distinct “Woo-hoo!” followed

by a progressively louder *z-z-zz-zz-zzz-Z-ZZ-ZZZ-ZZZZ*. The zip line passed right behind the altar, and I saw the young lady fly by the rough-cut cross. I smiled. Here was the holiness of Lutherlyn.

Camp Lutherlyn is a place where a zip line has an important pedagogical purpose, and every waking hour contributes to the educational environment. For most participants, the experience is relatively brief and intense. Some only go once, but there are those who want to go again and again. It is also a sanctuary, a place that is set apart, holy, and safe. However, it is a different type of sanctuary than those to which most participants are accustomed, so it helps people rethink the very definitions of words like *sanctuary*, *worship*, and *holy*. It is a place of intentional Christian community, where people are encouraged and supported through challenges, like a zip line that has belayers, community encouragement, and people waiting with a ladder on the far end of the line. It is a place of fun, adventure, and new experiences. It is a place where it is safe to doubt, question, and be scared. It is a place of inclusion and encouragement for those who have been outsiders. Maybe it can be summed up in the words that Lutherlyn uses: “Lifechanging adventures in faith.” Maybe it is more descriptive to think of it as a *zipline through a sanctuary*. But summing it up in one word goes back to the eighth grade participant’s response: HOLY.

CONTEXT: A PLACE APART-----

Camp Lutherlyn is nestled in the forested hills of Western Pennsylvania, at the intersection of East and Midwest, with a dash of Appalachia. It is a short one-hour drive north from the outskirts of Pittsburgh, but the urban sprawl quickly gives way to small towns and farmland. The drive to camp follows the heavy traffic of Interstate 79 to the meandering path of Highway 422, down a small township road with no shoulder, and finally onto a mile long narrow driveway labeled “Lutherlyn Lane.” The entrance itself feels like a journey into a new world. The forest presses in warmly on each side, the trees forming a canopy in places. Long before the buildings and playing fields come into view, the outside world has disappeared from the

rearview mirror behind a bend in the drive. “It feels like another world,” one female camper said. Others described it as a “getaway,” an “escape,” and especially as a place of safety. “Safe to, like, be yourself,” a summer staff member elaborated. “It allows you to be who you are.”

Camp Lutherlyn falls under the jurisdiction and ownership of the Northwest and Southwest Pennsylvania synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). These synods encompass twenty-two counties in Western Pennsylvania with a combined population of about 3.5 million, more than half in the Pittsburgh Metro. The synods serve a combined 256 congregations, with baptized membership of about 88 thousand.¹ The area is overwhelmingly white, reflecting the troubled racial history of Western Pennsylvania. The Lutherlyn property boasts an archaeological site that has produced stone tools dating back 10,000 years, trees planted by a Revolutionary War veteran, and an abandoned coal mine left from the era that made the so-called *Rust Belt* the heart of American industry. All of these sites are incorporated into Lutherlyn’s extensive educational programs.

Lutherlyn was founded in 1948 during a rising tide of industry and religiosity in the area, when church attendance was soaring and Christian summer camps were springing up across the nation. A series of church mergers, culminating in the 1988 formation of the ELCA, helped the camp continue to expand, both in terms of property and clientele. However, the camp has seen a sharp decline in camper participation in the past fifteen years, from around 1700 summer campers in 2001 to around 1000 in 2015. This decline can be attributed to multiple factors. Western Pennsylvania is a declining area, with people (particularly men) moving elsewhere to find jobs. The two synods have also declined dramatically, losing 34 congregations and 16% of baptized membership since the 2009 ELCA vote allowing congregations to ordain openly gay clergy members. There is also evidence that congregations and synodical bodies are intentionally reducing support of camping ministries. One synod’s annual financial support of the camp has remained steady,

¹ ELCA Research and Evaluation, “Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod Demographic Snapshot” and “Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Demographic Snapshot” (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2012) Retrieved August 2015: <http://www.elca.org/en/Resources/Research-and-Evaluation>.

but the other has reduced funding from \$65,000 to \$5,000 in recent years. Leadership staff members indicate that increasing numbers of congregational leaders, particularly pastors, are indifferent to the camp's existence and do not even come for free events designed for them. Pastors present at camp, while themselves overtly supportive, confirmed that many of their colleagues are indifferent or antagonistic to Lutherlyn's existence. The financial strain on the camp is evident in its buildings, several of which display signs of deferred maintenance. However, there are also new construction projects underway. The camp long operated as predominantly a summer camp that was, in the director's words, "a part of the church culture" in the synods, but the story is much more complex in 2015.

LUTHERLYN IN 2015: A CULTURE OF EDUCATION -----

The camp remains a ministry of the synods, and summer camp remains an integral part of the camp programming, but the ministries have expanded considerably in their reach. The short summer camp season (two weeks of staff training followed by seven weeks with campers) accounts for almost half of the total operating income, but the remaining ten months of the year are filled with programming, as well. Retreat groups of all kinds come for day events and overnight retreats. The ropes challenge course and horse stables are operated year-round. The largest of the non-summer programs is the Lutherlyn Environmental Education Program (LEEP), which offers a wide variety of educational programming to teachers, scouts, and school groups. The program serves more than 3,000 people annually, and it accounts for nearly a sixth of operating income. The Terra Dei Homestead is an educational center focused on sustainable living, complete with garden, composting, native prairie, solar panels, and more. The Woodland Center for Arts and Crafts is the newest addition to the year-round education ministries of Lutherlyn, and it brings in people of all ages for pottery, blacksmithing, and fiber arts. Some retreat ministries serve to bring summer campers back to camp, and others bring adult groups or intergenerational groups from area churches. The majority of the camp programming directly serves and compliments the ministries of its constituent

congregations, and a significant minority of programs reach out to people beyond the Lutheran church, with an emphasis on education.

Summer camp itself is made up of a myriad of programs. The director notes that one thing that sets Lutherlyn apart from other camps is its diversity of program offerings. It is a tremendously complex operation run by ten full-time staff, many part-time or seasonal staff, and more than sixty college-age staff members hired solely for summer camp programs. The majority of residential summer programs last for one week, with campers arriving on Sunday and leaving on Friday or Saturday. Programs are co-educational, and campers stay in cabins for the week in groups of six-to-ten campers of the same gender and approximate age. One college-age staff member serves as the *cabin counselor*. Cabins are furnished with bunk beds and have indoor bathrooms, complete with showers. Each program typically has several cabin groups, and there are often several programs operating in a given week. A typical day begins and ends with Christian devotional activities, known as *morning watch* and *candle power*. The day's activities vary according to the program specialty, but most campers participate in low ropes challenge course, high ropes course, swimming in the pool, aquatic activities at the pond, hiking, archery, and games. Each group has Bible study every day, which is typically done in the cabin group and led by the cabin counselor. The end of each day brings a large-group activity, followed by a worship service and campfire.

The philosophy of the summer camp programs centers on education. The director emphasized that participants are encouraged to “think theologically.” He lists several things that make camp a unique educational environment, among them the intentional community living that values cooperation over competition, person-to-person interaction that fosters empathy, the outdoor environment, and an emphasis on leadership development. He described camp as “the last safe place to play outside,” emphasizing the importance of spontaneous play that is becoming less frequent in a society of protective parenting and structured institutional environments. He characterized the learning environment of Lutherlyn in terms of

Thomas Groome's *shared Christian praxis model* of education.² Highly structured activities are intentionally limited, and campers are invited into the process of learning through active questioning, self-directed activities, and shared leadership. The summer staff manual summarizes the small group camping philosophy of Lutherlyn:

Small group camping means living together in a micro-community. It provides an environment for forming rich – even intense – personal relationships. Learning and relationship building occurs as the group involves itself in building skills, studying, exploring, working, worshiping, eating, sleeping, and playing together. The group takes the initiative for its own programming and planning. The leader is a member of the group.³

The director wrote a catechism designed for use in some of Lutherlyn's confirmation programs. In the introduction, he writes, "Our faith is not a package deal for you to learn and that's it. It is a journey...and a wrestling match."⁴ Lutherlyn campers are encouraged to wrestle with their ideas about God, and mentors are present to accompany them on their journey.

CONFIRMATION CAMP -----

As I sat, wet and muddy, in the amphitheater of Camp Lutherlyn and watched the camper zip past, it was the first week of summer camp. Among the 100 or so campers at camp that week were 64 confirmation students from 10 different Lutheran churches, along with their pastors. These churches were divided into two different groups that operated entirely independently of one another, though curricular content was very similar. Both were structured around the parts of Luther's Small Catechism (the Ten Commandments, Apostle's Creed, Lord's Prayer, Sacraments), along with other topics such as worship, Lutheran heritage, and human sexuality, though neither program used a set curriculum. Campers spent three-to-four hours each day with the pastors in confirmation lessons, and the rest

² See Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

³ "2015 Summer Staff Manual" (Camp Lutherlyn, 2015), p. 16.

⁴ Randal K. Gullickson, *Life: God's Great Experiment* (Randal K. Gullickson, 2008), 1.

of the day was spent with Lutherlyn staff members in various activities. The result was a hybrid version of the typical Lutherlyn experience.

Both camps operate on a three-year cycle with students who have completed seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Most students attend all three years. All of the ten congregations operate a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly confirmation class throughout the year in addition to confirmation camp. Camp attendance is “*strongly* encouraged,” as one camper said with a laugh. Some of the students were there because pastors or parents compelled them to come, but most were excited to be at camp. Camper surveys and focus groups indicated that there was high motivation to attend camp in order to learn more about God and progress towards confirmation. The majority of the young people seemed genuinely interested in learning more about the Christian faith, and the camp experience was a highly valued piece of their Christian education. Teaching styles varied widely among the pastors, and camper surveys indicated a higher level of satisfaction with lessons that tended to be more interactive than didactic.

The participating pastors were highly invested in the camp form. They slept on bunk beds all week and worked to juggle congregational ministry concerns with teaching in the intense environment of camp. Two had to leave for a time because of ministry needs, and another was planning a funeral over the phone. The commitment required is worth it to the pastors. “They can come away from their comfort zones and experience new things,” one pastor said. Pastors enumerated the ministry benefits of camp in relational terms more than curricular concerns. They highlighted the value of deepening relationships with their confirmation students, along with their students building relationships with peers and other Christian mentors.

Confirmation Camp: The Sanctuary

There are many sacred places at Lutherlyn, but camp itself becomes a sanctuary to many of the participants. One reason is that there is simply more time devoted to God at camp. The entire day is structured with prayer, community worship, and

Bible study. Asked the difference between camp and home, one camper said with a chuckle, “Well, I usually only go to church on Sundays, but now I’m doing church stuff every morning.” In addition to increased frequency, sanctuaries are *different* at camp, and the zipline is only part of the story. Campers worship in outdoor chapels, around the campfire, and sitting in the



Chapel Hill, one of Lutherlyn’s outdoor worship spaces

wet grass under large tree canopies. They participate in Christian faith and practices in ways that they have not encountered. It was important to the campers that the prayers, faith activities, and worship services were geared towards their age group rather than towards adults. Some of the campers said that they first prayed out loud at camp, and they acknowledged the importance of speaking their faith. “It kind of makes you come out of your comfort zone and actually admit to yourself that you believe in God. And, like, saying it out loud helps what you believe,” one male camper said. One cabin group made it a goal for every one of them to pray out loud.

97% of participants (all but two individuals) indicated on the survey they “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I learned more about God,” and 88% indicated, “I was strengthened in my faith.” One camper in a focus group said that he had not wanted to come to camp and did not particularly believe in God, but his parents wanted him to get confirmed. In three short days, he had gone from unbelief to believing in God, and he was actually excited to learn more. “I got my faith back,” he said. A tenth grade girl in her third year of confirmation camp described her renewed interest in faith. She said that she always believed in a God “out there,” but she was finally getting to understand this “Jesus thing”: that God is relatable and accessible.

Seventeen survey items related to faith and Christian engagement were measured on the first day and the last day of camp. The average score increased on every single item, and the increase was statistically significant on four items:

- 1 | “It is important for me to belong to my church/congregation.”
- 2 | “I have important things to offer the church and world.”
- 3 | “Scripture is the Word of God.”
- 4 | “When I grow up, I plan to participate in the life of a church.”

It is instructive to note that three of the four items showing the most significant growth are related to participation in Christian community, suggesting that the *Confirmation Camp* experience at Lutherlyn nurtures engagement in congregational ministries. Campers left camp with an increased desire to participate in the life of a church, and they believed that they had something to offer the church and the world.

Confirmation Camp: Spotters Ready?

“Spotters ready?” Campers say this over and over at camp, as they prepare for trust falls or climb onto challenge elements. Their fellow campers are ready to literally catch them when they fall. “It really, like, built your trust in people,” one said of the campers about the ropes course. This trust and mutual care for one another carries over into all aspects of camp life. The faith formation and Christian education observed at Lutherlyn took place in the context of what staff members and participants described as *intentional Christian community*. It is *intentional* because community-building is a top priority and stated goal of camp leadership and summer staff members. It is *Christian* because it is framed by faith practices and overt Christian teachings. It is *community* because that is what participants said it was; that is how it *felt* to them. “We’ve only



Group Challenge Course - The Wall

known each other for a couple days, but I feel like we're family," one boy said, as his cabin mates nodded in agreement.

The themes of community are intimately connected to the themes of sanctity. The community at camp allowed campers the freedom to be authentic, to *be themselves*, in ways that they perceived were not possible back home. "Everyone around you, they accept you for who you are," one girl said. One boy said, "Back at home it's different because, like, here you don't have to be someone else. Like, if you're praying here, no one's gonna really judge you about it." The staff members spoke of the *Elijah Chair*, a metaphor they use to emphasize that there is always an open chair, always a place for someone in the community. "Camp showed me the love that I didn't get at home," one counselor said. Another counselor shared that he had been excluded and ridiculed at school, but he was accepted and encouraged as a camper at Lutherlyn. He became a counselor to give back to the place that transformed his life. "If I can make a difference in the life of one kid, it will all be worth it."

Freedom from technology and the ability to ask questions were two key themes that contributed to the campers' feelings of community and inclusion. Encouraging questions is part of the *shared Christian praxis* model described by the camp director, and it is woven into the fabric of Lutherlyn. "Here, there's never a stupid question," one girl said. The campers felt comfortable asking questions in formal and informal settings. Two tenth grade boys, who appeared largely disengaged from a didactic lesson that a pastor taught earlier in the day, approached the same pastor and asked him how *he* came to believe. He shared his faith story with them, an experience that had an affect on both the campers and the pastor. One girl explicitly said her faith had grown stronger at camp because she was not afraid to ask questions. On the survey, 93% of the campers indicated that they "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement, "My questions concerning faith were taken seriously." The campers admitted that if they were home, they would probably be indoors interacting with some electronic gadget rather than playing in the rain and mud. Surprisingly, they descried their distance from cell phones and video games as

“being free” from them. “I am happier without them,” one boy said. “Being gone from technology kind of clears your brain,” a girl said. Being free from technology opened the campers to face-to-face interactions that contributed to the feelings of authenticity and intimacy in the camp environment, making the campers feel more included and more comfortable engaging in faith discussions.

Confirmation Camp: The Zip Line

A zip line can be frightening, uncomfortable, and scary, but it is also exhilarating, fun, and safe. The interactive nature of camp is designed to be fun, but it is also designed to be challenging and to create learning opportunities out of uncomfortable moments. Certainly, there are people who have negative experiences at camp, but the camp leaders strive to make it a fun environment, and most participants gravitate immediately to this theme when they are asked to describe camp. 95% of the survey respondents “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I had a lot of fun.” “Fun,” “amazing,” “awesome,” and “exciting” were common ways to describe camp in the focus groups. When elaborating on what makes camp fun, the most common answers had to do with the games and activities. The zip line was, in fact, one of the most common answers. The Lutherlyn campers also seemed particularly taken with *gaga ball*, an increasingly common camp game that has similarities to dodge ball. They also loved the outdoor activities at camp, even in the consistent rain. Campers took the opportunity to make spectacular splashes in mud puddles and slide on their butts across wet playing fields. The weather provided perfect conditions for *mud-whomping*, a Lutherlyn favorite that involves sliding, rolling, and slithering in particularly greasy mud.

It was clear that all of the activities, from *mud-whomping* to the zip line, served the educational purposes of the camp. They were used to foster community and to illustrate faith concepts. One camper said that “Getting over the ten-foot wall” was the most challenging part of camp, “Cause I was scared to do it, but I actually did it.” Doing new things and accomplishing difficult tasks helped the campers build self-confidence, giving them the assurance to do things like ask difficult questions of their pastors or counselors.

For some, the fun activities are gateways to faith formation. One counselor described his experience as a camper in the *Rocketry Camp* program. He described how he always tried to get out of church services at home and had very little interest in faith, but he did not mind worship at camp. He described a progression in his faith as a result of his camp experiences, going from “I’m in it for the rockets and I’m okay with the church stuff” to “I’m in it for the rockets *and* the church stuff” to “I’m in it for the church stuff, and the rockets are cool, too.” It is clear that the camp experience functions differently for different people, but it is also clear that the whole process functions together: the zip line, the sanctuary, and the supportive community that belays, encourages, and ensures a clear path.

DISSONANCE AND DANGLING ON THE LINE -----

The pastors present at *Confirmation Camp* acknowledged that not all of their pastoral colleagues were camp supporters, and some openly questioned the value of camping ministries. One local pastor, who was not present at camp but agreed to be part of the study after a chance encounter, suggested that the camp model has outlived its usefulness. The pastor admitted to never setting foot on Lutherlyn property but critiqued the camp programs based on names like *Rocketry Camp* and *Horse Camp* (“they have no mention of God”), asserting that after returning home campers talk more about model rockets than about faith. I smiled as I recalled the counselor who had a faith-shaping experience in *Rocketry Camp*, but I also noticed the deep disconnect. Some congregational leaders believe deeply in the value of the camp model, while others do not even value it enough to visit the property. They may share the preconceived notion that camp is heavy on fun and games but light on faith formation and Christian education, a critique that is clearly unfounded in the case of Lutherlyn, specifically the *Confirmation Camp* programs.

A better critique is that the camp model might function in isolation from a supportive community. Those who have experienced a camp zip line know that when the ride is over, the rider simply dangles in place by the harness until someone gets a ladder to help them down. A clear strength of *Confirmation Camp* at

Lutherlyn is that the campers are experiencing camp with mentors from their home congregations, which may better facilitate the processing of the camp experience. Some campers directly contrasted their camp experience with their home and congregation. This evidence for discontinuity between camp and congregation is concerning, though the evidence for continuity and the intention of continued engagement is much stronger in the camper interview data. The increased camper desire to engage in Christian community, shown in the survey data, is also encouraging. The clearest evidence for dangling at the end of the zip line came from the summer staff members, several of whom described their faith journey almost exclusively in terms of the camp experience. One baldly acknowledged that she has no faith away from camp and that she was frightened for when she had to leave. Other staff members described engagement in Christian communities and faith practices outside of the camp environment. The perception of finding faith solely at camp seems to be a minority experience, but it is still instructive for camping ministry practitioners and partners. A transformative or *life-changing* camp experience does not take place in isolation but rather as part of a larger ecology of faith formation. Ministry professionals must attend to the care of young people before, during, and especially after the intensity of the camp experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS -----

Christian education at Lutherlyn has significant implications for confirmation and equivalent practices in other settings. The *Confirmation Camp* program is an exemplary partnership between the camps and the congregations that can be replicated in other settings. The model has clear benefits in fostering deep faith discussions and facilitating significant self-reflection, both of which are goals of many catechetical programs. Significant factors of the educational model include: fun, intentional community, separation from the home environment, interactive learning, building trust, and freedom to ask questions. Christian education models outside of the camp environment could work to incorporate trust building and community building activities into their curricula, even if it means sacrificing content. Being part of a trusted community and feeling safe to be oneself may be

valued so highly that failure to attend to these concerns will mean failure of other educational goals.

The brevity of the camp experience is also instructive for the wider church. Tremendous growth potential is evident in the camp experience, but there is evidence that this growth either fades over time or is not applicable outside of the camp context. The ongoing ministry of the *Confirmation Camp* pastors after the conclusion of the camp experience is one answer to this problem, likened to providing a ladder for the participant at the end of a zip line. Some may argue that it is better not to put the child on the zip line in the first place. However, confirmation programs are like camp in their relative brevity, and a major critique is that many recent confirmands disengage from church activities immediately after completing the programs. A clear strength of *Confirmation Camp* at Lutherlyn is that at the conclusion of the experience, most participants are excited about their faith and are *more inclined* to participate in the life of a congregation than they were before camp. They are, in effect, crying out for a ladder. Their first inclination may be to walk straight back to the climbing pole and request one more ride, but there are long interims between trips to camp or a zip line, and these provide opportunities for faith mentors to engage participants.

On my last morning at Lutherlyn, I walked past a counselor with his head in his hands. I asked what was wrong, and he grumbled that he stayed up late. His campers had begun discussing what Hell was like and how come God punishes children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations. They were second year campers, which meant that they were studying the Apostle's Creed in some of their classes, evidently fascinated with the phrase, "He descended into Hell." They were up until 12:30 in the morning talking about the love of Christ and the differences between the Old and New Testaments. There were probably some heresies floated around that would make a Lutheran pastor cringe, but it was a safe place for the campers to ask their questions and wrestle with their beliefs. The great possibility (and likelihood?) is that the conversation did not stop with lights out or even the last goodbye of camp. Participants may continue the conversation with

each other over social media, with their pastor, who shared in the camp experience with them, and, God willing, with many other Christians for a lifetime to come.