



## **ORGANISATIONAL HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CAMPING INTERNATIONAL**

Christian Camping International traces its beginnings to a meeting of 13 camp/conference centre directors at Mount Hermon Conference Centre in California in November 1950. They were called together by Dr. Fulton Lytle, the host, and Dr. Walter Warkentin and Graham Tinning to discuss mutual concerns for Christ-centred camping.

More than one of these men had been struggling with intense enough problems in his camping ministry to be thinking about leaving that ministry and this time together helped to identify common problems. Through mutual sharing of solutions, frequent periods of prayer, and Bible study, these men found enough help and encouragement to sustain them in their ministries.

In 1951 at Hume Lake, California, because of increased interest, an organisation was formed called the Western Conference and Camp Association.

At the same time, other fellowships of camp leaders were forming in the U.S. and Canada, the oldest being an Eastern U.S. group called the Association of Bible Conferences and Camps initiated by Gordon Purdy. Gordon Purdy, who had taken on the full responsibility of a camping ministry after his predecessor's death, invited camp and conference centre directors to meet at his Park-of-the-Palms centre in Florida to also share mutual concerns. Representatives from 29 camp and conference centres attended this first meeting. This organisation met in Florida in February each year and also in New York several years in conjunction with the National Hotel Show.

The Western Conference and Camp Association (WCCA) grew to be the largest, with a bimonthly magazine, *Camp Life*, reaching 5,000 readers, an annual year book of *Christian Camping*, and membership representing 64 denominations in many parts of the U.S. and Canada plus Guatemala, Australia and Japan. In 1958, Graham Tinning left the directorship of Forest Home Conference Centre and became the first executive secretary of WCCA.

Since there were other camping organisations in existence at that time, the executive committee of WCCA felt it necessary to participate in the conventions of these other camping organisations if money was available. This decision to aggressively interact with other camping associations proved wise and led to several mergers out of which came CCI.

The first international conference of CCI took place at George Williams College, Lake Geneva Campus in Williams Bay, Wisconsin in March of 1963 and drew 524 delegates. In 1964, the foundation for the future Japan Christian Camping Association was laid through an all Japan Christian camping conference sponsored by Matsubarako Bible Camp through the efforts of John Schone. In 1966, the Central American Region of CCI was launched in Guatemala with the formal installation of its officers by Bill Gwinn representing CCI.

By 1968, through the tireless efforts of CCI executive director, Graham Tinning, and a visionary Board of Trustees along with enthusiastic volunteer leaders, CCI had grown into five regions in the United States, Canada, Central America, and Japan.

After Graham's death in 1968, Ed Oulund was chosen by the CCI Board of Trustees to become the executive director of this rapidly growing international association that had no official headquarters site. Through the generosity of Homer and Alice Dickson of Yorkville, Illinois, a 108 acre mostly wooded site on the lower Fox River was given to CCI for the establishment of its international headquarters and a day camp ministry to the local communities that would provide opportunity for CCI members to study camping innovations through this model camp. An attractive headquarters office for member services and education was constructed through the tremendous efforts of Ed Oulund and dedicated on April of 1973. A model day camp was initiated in the summer of 1976.

With CCI continuing to grow internationally, the Trustees continued to struggle with how to develop a truly international organisation that respected varying cultures and traditions and national leaders as equals. The new element that emerged in the restructuring of CCI along national association lines in 1973 was called the division. Each division was given the authority to develop their own internal organisational structure under broad guidelines required for membership in CCI as set forth by the International Board of Trustees. The recognised divisions of CCI as indicated in the 1973 organisational chart were Central America-Columbia, Canada, United States, and Japan-Orient.

In July of 1974, the Australian Division was formed at a meeting of camp leaders at Mill Valley Ranch through the efforts of Arthur and Bonnie Bartlett with 200 names on the first mailing list and the first conference held at Mill Valley Ranch in August of 1975. New Zealand had its organisational beginnings at a meeting in 1976 at Kiwi Ranch in Rotorua.

To foster spiritual fellowship, sharing, mutual stewardship, and the development common strategy and vision for CCI worldwide, an International Coordinating Committee (ICC) was established by the Board of Trustees that consisted of the presidents of each national/regional association and three members of the Board of Trustees. Howard Skinner was appointed as chairman of the ICC and coordinated this work. The ICC met for the first time in Banff in October 1977 and unanimously agreed on a yearly contribution of 20% of membership fees collected each year to be used for the international ministry expenses. This was lowered to 15% at the French Lick ICC meeting in 1979.

To be consistent with the new organisation structure, the United States became a separately operated division with a complete set of officers in 1977 but still functioned legally under the CCI incorporation in California. After receiving reports on each of the then existent divisions, the following divisions were recognised as having achieved full divisional status through Board of Trustee action in 1978: Australia, Canada, Far East, Latin America, New Zealand, and United States. One of the main requirements was that each division had their own by-laws and was registered in their own country.

In 1979, Southern Africa and Japan were recognised as divisions and Taiwan was approved pending receipt of materials. The Korean division was recognised as separate from the other Far East divisions but not approved as a division until November 1982 when all required materials were complete. The 1979 ICC Annual Report stated that "a 'missionary vision concept' should be the underlying principle of ICC' [and] a 'working partnership' and 'unselfish sharing' should be the basis of our interaction" (p.5).

During this time, Ed Oulund was wearing both hats as International Executive Director of CCI and U.S. Executive Director. The international work was somewhat shifted to the ICC in 1977, and, upon Ed's retirement in 1979, the international work was done entirely done by the ICC and subsequent committees. When John Pearson assumed the role of executive director of CCI/USA he moved the U.S. office to Wheaton, Illinois to be closer to better support services, other evangelical organizations, and potential donors. The CCI property was then modified under a joint effort with Metro Chicago YFC and CCI Trustees to provide residential camping on site to continue to fulfil one of the two reasons that the property was given by the Dicksons -- that of providing a camping ministry to local people. A 30 year lease was entered into with YFC with the income from this lease, as determined by an international committee; to be split 65% to CCI/USA and 35% to the international ministry.

When the representatives of the international associations met biennially, they felt that they were struggling too much with the business side of the ICC responsibilities rather than spending time in fellowship and sharing resources to help them in developing their associations. To accommodate this need, the international structure was slightly modified and renamed Christian Camping International Fellowship (CCIF) in 1981. John Shackelford was appointed administrator of the CCIF with Vince Craven acting as chairman and Lee Kingsley as treasurer and this three person committee assumed most of the administrative duties of coordinating the international work of CCI.

In February 1985 after receipt of the necessary documents, Brazil was declared a division of CCI. John Shackelford indicated his desire to retire from the role of international administrator of CCIF, it was felt that a full-time international coordinator be obtained for this position. There was again ambiguity among the international representatives to the biennial meetings as to how much international coordination and international business they desired to do. To provide time to consider the organisational needs of CCI and obtain the proper person to fulfil the role of international coordinator, Ed

Oulund was asked to assume a one-year role as coordinator of area advisers and field representatives for 1984.

The areas and representatives were: Bob Sabean, Latin America; Brad Stenberg, Southern Hemisphere; Bob McDowell, North America; John Schone, Far East. In 1985, the Trustees selected Brad Stenberg, who had excellent experience in cross-cultural ministry through his involvement with the South African CCI Division, for the role of international coordinator of CCI.

The first Asia Pacific Conference was held in Taiwan in March 1985 and attended by 170 delegates from fifteen countries. It was organised under the leadership of John Schone who was instrumental in founding camping associations in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. At the Divisional Leader's Retreat in Taiwan, a proposal was drafted to provide more opportunity for the divisional leaders to participate in the decision-making process of CCI. Bob Kraning, David Loewen, and Dinho Pereira were elected by the delegates to the Divisional Leader's Retreat to present this proposal to the Board of Trustees at their October 1985 meeting at Mount Hermon.

The trustees moved "to enthusiastically adopt the proposal submitted by the divisional leaders which provides the basic outline of a new structure for the international ministry of CCI" (Minutes of the Board of trustees, October 1985, p.1) and immediately put the three delegates to work with three trustees and Brad Stenberg to put life to this new proposal. These seven men met during the same time as the trustee meetings at Mount Hermon and became an interim committee to finalise the new organisational structure and present it to the divisional leaders at the divisional leaders meeting in October 1986 in Vancouver, Canada. At their meeting at Forest Home in February 1986, this new interim CCI Board recognized the United Kingdom as an applicant member of CCI and the Philippines as a Candidate member of CCI.

The new CCI structure that emerged from this committee and the divisional leaders meetings in Vancouver was called the Association Representatives Forum (ARF) and included two representatives from each of the 10 approved CCI divisions plus two trustees. This body was organised as an alliance of associations with the purposes of building strong Christian camping associations and helping new associations come into existence. A CCI Policies Manual was adopted in October 1986 at the Association Representatives Forum (ARF) meetings in Vancouver, Canada and assigned to the new steering committee for completion. The steering committee was also asked to come up with a partnership plan for inter-association sharing which they did.

Due to Brad's expressed willingness to satisfy the desires of those heading this new organisational structure even if it meant the termination of his role, the newly elected ARF steering committee carefully reviewed the need for a full-time coordinator in the international structure and approached Brad with their proposal to see this position eliminated. Their plan was to cut the overhead of the international ministry to a minimum through use of a volunteer ARF executive committee, volunteer contributions from the member associations, and a partnership program.

The first Associations Representatives Forum under this new organisational structure was held in Vision Valley, Australia in 1988 with the second following in Kruger National Park in South Africa in 1990. Motions made by the Board of Trustees in August 1988 at Vision Valley in Australia (T-141-8/88) and in Kruger National Park, South Africa (T-164-10/90) have both affirmed "the current organizational chart in the CCI Policies Manual and the role of the trustees in the international structure that this organizational chart represents" (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, October 1990, p. 1). CCI/Philippines and the CCI/United Kingdom were brought in as official members of the ARF at the 1988 Australia meeting.

Subsequent Association Representatives Forums have been in Mexico City, Mexico in 1992, in Seattle, Washington, USA in 1993, in Waikanae, New Zealand in 1995 and in Leicestershire, United Kingdom in 1997.

At the 1997 forum in the UK, CCI/Russia was granted full membership into the ARF and both CCI/Netherlands and CCI/Romania were admitted as associate members.

To clear the way for the U.S. Division to be functioning on an equal basis with all other national associations and have its own corporation apart from Trustee ownership, an Illinois not-for-profit

corporation called the Dickson Valley Corporation was formed in February, 1988 to hold the CCI property on the Fox River and continue the lease with YFC to insure that the requests of the donors to provide a camping ministry for the Fox Valley was honoured. On April 28, 1989 the Trustees turned over the legal U.S. corporation and U.S. registration of the logo to the U.S. Division to establish their complete autonomy. This placed the Trustees in the role of advisers or counsellors to the ARF rather than legal trustees.

Subsequently YFC became overwhelmed by internal problems and terminated their lease on the property on August 31, 1989. The property continued to be managed by Dickson Valley Corporation by means of establishing a local management committee to work with the Dickson Valley Corporation board. Contributions equal to the YFC lease agreement continued to the U.S. and international CCI ministries until 1997 when CCI/US, the ARF, and Dickson Valley Corporation felt that in the best interests of each of the parties that a cash settlement be made by Dickson Valley Corporation to terminate the monthly contributions based on the 1982 YFC lease. With the portion of the money given to the ARF in this settlement, the Walt Warkentin Trust Fund was established by the ARF in 1997 to support their work.

In 1990 at the ARF meeting in Kruger National Park in Africa, the idea of an official journal of the national associations of Christian Camping International was launched and the Network was birthed. Leigh Belcham, CCI/UK has continued to edit the NetWork since its inception. NetWork is currently printed electronically on CCI's homepage that was launched on March 16, 1998.

To meet the needs of a growing international organisation without a full-time international coordinator, four regional representatives were reintroduced to the organizational structure of CCI at the 1997 Forum in the UK. They are focusing on Europe, Africa, Asia/Pacific, and Americas/Russia and report to the Executive Committee of the ARF. To simplify the name of the Association Representatives Forum (ARF) and make it more understandable to those new to CCI, it was changed in 1997 to the International Forum or Forum for short.

Japan was the setting for the 1999 International Forum of CCI. During the Forum, CCI/Netherlands and CCI/Romania were confirmed as full members and reports were given of developing associations in other parts of the world. With the advent of e-mail, communication between members greatly improved and the CCI website also proved a useful tool for promoting CCI and the distribution of information. The Executive Committee continued to oversee and manage the operational activity of the international work of CCI in between the Forums, with the 2002 Forum being held in Maryland, USA.

History written by Dr. Bud Williams 2/99 from original CCI archival sources held at Wheaton College. Updated 10/02.