

Short Sheet # 1

Testimonies about the Young Life Camp Experience

1. The testimonies of two Christian leaders, Bruce Larson and James "Frog" Sullivan.

A. Bruce Larson ("No Longer Strangers")

"As a parent as well as a clergyman, I have been fascinated by the ministry of Young Life. Over the years I have seen how this ministry to teenagers has had the ability to bring young people into an experience of God in Jesus Christ and also into an experience of life with one another. I have known dozens of individuals who through Young Life have begun to discover God and step out of their self-centred world into a new awareness of parents and peers.

Last summer my older son, Peter, had the privilege of spending ten days at a Young Life camp. When he returned I met his bus and immediately noticed a difference in this "typical" adolescent boy. He was outside himself, communicative, sensitive and excited. As we drove home, the first thing Peter said gave me the clue not only to what had happened but how it had happened. "Dad" he said "I became a Christian at the camp last week. It's strange, I didn't learn a thing about Jesus that I didn't know before I went there, but I met some people who were real".

This boy of mine has always been something of a theologian and has lived in the realm of ideas... I could well believe that it was not his knowledge of doctrine that had been enlarged at the camp. Rather, he had spent time with leaders who knew how to live out life with people in such a way that God could break through and begin to transform.

B. James "Frog" Sullivan ("The Frog Who Never Became a Prince")

"Frog" had no Christian background. His interests lay in athletics, drinking and street fighting. He knew nothing about Christ or God, except as swear words, and had never been to church. He first went to Young Life Club to stir. Even though he found it quite "foreign" he returned "because the leader showed a personal interest" in him. Then he went to camp.

"I went to camp, and there met the man who was to become the greatest influence of my life, Jim Rayburn... He was the counsellor in my cabin, and he talked with us every night. He shared his life, he gave us himself, and he influenced me in a way that no other human being had ever done. In that week I found that indeed God was for real, Jesus Christ was for real, and I gave Him as much of my life as I knew how.

I spent a lot of time with Jim Rayburn. We talked together at length, we read and we prayed... Sometimes we would just get together and laugh. But many times I saw this man on his knees, giving himself to God for the mission of Young Life... I watched and loved this man for twenty-five years."