



“Captain”

PHIL “CAPTAIN” HOOK

Dr. Phil “Captain” Hook, whose camp name needs no explanation, came to Pine Cove on September 19th, 1973. Phil and his wife, Martha, along with their three daughters, came to Tyler from Dallas where Dr. Hook was the Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. He had also previously taught at Philadelphia College of Bible and Wheaton College. Phil graduated from Westmont College in California and Dallas Theological Seminary.

One of the challenges Phil encountered was helping Pine Cove become financially stable. Phil inherited a bond program when he became Executive Director of Pine Cove, necessitating writing a \$1,500 check every Monday to pay the bond. Also, when the Ranch was built, Pine Cove built somewhat beyond its resources, and it took some time to recover.

“Phil got us stable financially,” explained Bill McKenzie, founder of Pine Cove, who credits Phil as being the one who turned things around.

“So many times, we saw God take adversity and make it very, very special,” said Phil.

Also, Bill pointed out that one of Phil’s great traits is that he is theologically astute. “He kept us on track theologically,” Bill said.

Dan “Yodel” Bolin, who served under Phil’s leadership and then later replaced Phil as Executive Director when Phil decided to move on, agreed saying, “[Phil] really brought a great credibility to the ministry.”

In 1974, soon after Phil arrived at Pine Cove, a new building was built at the

Center – the Rap Room, a place where Phil taught often. Teaching was a huge passion of his, something that both the staff and campers benefited from greatly. In fact, one of the most significant legacies that Phil left at Pine Cove was his heart for staff development, specifically through teaching.

Explaining what it was like to be taught by Phil, Kathy “Ditto” Sheelman (now Lawrence), Phil’s secretary during his early years at Pine Cove, said, “I felt like I was listening to someone who had been sitting at the feet of Jesus.”

One of Phil’s favorite times during each of his 10 years at Pine Cove was the staff training that took place before each summer of camp started. The college students throughout the years proved to be some of the best audiences Phil ever taught, making the training week a time where God clearly moved. Another time Phil saw God move was after a Marriage Enrichment Conference that he had taught one weekend. A couple



came to the conference as a last resort, expecting that their marriage would be ending soon. By the end of the weekend, this couple came to meet with Phil and asked him if he might help them come

into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Phil also established two significant programs while at Pine Cove, the Carpenter's Workshop and a counseling project.

Just as during the Don Anderson years, because the full-time staff was so small, everyone

was involved in all aspects of ministry. "Everyone did what needed to be done," Phil said, explaining that it felt like everyone worked seven days a week those days, with maybe Sunday afternoons to rest and a Monday off here and there.

Some of the times Phil remembers laughing the hardest while at Pine Cove

were during the skits. Two of the staff members he mentioned as being the funniest were Gary "Yogi" Cogill and Kiyoshi "Tex" Kakuda. Phil said that as he watches television today, he often thinks, "They did far better!" One of the skits he was famous for performing was the Little Nemo skit in which a sheet was placed over him. Someone behind him (on occasion, Kathy "Ditto" Lawrence) used their arms to become his arms, and his arms became his feet when he put shoes on his hands. One of his favorite skits to watch was a skit in which someone who supposedly was just learning to play the guitar would come out on stage in order to perform. Because they were so bad, someone else would eventually come out on stage with pliers and cut one of the guitar strings. The skit went on and on in that fashion until inevitably a chainsaw was brought out, and the guitar was cut in half. Needless to say, they had a hard time finding enough old guitars to last the summer.

Directly after leaving Pine Cove, Phil went on staff with 89.5 FM KVNE, a Christian radio station based in Tyler. His soothing voice became very recognizable to the East Texas



community. Later, Phil volunteered with different ministries, including Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Lately he has dabbled a little bit with oil and gas leasing. Today Phil resides in Hallsville, Texas, where he is in his own words, “retired and having fun.”

When asked what Pine Cove meant to him, Phil mentioned that it was a place that was special to his family because they were able to be involved in a ministry together, something that the ministries he had been involved in prior to Pine Cove lacked due to extensive traveling. Phil also expressed that Pine Cove was special to him because it became a place for him to teach. He explained, “I always was a professor, a teacher, so Pine Cove was an opportunity to make theology live. And I really worked at that to create a living, learning environment where theology and the Bible were woven into it rather than something one did after breakfast.” He pointed out that there are theological illustrations and teaching opportunities all over camp. For example, water skiing is an illustration of faith because skiers cannot ski by themselves; they are forced to hold on to and trust the rope.

According to Dan Bolin, Phil Hook was a “brilliant man, great guy, and wonderful leader for [Pine Cove]. He brought such a great philosophical and theological bent to what we do...He took so much of the activity and helped us understand the meaning. He forced us to think why we were doing what we were doing.”

In profound words, Phil said, “[I’ve come to] realize how much the atmosphere you set creates the result that God uses.” Praise the Lord for the atmosphere that Phil “Captain” Hook set during his time at Pine Cove, because undoubtedly God used that atmosphere to create amazing results, impacting many lives for His glory!

The image shows a newspaper clipping. On the right side, there is a black and white portrait of a man with glasses, identified as Dr. H. Phillip Hook. To the left of the portrait, the article is titled "t for Prayer" in a large, serif font. The text of the article is partially visible and discusses various church activities and group studies. Below the portrait, there is a caption identifying Dr. H. Phillip Hook as the assistant professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. At the bottom right of the clipping, there is a bold headline: "Dr. Hook To Direct Pine Cove".

t for Prayer

the small, more independent, organizational creeds or

The third is a "sharing group" where, Busiek explains, "We share our crops and failures in life and how to let Christ help handle our personal problems."

The fourth is a weekly Bible study and sharing group of couples and singles that meets in homes.

In addition to the latter one, Busiek's wife, Millie, attends a women's Bible study group.

This enormous influx of small group situations among professed Christians in the Dallas area brings up two pertinent questions:

Why do these people feel a need for this kind of spiritual experience outside the organized church, and do they present any kind of threat to the church and its clergy?

Busiek maintains one rea-

Dr. H. Phillip Hook . . .
To direct conference center.

Dr. Hook To Direct Pine Cove

Dr. H. Phillip Hook, assistant professor at Dallas Theo-