

Bethany Bible College: Good Enough To Believe

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"A reporter came over to Bethany several months ago and spent four days here to gather material for a story.

"We waited and waited for our story to be printed, and then finally I called her and asked what happened.

"She told me, 'My editor said he didn't want to run the story because no one would believe it; he said it sounded like a public relations piece about the college,'" related Dennis Roberts, the real public relations man for the small college located in Scotts Valley.

And, it is true, that Bethany Bible College is hard to believe.

While administrators readily admit that students are carefully screened, and that at this time in their lives students are nearly homogenous in their belief in Christ and Christianity, the 570 students clearly are not a captive audience of ministers' sons and daughters.

"We have problems and it can be hard sometimes to live with a 600 member family.

"But, we have no drugs here, there's no immoral sex, and when we have problems, everybody works to solve them," explained Jerry Bouch of Douglas, Ariz., a sophomore.

"Last year was the greatest year of my life," he said, "and this year students are even working harder together."

The one fault the honest young man could find was "the food here is not to my liking, it's too starchy and too many artificial foods are used," he said.

"But, I like the food at the cafeteria," Roberts quickly countered.

All students interviewed were unanimous in one belief, "Bethany is the toughest academic school I have ever attended," each would say.

"In one class, the instructor even gives us test questions from guest lecturers — something that never occurred in my two years at other colleges," said Joan Winters, a senior from Los Angeles.

"I was an A student the last year in high school, but here I am a hard-working C student... but improving," Bouch said. Bethany has been accredited since 1966 to award bachelor

who were interviewed — "not at all as strict as at some Bible colleges," one student said.

But, the rules, obviously, would have to be considered strict by the standards of the world of man that surrounds the school.

Bethany does not allow any drugs including tobacco, dancing, going to movies, "overt displays of physical affection between the sexes," mini-skirts and shorts, long hair below the collar, and beards and bare feet are prohibited.

Students must have approval to leave the campus on extended leaves, and couples must have permission to get married and can only do so during school break times.

Tough rules?

"Not at all, when that's where you are," a student explained.

Bethany pulls no punches in its insistence upon following Christian decorum:

"It must be admitted that Bethany is not for everyone (and) students who find themselves out of harmony with the standards and ideals of the Assemblies of God at Bethany are respectfully advised to pursue their education elsewhere," the rule book states.

The college can lead a student to a teaching credential, or award the liberal arts degree, or grant ministerial degrees.

Every student must attend chapel. But they want to.

Every student is required to take a core program of religious classes. And, they want to.

Many students, on their own, are actively engaged in ministries while attending school, doing evangelical work in Santa Cruz County, including evangelical walks on the beaches to talk to people.

"Christianity forces you to know yourself, to face your problems; it isn't a crutch," Winters said.

"A conversion to Christ changed my life," Bouch said, "improving me in my academic work, even in sports, in everything I do."

Bouch is planning a ministerial program and wants to be a pastor when he graduates.

Before he gets there, he will have to do a 14-week internship

mission.

Students are required to provide three references: one from their pastor, from a teacher and one from a Christian friend.

In speaking of all the screening and restrictions of the school, one feels there should be a sad or serious face worn by the young on the campus.

"It is a happy place, and there is joy here," a student told the press.

It costs about \$1,500 per semester, but that includes room and board, which is \$495 — not a bad price for over three months of living at today's prices.

The total sum also includes room and board over the January term.

There is scholarship help for many students.

The studentbody comes from all over the country and from many foreign lands, but the majority of students are from California and nearby states.

The origins of Bethany go back to a weekday training program begun in 1917 by the Rev. and Mrs. Robert J. Craig as part of the work of Glad Tidings Mission in San Francisco.

In 1919, this informal training class was officially launched as the Glad Tidings Bible Training School and in 1921, the first class of 12 students was graduated.

In 1947, control of the school passed to the Assemblies of God Church and it was moved to Scotts Valley in 1955.

It was accredited as a Bible College in 1959, and as a liberal arts college in 1966.

"We are a bridge between the old fashioned Bible school and the liberal arts college.

"We attempt to expose the student both to Scripture and the world of man," said Norman Arnesen, chairman of the Biblical Literature and Philosophy Division.

Arnesen said that a number of women students are thinking of careers in the ministry, and that the Assemblies of God had always allowed women ministers in its church.

Women students interviewed said they did not feel there was sexual bias against them in the world's ministries.

Of the Christian movement today, Arnesen said, "I believe

"I believe that academically it is tougher now than when I went here in 1958," stated the Rev. John Bueno, who added, "and when I was here I was also taking classes at San Jose State and I remember that it took as much preparation for Bethany as it did for San Jose."

Bueno is back on a lecture visit, and has the reputation of a local boy who made good.

After his graduation, Bueno went to Central America and settled in San Salvador. Suddenly, in 1970, his church of 1,000 members began to grow — helped by a lay preacher system and satellite churches — and reached 13,000 this year.

During last week, Bethany's administration and studentbody was deeply involved in a missionary support program with "all of us working together on it," Bouch said.

Bueno commented, "I came back for that program, but I'm not emphasizing foreign missionary work. I'm talking about the principle of surrendering and submitting one's life to Jesus Christ."

Bueno came back feeling he probably would be met by students who had passed him up: "I was afraid the kids would tune me off, but there was none of that," he said.

His reception was enthusiastic.

Bethany's rules are not considered strict by the students

with a working pastor.

"This will come in my junior or senior year, and I hear it is really hard — you have to provide your own housing and food, and you work with the pastor for 40 hours a week.

"After that, you have to write a term paper on the experience," he said.

Freshman Verna Quenton of Rosamond said that Bethany is the place she was seeking, that it is hard academically, but that it is fulfilling her ideal.

When questioned, the young woman said, "At this time, I am here to change myself; that first, before I think of changing anyone else."

Among the students interviewed was a girl who converted three years ago after spending seven years in the drug world and a young man who before conversion was living with his high school girl friend who was pregnant.

"My parents thought my conversion was just a fad," he said, "but, it has grown stronger every day."

To get into Bethany, not only is it required that a student have an acceptable academic record in high school and previous colleges, but he or she "must have a definite experience of Christian conversion" and it is strongly recommended that a student be a "practicing Christian for not less than one year before ad-

there is another charismatic movement of God current today.

He believes the movement of real manifestation, "grace gifts" he called it, is meant to build the church and introduce Christianity to the world.

"Today's students are very refreshing. I held an extra review session recently and 60 per cent of the students came out to it.

"It is very exciting here," Arnesen said.

Exemption Revenues

State Controller Kenneth Cory announced the payment of more than \$222.2 million to California's 58 counties as reimbursement for income lost through state-mandated exemptions from the personal property tax on business inventories. Santa Cruz County received \$805,286.

Blaze

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A stubborn blaze raged through a paper products storage area of the Arden Farms ice cream plant in downtown Los Angeles, causing an estimated \$250,000 worth of damage and injuring three firemen.