

Bethany College

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Bethany Bible College moving to Sacramento

McClatchy News Service

SACRAMENTO — Bethany Bible College of Scotts Valley plans to move to the Sacramento region by 1993 and establish a new campus, perhaps at Mather Air Force Base, a college official confirmed Wednesday.

Lou Ritz, a member of the school's board of trustees, said representatives from the school earlier this week toured Mather, which will be closed in three years, and are considering it as a possible site for a campus.

College trustees had said several months ago they were probably going to leave Santa Cruz County,

mainly because of soaring housing costs. In addition, college officials said at the time that Scotts Valley was too remote from the population base of the Assembly of God church in California. The church operates the college. Bethany's enrollment has dropped from more than 600 to about 500 currently, the officials said.

The Scotts Valley property, if sold, could net the school a big profit and allow the college to move to Sacramento debt free, college officials also said.

Ritz said Bethany officials also are looking at property in the Southport area of West Sacramen-

to and the Rocklin and Elk Grove areas. He said the school's wooded 109-acre campus in Scott's Valley would be put on the market later this year.

The asking price is expected to be about \$30 million.

"We think (Mather) would do quite well," Ritz said. "We could adjust quite nicely to that site. The facilities would meet our needs."

He said college representatives hoped to tour the base again Thursday.

No decisions have been made on how Mather's 5,840 acres will be converted to civilian use after the

Air Force leaves in 1993. A blue-ribbon citizens group, the Sacramento Area Commission on Mather Conversion, is preparing a draft plan of how the installation might be used.

Suggestions have included a federal prison, a regional park, low- and moderate-income housing and an industrial air park and air cargo center. In addition, the California National Guard, Air Force Reserve, California Department of Forestry and U.S. Forest Service are expected to use Mather's runways, hangars and other facilities.

Los Rios Community College District and Sacramento City Unified

School District also have expressed interest in locating campuses on the base.

Ritz said Bethany probably would spend "upward of \$20 million" for a new campus for its 500 students and 24 full-time faculty members who will be relocating in the Sacramento area.

Ritz said the college has an annual budget of about \$5 million. He said the board of trustees voted April 26 to sell its existing campus and move to the greater Sacramento area because of "reduced housing costs for both faculty and students, in addition to an expanded student base."

At the same meeting, trustees al-

so voted to change the name of the school to Bethany College of the Assemblies of God."

A press release issued by the school said, "The name change will not affect the mission of the college. The goal of educating and training people in various callings for world evangelization remains the same."

According to the Comparative Guide to American Colleges, the school is devoted to preparing students for various church ministries as well as public and private elementary education.

Ritz said students at the school can earn either bachelor of science or bachelor of arts degrees.