



Bethany College Report – January 2005

Greetings from Bethany College! We are thrilled to be a part of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Brethren Conference and we pray God's blessing on you as you serve in your communities around the province.

In this report we would like to answer one of those common financial questions. Why support Bethany College? But first allow us to offer a word about **Bible College...and why it matters.**

Can you imagine the state of the church today – and even that of your own congregations – if it were not for Bible Colleges? **Bible Colleges provide a level of long-term depth and intensity to the discipling process** that has not been replicated in any other environment. As a result our churches, missions agencies and parachurch ministries are enriched with believers who have a well-developed *biblical worldview*. Disciples like these can incorporate their faith and discipleship into their lifestyle and personal ministry. This will impact families, workplaces and communities for God's glory, redeeming and transforming our culture.

Take a look around *your* churches and the chances are that many of the key workers and leaders have attended a Bible College such as Bethany, Briercrest, Columbia, Millar, Prairie, or Providence. Schools like these ground their students in the Word of God and equip them to serve both in the church and in society. Without Bible Colleges and the graduates that come from them, the church in Canada, we fear, would be *severely* diminished.

May we **challenge each of you** to look to the future of the church by **encouraging students to attend Bible College** so that as many as possible can "*drink deeply at the river of Scripture.*"

At our **annual convention in November** constituency representatives voted to **change the governance structure** of the college to allow the **provincial conferences to elect Bethany board members** directly. Alberta has been doing this for some years, and Saskatchewan will now join that process. As well, **financial statements and auditor's reports** will be presented at future conferences for delegate information. We look forward to working more closely with the conference executives in our joint ministry of *nurturing disciples and training leaders* for ministry.



Your Bible College is Bethany and here we are committed to the church and the ministry you have entrusted to us for *nurturing disciples and training leaders*. Many of you know **Randy Klassen**, one of our instructors who teaches courses including "Life of Christ", "Literature & Faith", and "Colossians / Ephesians". Listen to Randy's heart as he shares of what he finds satisfying in his work. "*One thing I love is seeing students excited about reading and memorizing the Word... to see them drink deeply at the river of Scripture. The fruit that one sees from this discipline is amazing. It is also satisfying to observe our students beginning to wrestle with Scripture. They learn that one can always go deeper – which is the way it is, both with Scripture and with God. They wrestle with the questions about Christ as both fully God and fully man. They're discovering that for Jesus to follow God the Father was a daily choice in obedience. This is a new understanding for many students.*"

Steve Siemens is a junior student hailing from Manitoba and is our **student body President** this year. He has made Scripture memorization a personal priority. Last year, touring with the Bethany Players, he recited the entire book of James for numerous congregations. This year, early in our fall semester, Steve memorized and recited the book of I John for the student body. **Students like Steve are learning** that to be a leader in ministry, one must **boldly model discipleship**.



Recently, we received this email message from **Glen Heinrichs, Bethany alumni (83-85)**. He shares the following: *Barb and I have kept in contact with NONE of our high school friends, FEW of our university friends but MANY of our Bible school friends. I believe those friendships were deep enough to stand the test of time. It is my hope that all of my kids attend Bible School. While university may prepare them for a job, Bible School gets them ready for life both now and forever. **Do we really need to ask the question, "What does it get them?"** I believe our mandate is to seek first the kingdom of God. I believe Bible School fulfills part of that mandate.*

Glen raises a serious issue. It is frightening to consider that post-secondary biblical education is considered by some to be an “expensive year off”. Many Christian parents are opting for university training for their children immediately following high school and missing the opportunity for spiritual grounding at a Bible College.

It is a privilege and a serious responsibility to be charged with nurturing the young adults in our care here at Bethany. We **seek to focus their enthusiasm and energy into becoming disciples** – not merely believers – but *disciples* of Jesus Christ. Further, **we seek to train them to understand and practice leadership at various levels** so that they can be better prepared **to serve the church**.

Your congregation plays a key role in this ministry of *nurturing disciples and training leaders*. Our supporting churches’ prayer support, encouragement for students and financial gifts are the very lifeblood of this ministry. As part of our family of sponsoring churches, we want to say “**thank you**” for co-labouring together with us.

We invite your congregation to continue its support for Bethany College via financial giving. Our current budget requires **student fees** to cover only **62%** of the College’s operating needs. The other **38%** needs to come from Bethany’s **supporting churches and friends**. Please consider how you and your congregation can continue its partnership with Bethany.