

Christian University Closes Doors, Lack of Funding

Teaching operations at the nation's oldest Assemblies of God college have been halted, and hearts are heavy.

Bethany University, founded in 1919, will be closing its doors this fall. The closure comes after a deal fell through between private investors seeking to purchase the university and the owner, the Assemblies of God Northern California and Nevada District.

The announcement was made June 13. As the institution begins its shut down, Rev. James Braddy, chairman of Bethany's board of trustees, calls for prayer. "This will not be a quick or easy task. Your prayers are desperately needed as we face this very difficult time of transition."

The close comes as a transition and change of season for more than just university administrators. More than 70 faculty members will stop teaching at the school, and about 400 students will no longer be learning on the Scotts Valley, Calif., campus.

Summer 2011 courses, as well as current online courses, are in the process of completion as the summer semester—and Bethany's last—ends August 15.

Nearly two dozen colleges and universities across the nation are stepping up in various ways to help their brothers and sisters in Christ. Some have developed extensive Memorandums of Understanding stating the services they are willing to provide to each incoming student. In addition, others will create specific scholarships, provide relocation funding, and/or make certain exceptions to policies, allowing easier transfer of class credits.

One of Bethany's sister colleges, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, in Waxahachie, Texas, is offering a 50 percent grant transfers from Bethany University. "We were sad to see a sister school close its doors," says Eddie Davis, vice president for enrollment. "So, we felt compelled to help Bethany students smoothly transition into another accredited university that shares Bethany's values."

Though the close has ultimately come because of a matter of funds, God was ever-present in the process. The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* reports that Bethany University President Rev. Lewis Shelton said he tried to save the university from closing through prayer and fasting, but God made the final decision.