

# Prepare. Explore. Journey.

## Colleges get off the beaten track to prepare students for life and ministry

Jim Coggins  
Special to ChristianWeek

Thinking of attending Bible college? Think they are all the same? There are some unique and diverse programs to choose from. Following are four examples.

### Expedition

The Expedition program at Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener, Ontario offers “a broad sampling of ministry opportunities,” says advancement project coordinator Nicole Sivyer. It is designed for students fresh out of high school who are unsure of what direction to go in life.

There are no assignments or tests in the one-semester program. Instead, most of the time is spent doing “hands-on” ministry. The college brings in specialists to present seminars on a particular ministry—prison ministry, children’s ministry, camp ministry, ministry to the homeless. After each seminar, the students are sent out to work in that type of ministry.

The semester is followed by a one-month mission trip.

Students earn some college credit and can fundraise to cover their expenses for the mission trip.

After running for two or three years in the fall semester, Expedition has added a spring semester in 2011, to accommodate a second



Canadian Christian colleges and universities help students get off the beaten track for life and ministry.

group of six students. Students can also take Expedition Plus, doing a second semester of regular classroom studies.

The students come out with a good grounding, Sivyer says, whether they go on to take a full Bible college course, go to university, enter ministry or pursue a career. “It is exciting to see the change in the students,” she says. “They come

out on fire for God and with an idea of where God is calling them.”

### Kaléo

Kaléo is an eight-month (September to April) leadership training program developed in a unique partnership between Briercrest Bible College in Caronport, Saskatchewan and Camp Qwanoes on Vancouver Island.

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Briercrest provides the academic training, flying in a faculty member about every three weeks to present a one-week intensive course.

Qwanoes does the rest, with two leaders and two interns guiding 28 students in a holistic program, says Qwanoes assistant director Jay Kennedy.

The program has a strong component of active ministry—after each week of classes, students put into practice what they have learned. They are connected to local churches to do ministry but also work at the camp and participate in a mission trip.

Community is another component, with the students living together at the camp’s retreat facility.

There are also adventure trips—sailing, surfing, backpacking up mountains and sleeping in snow caves. These trips are not just for fun; the students are put in positions where they are “stretched beyond their comfort zone” and have to take initiative and work together.

The program offers a full year of college credit. Afterward, some students continue their studies at Briercrest or elsewhere, and others enter careers. But the common denominator is

leadership training. Even learning to serve by washing dishes is a component of leadership training, Kennedy says. “Many of the students discover who God wants them to be, and then discover what God wants them to do.”

### Millar Missions

Millar College of the Bible in Pambrun, Saskatchewan, strives to constantly keep a mission focus in front of its students. The college has about 150 students in years one to three and every summer sends out a couple of mission teams of 10-15 students each.

The trips last four to six weeks and are “staff driven,” says director of ministries Scott Gerbrandt. The staff is “sold out on missions” and volunteers to take a team to a certain country where they have a connection with a missionary. Like students, staff members must raise their own money for the trips.

The trips are also good preparation for Millar’s fourth year, which is an eight-month internship program designed to “ease students into ministry.” Throughout this year, the students spend one week training at the college and then three weeks doing ministry in a church or parachurch organization. Students who do their internships with an overseas agency do their training sessions by video.

One goal of the mission trips is to help students “learn to trust God in difficult situations,” says Gerbrandt. “We want the students to see missions as a worthwhile endeavour, whether they eventually go out as missionaries or support missions from home.”

### Discipleship

At Peace River Bible Institute (PRBI) in Sexsmith, Alberta, discipleship training is not just a program, says admissions manager Lisa Purdey. Instead, “discipleship is woven into everything we do.” The focus is not on what students know about God but on what they really believe about God. This requires accountability, vulnerability and openness.

*Continued on next page*

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Key to the discipleship emphasis are care groups, where students process what they are learning in class, share their struggles and are held accountable. Each care group lives together in residence.

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A senior student leads each care group of six to nine students. These leaders in turn are disciplined by staff

members from the student life department, with three leaders meeting with one staff member. The school has moved from one-on-one discipleship to group discipleship, Purdey says, because individual discipleship can be “me-focused” but in a group, students learn to mentor and disciple one another.

Faculty members are also “extremely involved in the students’ lives,” Purdey says. Besides teaching, faculty members meet students in small groups, invite students into their homes and talk individually with students before and after class. Even late assignments and missed campus chores are seen as opportunities for discipling.

Graduates may go on to further schooling, to church or mission ministry or to other careers. Whatever, they do, PRBI’s goal is to “prepare students for life.”

## School Directory

### Bethany College, Hepburn, Saskatchewan

“Nurturing Disciples and Training Leaders to Serve” is the mission of Bethany College. The disciples of Jesus were lifelong students; we desire that our community continue in this transformation. There is a depth and breadth to student life at Bethany—living among friends, studying the Bible, service learning experiences and ministry opportunities. God transforms people at Bethany! He changes students’ perspectives, sharpens their thinking, shapes hearts into his image, awakens an awareness of gifts, opens their eyes to the needs of the world around them, and inspires them to get involved in sharing Christ’s love.

Visit [www.bethany.sk.ca](http://www.bethany.sk.ca) to find out more about our diploma and degree programs.

### Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Outtatown Discipleship School is a unique program of Canadian Mennonite University for students seeking a life-changing experience of adventure, travel, service and Christian studies. Outtatown’s mission is to inspire and nurture students in their life of discipleship with Jesus Christ, in a journey towards knowing God, knowing yourself, knowing the world. Outtatown offers university credits and exciting site locations in South Africa and Guatemala, with a new French Africa site opening in Fall 2011. For Christian university education in the Anabaptist tradition, register the following year at CMU for undergraduate studies.

Call us toll free: 1.877.231.457; visit our website at [www.outtatown.com](http://www.outtatown.com).

### Peace River Bible Institute, Sexsmith, Alberta

How often have we seen people labour their lives away, only to be forgotten (Ecc. 1:2b-3)? Will anything in this life last? One thing can be sure: nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:37-39). Thus, everything we do at PRBI is to push one another further in knowing God. Christ’s command to “make disciples” (Matt. 28:18-20) drives life at PRBI. Deep relationships with staff and students,

interactive classes, and practical application allow students to explore their role in God’s kingdom and delve into difficult questions about themselves, the world, the church and God.

Visit [www.prbi.edu](http://www.prbi.edu) for more information.

### Prairie Bible College, Three Hills, Alberta

Prairie is comprised of three colleges on one campus. Prairie Bible College is Canada’s oldest Bible College and focuses on ministry preparation. With a fleet of seven aircraft and ties to mission aviation agencies, Prairie School of Mission Aviation is equipped to train pilots for mission aviation at home and around the world. In 2006 Prairie opened the first college in Canada offering two-year vocational programs integrating Bible and ministry education. With programs in health and childcare and business administration, Prairie College of Applied Arts & Technology has created even more options for students to pursue valuable careers and exciting ministry opportunities.

Learn more. Visit [www.prairie.edu](http://www.prairie.edu) or call 1.800.661.2425.

### Red Rock Bible Camp, Steinbach, Manitoba

Our eight-month discipleship ministry is for Christian adults from 18 to 25 years of age. Our vision is to create an ideal environment to grow passionate disciples of Christ who will change their world as they journey on the lifelong pursuit of knowing God and His plan for their lives. From home base in the Whiteshell Provincial Park to adventure trips in the Canadian Rockies to missions in Belize, our participants will experience God in eye-opening ways that will stretch their faith and clarify who they are and who God wants them to be.

Learn more at [www.pursuit-redrock.com](http://www.pursuit-redrock.com)

### Summit Pacific College, Abbotsford, B.C.

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