

# Religion

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## Bible college alumni gather

By Allison Mayes

(Herald writer)

Rev. John Teibe is renewing old ties — to former classmates, and to a vibrant Christian era when Alberta was considered the Bible Belt of Canada and "Bible Bill" Aberhart led the province during the Depression.

Teibe, a former missionary to India and head of Calgary's Christian Research Institute, is among 250 alumni and staff gathered in Calgary this weekend for a reunion of three influential bible colleges.

Prophetic Bible Institute (founded 1927), Berean Bible College (founded 1948) and Foothills Christian College (which evolved from Berean in the 1980s) all have closed their doors. But in

### PROPHETIC INSTITUTES

the course of more than five decades, says Teibe, they provided more than 1,000 young people with a solid biblical foundation for active Christian service.

"It all started with this very strong vision and keen challenge to students to make their lives count in the proclamation of the gospel," remembers the Baptist minister, 64, who began his three-year studies at Prophetic and graduated from Berean.

Prophetic Institute, which was prominently located downtown at 8th Avenue and 5th Street S.W., was founded by Aberhart, the charismatic preacher who went on to be premier. He would use live radio broadcasts from the school's large meeting

hall to spread his dramatic sermons to the masses. "They would pack that place with Mr. Aberhart preaching," recalls Teibe.

Prophetic attracted students from across Western Canada with a curriculum emphasizing biblical prophesy. Its famous first graduate, Ernest Manning, followed Aberhart into politics and also was destined to lead the province. Manning, now 83, will address the alumni Sunday.

Berean Bible College got its start when Prophetic staff members broke away over an internal disagreement about the importance of missionary work. The new school, so-named for the biblical passage which says the Bereans (residents of Macedonia) "searched the scriptures daily," was at 4th Street and 32nd Avenue N.W.

## to renew old ties

Its longtime president was Rev. Cyril Hutchinson, another popular radio speaker who would invite students on to the airwaves to sing or talk about their faith.

In the early 1980s, the college modernized its approach, changed its name to Foothills and expanded its programs — perhaps too rapidly. By the middle of the decade, it failed financially and closed, says Teibe.

But the legacy of the three schools lives on in the graduates, many of whom are pastors, missionaries and youth workers, says Teibe, whose wife Anne is also a Berean grad. A number of alumni are unable to attend the reunion, he notes, because they are on missionary assignment in Africa, Europe, Asia and South America.

Reunion events include a picnic this afternoon at Glenmore Park, a gathering this evening at Bethel Baptist Church and a praise and worship service Sunday afternoon.

The reunion organizing committee, says Teibe, will urge grads to make a financial commitment to supporting Peace River Bible College and assisting an Alberta couple who are headed to Latvia as missionaries.

Teibe, who looks forward to catching up with old friends, says the colleges had a profound effect on his life as a Christian.

"It certainly gave me a sense of direction, of purpose . . . and showed that young people could have a part in changing the world."