

# Religion mixes with scenic beauty

By Sharon Hahn  
staff writer

Four yellow brick buildings seem to camouflage the wooded and lake-dotted campus of Avon Township's Michigan Christian College.

Just beyond the parking lot and bookstore/library, a panoramic view of hidden Lake Norcentra and the wooded acres behind Gallaher Center open up to the visitor.

The center, a 6,000-square-foot slate-roofed summer cottage — once owned by Detroit advertising executive Lou Maron — now holds the administrative offices, music department and Bible room.

A quiet walk around the lake, past what was the greenhouse (now the science building), takes students and faculty members near the Clinton River and far from the bustle of traffic and trade in nearby Rochester.

**THIS CAMPUS** attracted 350 students from 22 states and Canada despite its refusal to overlook misuse of alcohol and drugs, "sexual misconduct" or on-campus smoking, and despite its enforcement of a curfew and dress code.

The private, fully accredited, two-year liberal arts college, with a strong tie to the Church of Christ, demands strict behavior.

All of the 15 full-time teachers and most of the students are members of the Church of Christ, said MCC President Milton Fletcher.

Church affiliation is not a requirement for acceptance to MCC, but the former Texas oil executive said each student must attend daily chapel and take one Bible course each semester.

The Bible courses often transfer to non-church affiliated schools as English, history or philosophy credits, Fletcher said.

Attracted to the school by the Christian atmosphere, students don't complain about the restrictions many other colleges and universities no longer consider.

"I think they are quite fair with just about everything," said sophomore Susan Gutt, a 1980 Rochester High School graduate. She said the 11 p.m.

weekday curfew and 1 a.m. curfew on Fridays and Saturdays can be extended in special cases.

"I think the curfew is more an incentive to study than anything else," said Alain Hadorn, 19, a sophomore from Phoenix, Ariz., who said many students wait until curfew to pull out their books.

**FELLOWSHIP GREW** among the young adults as groups of students arrived for the official campus service marking the beginning of MCC's 23rd session.

Each student has an assigned seat and the chapel room filled to overflowing with pupils, faculty and faculty wives greeting one another after a summer of separation.

It's a family-like atmosphere, report many of the students.

"Everyone helps you out," said returning sophomore Jim Santellan of Holland. "If you have any problems, you can feel free to go to the faculty and staff. Your friends are always there when you need them."

Freshman Clifford Plummer, 18, of Park Forest, Ill., had only a week to make his observations.

"Everybody is real friendly," he said. "Last night, a bunch of us went to the movies. Whenever you do something, it's done in groups. I like that."

"It reminds me of a Christian summer camp, only instead of just two weeks, this will go on all year," he said.

Michigan Christian College's close association with the Rochester Church of Christ, 127 E. Avon, produced an adoptive parent program among its church members (to assist students away from home), and has brought additional stability to the students, Fletcher said.

"IT'S AMAZING," as these kids come back on campus, to see them reunited with their adopted families from last year."

Each family involved in the program adopts

from two to six students, he said. During the school year the family acts as counselor, chauffeur or just a family that cares to the students.

History and French teacher Leo Hindsley of Avon Township has taught at MCC for 15 years. The former Macomb County Community College teacher said his present students compare favorably to those in the community college.

"Their attitude is much better," he said. "They approach their whole life and studies from a Christian viewpoint."

The school has about 60 students who commute, but most reside in dorms provided by the college, Fletcher said. And it's through a variety of influences that the MCC students have found their way to the rolling Avon Road campus.

Mark Dixon, 19, of Indianapolis, and Teresa Massey, 20, of Anderson, Ind., both spoke of the vocal group "Autumn" that visited their hometown area telling prospective students about the MCC campus.

Fletcher explained the group consists of four students who travel 20,000 miles three months each summer singing for youth camps and congregations and recruiting students.

Another feature drawing students to MCC is its course selection. Sophomore David Rogers, 21, of Ortonville, said nearby Oakland University didn't offer Greek, and the pre-calculus class he needed was not offered at OU the term he wanted it. He found both at MCC.

Commuting student Deborah Lockwood, who calls herself D.J., is an accounting major who noticed the school while driving past it one day. The 26-year-old decided to check it out, liked what she saw and enrolled, she said.

SINCE IT opened in September, 1959, the school has grown from 37 acres with three buildings to its present 91-acre, 12-building campus.

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