

STUDY CENTER GROWS

'Sign' Turned Life Of Retreat Leader

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FALLBROOK — Jim McManus will candidly tell anyone that he decided to make the De Luz Christian Study Center his life's work only after God gave him the go-ahead sign he asked for.

This is not a source of embarrassment for McManus, 38 — not even in a highly sophisticated age in which the idea of talking to God seems to embarrass many persons.

"This may not be as sophisticated an age as many people would like to think, anyway," McManus said in an interview.

"It's more an age of romanticism than sophistication, because so many people seem to place such a romantic faith in human nature to achieve good," he said.

Human intelligence is fine, but prayer never hurt anyone searching for the right thing to do, McManus believes.

Opened Home While Teaching

Which is where the former Fallbrook High School history teacher found himself in 1961, two years after he opened the study center in a sprawling, 80-year-old house in the De Luz Valley about 10 miles north of here.

The center was designed primarily as a haven for hurried city dwellers looking for a place to talk and think about Christianity in a peaceful, rustic setting.

After moving into the big house on De Luz Road, McManus and his wife began holding weekend retreats for groups of 15 to 25 persons, mostly college students.

It wasn't long, however, before McManus came to the conclusion that he couldn't run the center, continue teaching, and do either job justly.

"So I prayed to God to give me a sign as to what he wanted me to do. It was just a matter of trusting God," said McManus.

In his prayers, McManus asked that a specific person he hadn't seen in months volunteer to make a regular financial contribution to De Luz Center. The person McManus mentioned was a family friend, Elma Stevens of Los Angeles.

McManus says that within a week he received a letter from the Los Angeles woman saying she was pledging to send him \$50 a

month, although she had no idea why she was moved to do so.

On the basis of that pledge and faith that God would somehow care for him and his family, McManus quit teaching to work full-time at the study center.

Monthly Donations Still Coming

His Los Angeles benefactor, incidentally, has continued sending McManus monthly contributions, although several years ago she reduced it to \$25.

Weekend retreaters at De Luz get a few lectures and plenty of time to read, listen to tapes, talk and contemplate.

McManus' main project now is amassing a collection of tape recorded lectures by prominent theologians and other thinkers who present the Scripture-oriented traditional Christian point of view.

The tapes, plus a 2,000-book library, will be housed in a 4,500-square-foot structure to be built on a low hill just south of the McManus residence.

No one knows for sure when construction will begin, since most of the work will be donated by De Luz supporters, in order to cut building costs to about \$40,000.

The foundation has already been laid, however, and an informal dedication ceremony will be held March 8 at 3:30 p.m.

Two San Diego clergymen will speak at the dedication: the Rev. Ellis Shaw and the Rev. Dr. Dean Nauman, both of Brooklyn Heights Presbyterian Church. A third scheduled speaker is Dr. Margaret Holzer, chemistry professor at San Fernando Valley State College.

More Living Quarters Planned

At present De Luz can provide lodging for about 25 persons. More living quarters will be provided in the new building.

While the center doesn't attempt to indoctrinate anyone, says McManus, it does take a clear, traditional Christian point of view.

It operates on the belief that God once intervened in men's affairs and told man what was expected of him through Jesus Christ and Scriptures.

De Luz, says McManus, simply offers people a system of absolute moral guidelines as an alternative to the moral relativism he says prevails today in society.

TPV Turns Dream Anglicans