

ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

“In the Nick of Time”

Occasional Essays
and Other Stuff
for Christian
Students

Presented by the
President of

Central Baptist
Theological
Seminary of
Minneapolis

American Christianity needs leaders. American Christianity needs *Christian* leaders. Christian leaders explain the Scriptures, bringing them to bear upon life's urgent questions. Christian leaders exemplify the life of faith, finding their ultimate satisfaction in God alone. They unite intellectual discipline with ordinate affection, turning their entire being toward the love of God. These essays are dedicated to the task of inviting today's Christian students to become tomorrow's Christian leaders.

—Kevin T. Bauder

“...Be instant in season,
out of season;
reprove, rebuke, exhort
with all longsuffering
and doctrine.”

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Pillsbury Baptist Bible College

Kevin T. Bauder

They say that any publicity is good publicity, but that may not be true. Pillsbury Baptist Bible College has recently received some rather unwelcome attention. First, a prominent pastor in Indiana has publicly narrated a pejorative but largely fictitious account of his expulsion from Pillsbury during the 1970s. Then a blogger from back East published a negative report complaining that the campus coffee shop wasn't open at night and he was bored while visiting the college. He named another Bible college, then asked, “If Pillsbury and _____ are the same price, why would anyone ever go to Pillsbury?”

That question is worth answering, not because Pillsbury is necessarily better than every other college, but because it has its own strengths and character. The truth is that Pillsbury should appeal to some students. Not every collegian will want to go to there, but prospective students from fundamental churches should at least consider it.

Why go to Pillsbury?

First, because Pillsbury is a small-town school. It has the benefits of a city without having the crime and congestion. Pillsbury doesn't need to keep a coffee shop open at all hours, because Owatonna has lots of places that sell coffee. You can get a cup any time you want! Owatonna also has a Wal-mart, a Target, a Mills Fleet Farm (the “men's mall”), and a Cabella's. There is an outlet mall nearby, and there is plenty of industry in and near the town.

If you want to go out to eat in Owatonna, you've got real restaurants from which to choose. If you want to go shopping, you can find real stores, and even real malls. If you're looking for a job, you can get hired for a decent wage. If you get sick, you're within about half-an-hour of the world-famous Mayo Clinic.

Even though Pillsbury is a small-town campus, the Twin Cities metroplex is only an hour away. Students have ready access to Mall of America, the international airport, all of the major-league sports (Vikings, Timberwolves, Twins, the Wild), lots of minor-league or semi-pro or university teams, dozens of college and university campuses (great places for ministry), some of the best live music in the nation (the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra are widely acclaimed), spectacular architecture, unparalleled recreational opportunities, and multiple museums of art, science, and industry. Students also have access to the churches of the Twin Cities.

That leads me to mention the second strength: Pillsbury students can worship and minister in a wide variety of congregations. Some of them are smaller country churches or new church plants. Others are medium-sized, or even large ministries. A short drive to the Twin Cities can put students in touch with churches that have significant outreaches into the urban core and to university campuses. The opportunities to gain experience in a wide assortment of ministries are much richer at Pillsbury than at most other Bible colleges.

Third, the student-teacher ratio at Pillsbury is among the best you will find in any Bible college. Each student receives plenty of focused attention from the faculty. Because the student population is smaller, the Pillsbury campus has a familiarity—a family atmosphere—that becomes impossible at a larger institution. By your second semester at Pills, you know everybody on campus. The faculty and the administration get involved in the students' lives, not as part of a program, but as part of life. Pillsbury is personal. And it's good.

Fourth, Pillsbury is being held to a high academic standard. It achieved accreditation with the ABHE some years ago. The ABHE (formerly the AABC) has been the most widely recognized accrediting agency for Bible colleges for more than half a century. Pillsbury has met high standards both academically and organizationally.

Fifth, somehow Pillsbury has managed to avoid the usual theological idiosyncrasies. While the college is careful in its use of Bible versions, it has steered clear of the King-James-Only controversy. There has never been a hyper-Calvinist (or even a thoroughgoing Calvinist of any sort) at Pillsbury, but the school has never been sidetracked into virulent anti-Calvinism. The faculty's understanding of sanctification is balanced, avoiding the extremes of venomous revivalism, easy-believism, and hard-line versions of Lordship salvation. It is committed to Baptist principles, but its campus is free from the fumes of Landmarkism. Doctrinal and practical balance marks Pillsbury Baptist Bible College.

Most importantly, the spiritual temperature at Pillsbury is as warm as you'll find at any of the other colleges, and higher than some. The staff and faculty at Pills are visibly living by faith. Students are able to watch these men and women live lives of sacrifice in order to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them. These spiritual leaders set an example that touches their students' lives in multiplied ways.

Baptist fundamentalism has been blessed with several good Bible colleges (and less-than-blessed with innumerable inferior ones). The better Bible colleges perform the important task of

training Christian workers while equipping them with a solid core of general education. At their best, they can also provide a very useful community for fostering the life of faith and forming lifelong relationships (including marriages!).

Each school has its own strengths. Faith is known for its academics and its theological faculty. Maranatha is known for the breadth of its educational offerings, its terrific food service, and its spiritual warmth. Northland is known for its heart and for its emphasis upon “life touching life.” The strengths of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College place it alongside these excellent institutions as an option for undergraduate education in Baptist fundamentalism. ✕

This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

Nature.

George Herbert (1633)

Full of rebellion, I would die
Or fight, or travel, or deny
That you had ought to do with me.

O tame my heart;
It is your highest art
To captivate strong holds to thee.

If you shall let this venom lurk,
And in suggestions fume and work,
My soul will turn to bubbles straight,

And then by kind
Vanish into a wind,
Making your workmanship deceit.

O smooth my rugged heart, and there
Engrave your rev'rend Law and fear;
Or make a new one, since the old

Is sapless grown,
And a much fitter stone
To hide my dust, than you to hold. ✕

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