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A Legacy of Serving the Lord's Church: The Story of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College (1957-2008)

Historical events constitute much of the biblical record. A majority of the Pentateuch describes the beginning of the world, the beginning of the Israelite nation, and the exodus of Israel from Egypt back to the Promised Land. Joshua through Nehemiah cover the remaining periods of Israelite history from the conquest to the exile to the return. In the New Testament four separate accounts list the historical events of Jesus' life, and a lengthy record of the beginning and development of the church is given in Acts.

Why dedicate over half of the Bible to the recording of historical details? Psalm 78:7 provides an answer: God established this testimony about his working in the world so that his people would "set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." To this explanation we can add Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 where he states that Israel's history during the wilderness wanderings gives us valuable instruction for ethical living. Other reasons could be suggested, but these two ideas—hoping in God as we see his providential dealings with man and learning from the positive and negative examples of those who worshipped God before us—are certainly two significant benefits of historical investigation.

While not on the same level of importance as the Bible's, the significance of the history of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College can also offer these same two benefits of historical study (e.g. hope in God and instruction for life). This is true because God's providential dealings continue to be exercised, even in our day (Eph 1:11). It is because of these benefits that I am undertaking the account before you.

In September 1957 a young man from a small South Dakota town traveled east on Hwy 14 to Owatonna, MN where he matriculated at a newly formed Bible college named Pillsbury. He and about 100 others were taught by a small faculty of nine. Most of the faculty had left Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis because Northwestern had chosen to eliminate its Bible school after the 1955-1956 school year. Unbeknownst to this pioneering group of students and faculty, their efforts to survive through that first year (1957-1958) would help to establish a Bible college that would last for more than fifty-one years. Considering the history of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College provides us with the opportunity to learn important factors for life and ministry. So please follow along as I give a short history of Pillsbury followed by an evaluation of the impact Pillsbury's alumni have made on Christ's church. Next, I will assess the reasons for Pillsbury's closure in December of 2008. Finally, we will consider the lessons learned by meditating upon the happenings at Pillsbury from 1957 to 2008. The reader ought to be apprised of the fact that these essays do not come from a dispassionate observer of Pillsbury (though I will seek to be as truthful as possible). For I am a 1985 alumnus and that young man from South Dakota?— his name is Ray Pratt, a 1961 graduate, a faculty member from 1967-1984, and most significantly for me, my dad.

A Short History of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College

The tale of Pillsbury's origin is a fascinating story of intrigue, legal intricacies, and providential superintendence. To make a very long story short, the former Pillsbury Academy was wrested from the hands of the religious liberals on the Pillsbury Board of Trustees by the churches of the Minnesota Baptist Convention. The state convention had won a huge victory against the

liberals in 1946 by breaking away from the national American Baptist Convention.¹ This victory gave them the ability to vote conservatives onto Pillsbury's Board. But just before the Convention's annual meeting vote that would complete the takeover of the Board, the board members sought to separate themselves from the Minnesota Baptist Convention by becoming a totally independent entity. The Convention responded to this action by taking the case to district court where the judge ruled in favor of the Convention. The case was appealed to the Minnesota State Supreme Court which upheld the district court's decision on December 23, 1955. The key member of the Board was elected as its first chairman: R. V. Clearwaters, the pastor of the Fourth Baptist Church of Minneapolis.

The Pillsbury Board made several significant decisions in the months following the Supreme Court action. These included the decision to convert Pillsbury Academy (a boys' military prep school) into a Bible college; to begin publicity, the preparing of a catalog, and the hiring of a faculty for this college; to name Dr. Edward Simpson as Dean of the college; and to elect Dr. Clearwaters as the first president of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College.

After Pillsbury opened its doors in September of 1957, the Board sought an individual who could serve as a resident president. Dr. Monroe Parker, an Alabama native, itinerant evangelist, and former assistant to the president at Bob Jones University, assumed the presidency in February of 1958. Almost immediately upon his arrival to Owatonna, Parker found himself at odds with Dean Simpson over the administrative structure of the college. The Board sided with Parker, and seven of the nine faculty members left at the end of the spring semester. Undaunted by this negative turn of events, the new president and Board brought in several new faculty members and the 1958/1959 school year began with a 20% increase in student enrollment. Monroe Parker would stay at Pillsbury for another seven years, seeing the enrollment grow to 413 by the time of his departure in 1965 (he stayed through the summer of 1965). Dr. Parker's heart for evangelism and his desire to provide a solid biblical education for Christian young people provided a good beginning for the college.

Pillsbury's next president was Dr. B. Myron Cedarholm, former General Director of the Conservative Baptist Association. He would serve in this capacity for only three years. Cedarholm brought his promotional and preaching gifts to the College, and the growth continued, reaching a little over 700 by 1967. But Cedarholm's gifts did not lie in administration, and this factor, along with an unwillingness to accept the authority of the Board of Trustees, led to his resignation on April 29, 1968. Six weeks later Dr. Cedarholm announced that he would be starting a new Bible college in Watertown, Wisconsin, and thus, Maranatha Baptist Bible College was born with the help of six faculty members who left Pillsbury to go with him. Three factors in particular contributed to the dispute Cedarholm had with the Board. First, Cedarholm made several significant financial decisions without consulting the Board. Second, the Board disagreed with some of Cedarholm's choices for chapel speakers. Third, a matter of student discipline whereby some students were not permitted their right to appeal a decision made by the Discipline Committee (as outlined in the student handbook) produced a direct conflict with the Board when the Board agreed to hear the appeal after the students had been denied that right by the administration. Sadly, Cedarholm's resignation was not a quiet one; instead, he chose to make an appeal to the students in chapel and to send out over 1000 letters defending his actions in the whole affair. In addition at least one of the faculty members (the dean of students) who chose to leave with Cedarholm resigned immediately

¹Behind these events lies the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the early twentieth century. A helpful summary of how this larger controversy affected the origin of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College can be found in Larry Dean Pettegrew, *The History of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College* (Owatonna, MN: Pillsbury Press, 1981).

so that other faculty members were needed to complete his courses to the end of the semester. This whole affair had significant impact on the college, and student enrollment dropped to around 400 students in the early 1970s.

Before moving on with this history, it might be helpful to consider the fact that during the late 1960s a controversy was brewing between those like R. V. Clearwaters who championed the “associational principle” and others who were more independent-minded.² The “independent” group had grown weary of the dangers of denominationalism after experiencing their losses in the battle with liberalism in the Northern Baptist Convention followed by the battle with the “soft policy” in the CBA of A. While Clearwaters was leading the charge for the former “hard core” members of the CBA of A to join the newly formed NTA, many of these more independent-minded men were not desirous of joining another association. In the summer of 1968 several of these independents met at the Grace Baptist Church of Anderson, Indiana at a meeting called by Pastor Don Camp in order to discuss the possibility of forming a new college that would champion the ideals of these “independents.” Dr. B. Myron Cedarholm attended this meeting and undoubtedly realized the potential of rallying these pastors behind him in forming a new college.³ On his return to Minnesota after the meeting, Dr. Cedarholm stopped in Watertown, Wisconsin, and one can read the rest of the story elsewhere.⁴

Dr. Clearwaters assumed the presidency for the next seven years (1968-1975), but in 1970 the Board asked Dr. Joseph Rammel to come as the new Executive Vice-President. Dr. Rammel possessed excellent administrative skills, and the Board eventually promoted him to the office of President in 1975 at which time Dr. Clearwaters was made the President Emeritus. Dr. Rammel’s presidency was marked by an expansion of course offerings and educational programs, an improvement in faculty quality, and a steady increase in enrollment culminating with a high of 726 in 1980. But the latter years of Rammel’s tenure (he served through 1986) saw decreasing enrollment and some significant personnel issues.

Paramount among these issues was the upheaval of the 1983/1984 school year when 25 faculty members departed at the end of the spring semester. This number constituted more than half of the teaching faculty and included the department heads of Bible, math, history, English, industrial science, philosophy, Christian education, secretarial science, education, and business. Those departing also included several key administrators such as the Academic Dean, Registrar, and Dean of Students. To be sure not all of these people left because of a conflict with the president, for some were going on to different ministries and would have left regardless of the situation. However, at least 75% were either fired by the president or resigned out of protest to the president’s actions. The reason for the decision to dismiss some of these faculty members still remains a mystery, and since Dr. Rammel has since died (in 2006), we can never know for certain.

Some reasons given to those he “let go” included disloyalty, incompetence, and financial considerations. While the financial situation of the college certainly was the issue in some of the cases, especially in relation to the newer faculty, suggestions like disloyalty and incompetence seem quite a stretch given the number of years many of the released faculty had labored at the school (the average number of years of service for the departing department heads and administrators was 10½ years). One theory relates to what appears to be a turnabout in Dr. Rammel’s relationship with some of the faculty regarding a disagreement over a discipline action being considered against

²To read more about this “associational principle” see the article by Warren Vanhetloo, “New Testament Associations,” *Central Bible Quarterly* 10 (Winter 1967): 7-14.

³Gerry Carlson attended this meeting and has provided the insights shared here with regard to the independent movement (email correspondence, July 1, 2009).

⁴See Kim Ledgerwood, *Rich in Mercy* (N.P., 2008). Also see <http://www.mbbc.edu/page.aspx?m=51>

his youngest son in an August, 1981 business meeting at Grace Baptist Church of Owatonna. In the church meeting Dr. Rammel spoke publicly against the action; however, the church voted to follow the recommendation of the pastor and deacons and proceeded with the discipline. At least half of the members of the deacon board who recommended this action to the church were faculty members at the college. Interestingly, all six were either fired or resigned in 1984 (one was fired in 1983).

Regardless of the reasons for this large number of departing faculty, the constituency of the college began to question what was happening at the school and the enrollment began to descend even more rapidly, reaching a low point of 347 in the fall semester of 1986. Eventually the Board of Trustees lost faith in Rammel's ability to lead, and they accepted his resignation as 1986 came to an end. Soon after this in the spring semester of 1987 the Board announced that Pastor Alan Potter, a Pillsbury graduate and pastor of a vibrant church in Lancaster, PA, would be assuming the presidency in April of that year.

Potter's dynamic personality and progressive vision for the college greatly encouraged the faculty and students. Enrollment numbers increased to a high of 369 (in the 89/90 school year) during his 7 year tenure. One of the great discouragements of Potter's presidency was the failure to attain full accreditation with the North Central regional accrediting agency. This was an unexpected disappointment especially because Pillsbury's main competitor, Maranatha, achieved accreditation during this time. Sadly, Potter found himself at odds with the Board over certain initiatives he wanted to advance, and he chose to resign in 1994.

By 1994 the enrollment had declined to 245 as the Board hired Dr. Gerald Carlson, an alumnus of Pillsbury and Vice President at Maranatha. But Carlson's tenure lasted only one year as he experienced great frustration with the faculty who did not want to head in the same philosophical direction that he felt the school should go.⁵

The 1994/1995 school year ended with an enrollment around 200, and the Board chose retired pastor, Dr. Earle Matteson, to serve as interim president while a search was conducted for a new president. At the end of the 1995/1996 school year Pillsbury experienced a larger departure of faculty (percentage-wise) than it had in 1984 as 21 of the 36 faculty either resigned or were fired, and school morale had descended to an all-time low. The reasons for this mass exodus were varied. Several left due to philosophical conflicts with the Board, and others departed because they felt Pillsbury was a sinking ship and saw better opportunities for ministry elsewhere.

When the Board named Dr. Robert Crane, a 20-year pastoral veteran from Minnesota, as the new President to begin the 1996/1997 school year, he faced a daunting task. Enrollment dipped to 119 that year, yet there was a renewed vigor among the remaining faculty and students who were excited about the possibilities Crane's ministry might bring.⁶ Dr. Crane embraced the task of the presidency with great resolve, and he would see enrollment figures climb to 200 (in the 2001/2002 school year) during the next 12 years. His faithful ministry was an encouragement to all the faculty and students despite the challenge to maintain financial viability. Though Pillsbury's enrollment only twice exceeded 200 during Crane's tenure, the college continued to graduate dedicated servants for Christ despite the limitations inherent in an institution so small.

⁵For more on Carlson's perspective on his tenure at Pillsbury see his short book, *What Happened at Pillsbury?* (Maple Grove, MN: Nystrom Publishing Company, 1996). In personal correspondence with Carlson, he refers to this year at Pillsbury as his personal "suicide mission" (email correspondence from Gerry Carlson [July 1, 2009]). It would appear that very few people were satisfied with how things turned out after Carlson's one-year stint.

⁶Personal interview with faculty member (July 31, 2009).

In 2008 Dr. Crane retired and Dr. Greg Huffman, a 40-year pastoral veteran, assumed the presidency. But, alas, the school had acquired too much debt and had matriculated too few students (only 140) to be able to continue past the fall semester, forcing the school to close its doors in December.

The Accomplishments of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College

Having given the history of the college, I will discuss the accomplishments of the school. What was Pillsbury trying to achieve? Was the institution successful in meeting its stated goals? How can we know whether or not it succeeded? A comprehensive and technically accurate answer to this last question would demand more investigative research than I am able to perform at the present. The ideal scenario would be to secure a roster of former students, alumni, and faculty; conduct interviews and send out questionnaires to these people; and then assess the data and report it in a journal of higher education. Thus, I am asking the reader to lower expectations and to exercise a (great!) degree of trust in me. Based on my knowledge of the many people attached to Pillsbury through the years (faculty, staff, students), my extensive conversations with them while researching for this article, and my honest efforts to report truthfully, my objective is to give a satisfactorily accurate *glimpse* of the success factor. This section of the essay will consider Pillsbury's purpose and then assess the accomplishment of that purpose.

Understanding Pillsbury's Purpose

"The purpose of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College is to prepare students to be 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2 Tim 3:17)."⁷ This has been the consistently stated purpose of the college since its inception. Through the years there have been slight modifications as to how this purpose statement is fleshed out,⁸ but as a Bible college Pillsbury's focus and mission have remained clear: to prepare students for Christian ministry in and through local Baptist churches.

When compared with the purpose statements of other fundamental Bible colleges, Pillsbury

⁷This statement comes from Pillsbury's website which can still be accessed at <http://www.pillsbury.edu/nav.php?link=About/history.html>.

⁸For example, the 1984-1986 Pillsbury Catalog suggests that its purpose statement is carried out through its promotion of a balanced emphasis on the student's growth in spiritual, academic, social and physical areas (Lk 2:52). This statement is expanded upon as follows: "Pillsbury's academic program is designed to prepare students for life in the following ways: 1. All students, without exception, are given a thorough training in Bible. 2. For those desiring to enter a phase of active, full-time Christian ministry, Pillsbury offers professional training to equip them for such vocations. 3. For those desiring to enter a profession outside of the full-time Christian ministry, Pillsbury offers a two year Bible preparatory program before going on for further training. 4. For those desiring a general training in arts and sciences along with a Bible major, a dual major program is offered." The most recent statement of Pillsbury's academic philosophy is found at their (still accessible) website (www.pillsbury.edu). Here we are told that Pillsbury accomplishes its purpose statement "through a program of biblical, general, and professional studies that integrate the doctrinal and ecclesiastical heritage of independent Baptist churches. This heritage of a Baptist emphasis on the local church and its programs is a controlling factor in determining the educational program for ministry that Pillsbury offers." One will notice the great similarity between the following statement of academic philosophy and that found in the 1984-1986 catalog: "All students are given an education in the Bible. For those desiring to enter a phase of full-time Christian ministry, Pillsbury offers a professional education to equip them for such vocations. For those desiring to enter other professions, Pillsbury offers a two-year Bible preparatory program. A student desiring general education in the arts and sciences beyond a Bible major may enter a dual-major program."

certainly fits the mold. But what made Pillsbury distinct from other Bible colleges? What kind of mark did Pillsbury leave on its graduates? Most Pillsbury students would suggest three emphases which made Pillsbury what it was—we could refer to these three points as identifying Pillsbury’s ethos. Pillsbury was known for its high quality of Bible education, emphasis on being well-rounded, and priority of local church involvement.

Without going into too much detail in regard to the philosophy of education espoused by Pillsbury, we need to understand the general purpose of Bible colleges as they came into prominence in the 1950s. The Bible college was formed in order to provide both a Bible education and a liberal arts education particularly to train young people for Christian ministries and church vocations. While there was an awareness that every graduate may not enter full-time vocational ministry, there was a requirement that every student would take a Bible major.⁹ Thus, the main distinctive of the Bible college in comparison to the liberal arts college was the requirement of a Bible major for every student. Pillsbury happily acknowledged this distinctive and even increased the number of semester hours typically demanded for a Bible major from 30 to 36. This increase took place during the early years of Dr. Rammel’s administration. To add to the importance that he placed upon this requirement, Rammel also established a policy that all non-Bible professors who had not previously received a Bible major in their training be required to take one Bible course per semester until they had completed 36 hours of Bible.¹⁰

This emphasis, then, on Bible training has always been Pillsbury’s major focus. And most former students would acknowledge that Pillsbury’s strongest and best-trained faculty were its Bible professors. Depending on the era, names like Joel Kettenring, Richard Weeks, Doug Bookman, Ed Glenny, Larry Pettegrew, Ronn Johnson, and Andy Hudson quickly come to mind when students reminisce about their favorite Bible professors at Pillsbury. But there is much more to Pillsbury’s Bible teaching than good memories. These Bible classes taught students how to be skilled interpreters of the Word so that they could study and apply the Bible for themselves. Also, the Bible classes encouraged students to develop a love for the Word that would lead to a greater love for God.

A second aspect of Pillsbury’s ethos was the importance of balance. Students were constantly encouraged to be well-rounded. “Don’t sit in the library all day, get down to the gym and cheer for the team!” “We want to encourage you to ask out that special someone for the Valentine Formal.” “Come to mission prayer band tonight.” “Make sure that you participate in your intramural athletic program.” These were just some of the typical statements heard during chapel announcements. Of course Pillsbury had its share of nerds, flabby bystanders, spiritual pygmies, and fearful non-daters, but most students bought into the calls for balance in their lives. Most sought to grow just as Jesus did—socially, spiritually, intellectually, and physically (Lk 2:52).

A final area of significance at Pillsbury was the primacy of the local church. Unlike other Christian colleges and universities in the country, Pillsbury intentionally chose not to offer Sunday services on campus.¹¹ Every student had to attend a local church for both Sunday morning and Sunday evening services. On Wednesday nights attendance at a local church or the campus service was required. Additionally, every student had to serve in a specific local church ministry at least four semesters in order to graduate (this ministry to local churches was referred to as “going on

⁹See Pettegrew, *The History of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College* (Owatonna: Pillsbury Press, 1981), 123-26.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 164-65.

¹¹There were two exceptions to this. First, Berachah Baptist Church was organized by Monroe Parker and met on the campus from 1964-1967. Second, for a short period of time in the early 70s, Grace Baptist Church held a service on the campus for students due to the fact that their building was not large enough to hold both the students and their regular attenders.

extension").¹² The most common chapel speakers were pastors from local churches. In the fall of the year many local churches from the southern half of Minnesota, northern Iowa and western Wisconsin came to the campus to recruit students for the purpose of serving in their assemblies on weekend "extension," and many of these churches would help to pay the students' traveling expenses. These are just some of the ways that local church ministry was made prominent. If students were not in the habit of being consistent in their church attendance or if they were not oriented toward service in the local church before coming to Pillsbury, they graduated with a very different mindset. Most pastors would agree that the Pillsbury alumni currently in their churches are some of the most dedicated, diligent, and faithful members they have.

Did Pillsbury succeed in accomplishing its goals as an institution? Do Pillsbury graduates demonstrate balanced lives, dedication to their local churches, and attentiveness to the sound preaching and teaching of God's Word? Are Pillsbury people consistent in living out the good works they were supposed to be "thoroughly prepared" to perform? As an alumnus myself, I hope that the answer to all these questions is a resounding "Yes!" Others will have to arrive at their own decision as they have opportunity to interact with Pillsbury's graduates. In this next section I would like to help the reader toward arriving at an accurate conclusion by assessing the accomplishments of Pillsbury's alumni.

Assessing Pillsbury's Accomplishments

The best way for us to understand the fulfillment of Pillsbury's goals as an institution is to look at her graduates. Many churches nationwide, especially in the Midwest, are pastored by Pillsbury grads. Pillsbury's alumni also include many who serve as elders and deacons in local churches, as itinerant evangelists to local churches, as music ministers, Christian school teachers, Sunday School teachers, and a myriad of other local church ministries. We can find graduates serving as missionaries on foreign fields (88 have served or are currently serving in this kind of ministry), and many students (322) took opportunity to consider foreign missionary service by participating in missionary apprenticeship programs (MAP) during their time in college. Pillsbury alumni have also served in key roles of parachurch organizations (e.g. college and seminary presidents, administrators, staff, and faculty, mission agency directors and administrators, and Christian school principals).

Perhaps a glimpse into Pillsbury's impact can come from three anecdotes. The first deals with a church and the second and third with families. First, the church of which I am currently a member—Eden Baptist Church of Savage, MN—illustrates the impact Pillsbury has made on independent Baptist churches in the state. Currently, 23% of the members who are 19 or older have either attended or graduated from Pillsbury. Our senior pastor is an alumnus, and so are three of the other five elders. Another elder also attended the school for a time. Our director of women's ministry and Sunday School superintendent are each graduates. Pillsbury has undeniably impacted our church's ministry. And this scenario could be repeated numerous times throughout the state as Pillsbury has clearly placed its stamp on the local Baptist churches here.

The second account of the school's influence can be seen in the Gerrit Jansma family from Westbrook, MN. Mr. Jansma owned a small dairy farm, and he willingly used his abilities in service to the college as he served on the board of trustees for several years. He had nine children, and every single one attended the college. Six of the nine graduated, five with bachelor's degrees and

¹²During the Crane administration the extension requirement was increased so that students were required to serve in local churches at least 7 semesters, i.e., students were expected to minister in a church every semester of their college education.

one with an A.A. degree in secretarial science. Today all nine children serve as active members of local churches.

The Pratt family from Elkton, South Dakota provides a third story. Four of the five children in the Pratt family (Ray, Judy, Dave, and Joanne) attended Pillsbury. Ray graduated in 1961; he went on to serve as a pastor for 2½ years, a Bible college professor for 34 years, and a Christian school principal for one year. During those years he faithfully served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher, interim pastor, and in many other local church ministries. Judy graduated in 1965; she taught for several years in both public and Christian schools and served as a pastor's wife for 20 years with her husband, Warren Frick. Dave never graduated from Pillsbury, but he has gone on to be a faithful local church member, serving as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and in several other ministries. Joanne graduated with an A.A. degree in 1971; she served as a pastor's wife for 8 years and then she and her husband, Paul Clark, left to serve on the mission field of Bogota, Columbia where they have ministered together now for 30 years. This kind of family story is not unique in the history of Pillsbury. Numerous others have likewise been strongly influenced by Pillsbury to go out and serve in Christ's church.

While I would like to say that 100% of the alumni are now faithfully serving God, we are all aware that sin takes its toll and that the percentage is not that high. But I do not think it would be a stretch to say that the vast majority of Pillsbury's grads are doing exactly what they were trained to do. And for this reason we should thank the Lord that a significant number of men and women have been "thoroughly furnished for every good work."

The Closure of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College

Who was the more accurate historian – the writer of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings (most likely one individual) or the writer of 1 and 2 Chronicles? Perhaps another question ought to precede this one: does an *accurate* account require both negative and positive aspects of the characters being discussed? Or does *accuracy* mean that as many details as possible are being included? Certainly the writer of Samuel and Kings included much information about the dynasties of kings in both Israel and Judah; he also revealed many facts about the origin of the theocracy; and he did not shy away from revealing quite a few negative aspects of the characters he treated. On the other hand, the author of Chronicles, seeking to encourage the hopes of the Jewish refugees returning from exile in Babylon, told the story of Israel's history with a decidedly positive perspective. He rarely mentioned the kings of Israel except as their lives intersected with the kings of David's line in Judah; he never referenced certain negative stories like that of David's sin with Bathsheba or the sinful activities of Absalom, Amnon, and Solomon; and he included list after list of genealogical material with the goal of showing the unity of the nation. In the end both writers were as accurate as their purposes required because both wrote under the inspiration of God (2 Tim 3:16).

I have raised this question of historical accuracy to remind the reader that the writing of history is not an exact science. Certainly, a historian can be sloppy or biased or intentionally inaccurate even to the point of deception. But my efforts in discussing the history of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College have been rendered with the goal of providing a truthful account. Undoubtedly others might tell the story differently, but I trust that most will concur on the details (and I certainly desire correction if any of the account has been sloppily or inaccurately presented). I admit that I am not an unbiased reporter because I am hoping to convey my own love for the school and my appreciation for God's work of grace through the lives of those who sought to champion the school's stated purpose: to prepare students to be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:17).

Having thus stated some of my personal biases in the writing of this account and having presented a history of the school, the major question before us in this section of the paper is, "Why did a college with such a valid purpose and amazing history fail to endure?"

Two events threatened to close Pillsbury within its first eleven years of existence. The first was the dispute regarding administrative structure that arose between the faculty and the first resident president, Monroe Parker, in 1958. Even though seven of the nine faculty members left, the school was able to continue and enjoyed a growth of 20% in student enrollment for the fall semester of 1958. The second early challenge to Pillsbury's existence occurred in the spring of 1968 when President B. Myron Cedarholm resigned. He founded Maranatha Baptist Bible College that fall and Pillsbury's enrollment fell from around 700 students to an average of 450 students throughout the early 1970s. However, neither of these troublesome events in the history of the college brought about its end. In fact the school rebounded during the latter half of the 1970s reaching an enrollment high of 726 in the fall semester of 1980. So what events and factors did figure into Pillsbury's eventual closure?

Certainly there is no single event that can be blamed for bringing Pillsbury to its knees. But like the defeat of the British army by the colonists in the War for Independence (1775-1783), several events chipped away at Pillsbury's strength. And the sum of these events, not necessarily one in particular, brought about the college's collapse.

Events of the Latter Rammel Years (1981-1986)

A perusal of the enrollment figures demonstrates that a rapid decline took place in the early 1980s. Following a high of 726 in the fall of 1980, the number of students fell to a low of 347 by the fall semester of 1986. Although student population increased to a high of 369 during Alan Potter's presidency (1987-1994), it never rose above 300 after 1992. These numbers indicate that events in the early 1980s probably contributed to the beginning of the end for the college. A number of contributing factors played a role in this early-80s decline.¹³

First, Pillsbury failed to gain the support of a strong national constituency. As a result of this failure, the school became more and more provincial with the vast majority of its students coming from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. While Pillsbury had enjoyed the support of a large number of churches in Pennsylvania during the 1970s, the stream of students from that state began to ebb during this period. Why did this lack of national support occur? One theory suggests that as student numbers from outside the Midwest began to increase, the college failed to address the need to expand its board to include people from outside Minnesota (Pillsbury operated under the auspices of the Minnesota Baptist Association which annually elected the board made up entirely of members from Minnesota Baptist churches).¹⁴ It is true that a national Board of Reference

¹³The factors mentioned in this section of the essay come from a combination of interviews conducted by the author. All of these individuals were granted anonymity, and I intend to honor my agreement with them. The reader can be assured that I sought and received information from board members, administrators, department heads and other faculty members and students. The honesty and openness of many of these individuals were very helpful in contributing to the accuracy of what is included in this essay.

¹⁴In a document sent out by the Pillsbury board following the Cedarholm resignation (dated May 10, 1968) the following statement appears: "By the Charter of 1854, all Trustees of the College must be residents of Minnesota." But this statement appears to have been in error, for a more fervent investigation of the original charter conducted under the Potter administration demonstrated that it had been amended in 1878. The amendment stated that up to half of the board could be non-Minnesotans. Thus, having a board composed entirely by Minnesota church members was *not* a requirement according to Pillsbury's governing

was formed during this time, but this group held no decision-making power. Another theory relates to the fact that the largest fundamental Baptist church in Philadelphia, PA (Calvary Baptist of Lansdale) which, along with many of its sister churches, had provided a large number of students throughout the 1970s, began to direct its students to other schools.

In addition to these two theories was the growth of competition from two competing schools in Wisconsin. Pillsbury's main competitor for students had been Maranatha ever since 1968; the two schools shared essentially the same constituency. In addition Northland Baptist Bible College of Dunbar, Wisconsin opened its doors in 1976, and it, too, drew from the same pool of students.

Second, Pillsbury failed to pursue accreditation with a government-recognized accrediting agency. Most would agree that Pillsbury should have begun to pursue accreditation much earlier than 1984, but at least the college did complete a self-study in the spring of that year. However, the effort to produce the self-study appears to have been a work of futility since Pillsbury did not use the self-study to apply for accreditation with the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) or with the North Central regional accrediting agency (NCA), both of which were recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Rather, the administration and board sought accreditation with the little known American Association of Christian Colleges, an organization that never received approval from the US Department of Education or CHEA. This factor hindered Pillsbury's ability to attract students. When Pillsbury finally did achieve accreditation with the Association for Biblical Higher Education (the former AABC) in 2005, it was too little, too late.

Third, some believe that Pillsbury's rapid expansion of curriculum offerings caused the school to lose its focus and direction. Rather than concentrating efforts on improving itself as a training school for pastors, missionaries, and Christian school teachers, the college appeared to be too willing to begin new program expansions without the necessary student population to support them. It also appeared to some that the college was moving toward a university model of education rather than the Bible college model it had endorsed through all its years of existence.

Fourth, the reality of the bursting of the baby boomer bubble affected Pillsbury just as it affected all colleges in the early 1980s. Demographically, there simply were not as many students in the college-age pool. This factor was also noticeable within the Minnesota Baptist Association (MBA) itself as membership in its churches began to decline. At this same time a disheartening number of member churches within the association began to drop their affiliation with the fellowship so that loyalty to the MBA's school slipped away.

Fifth, as was mentioned above, the latter years of the Rammel administration were plagued with a number of personal and administrative controversies that sent a troubling message to Pillsbury's constituency, causing a lack of confidence in Pillsbury's leadership and direction. Losing 25 faculty members following the spring semester of 1984 was a profound disruption for the school as key administrators (the Academic Dean, Registrar, and Dean of Students) and department heads (including Bible, math, history, English, industrial science, philosophy, secretarial science, education, and business) departed. As noted earlier, many of these departures stemmed in part from a controversy regarding a church discipline situation involving Rammel's youngest son.¹⁵

rules. In a letter (dated January 10, 1991) sent to Pillsbury board members by the Executive Secretary (Dr. Richard Paige) and President (Rev. Will Peterson) of the Minnesota Baptist Association, a photocopy of the findings of attorneys from the Dorsey & Whitney law firm of Minneapolis confirms that Pillsbury's charter allowed for the presence of non-Minnesotans on the board of trustees. As a result of the discovery, some non-Minnesotans were seated on the board in subsequent elections. But in hindsight such an action (to add non-Minnesotans to the board) should have taken place 15 years earlier than this.

¹⁵Not only did the six members of the deacon board at Grace Baptist Church in Owatonna, who were Pillsbury faculty members, lose their jobs in 1984 (either by firing or resignation) (also, one of the six was

Another controversy that arose during these years was Rammel's handling of the finances of the school, or, better, his approval of spending by individuals who controlled certain financial decisions, especially finances related to athletics. The clearest example of failure in this area involved the hiring of a new football coach (Larry Courtney) for the fall season of 1984. Even when Courtney brought with him several unsavory coaching staff members, including one who had to be fired for alcohol and drug use two months into the school year, and even when this coach held a "coaches meeting" during Sunday morning church services,¹⁶ he continued as coach for two more seasons. Courtney also recruited a number of students from southern states who had virtually no idea of Pillsbury's ethos or standards of conduct.¹⁷ Negative repercussions were bound to happen as a result of this kind of recruiting, and this is precisely what occurred when a female graduate filed a discrimination suit with the Department of Human Services in the State of Minnesota in October of 1986. In the suit she alleged that Pillsbury had not permitted her to date inter-racially.¹⁸ The suit brought great negative publicity to the school when the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* published a story about it on February 1, 1987. The IRS soon became involved, and thanks to many hours of work by the school's attorneys and President Potter the suit was finally resolved in October of 1992.¹⁹

Evidence of pragmatic decision-making abounded during these years of declining enrollment as Rammel and his team strived to boost attendance. Another anecdote recounted to me by a board member included an alleged cover-up that took place in regard to some of the recruited football players. Apparently some of the faculty falsely doctored documents of several of these players so that they could meet the school's academic and spiritual requirements. Even when this fact came to light, "no one repented, no one was punished, no one was released."²⁰

Sixth, overseeing all of these events during the early 80s was the board of trustees, and they certainly had much to do with the direction of the school, specifically in that they continued to support President Rammel. Most observers of the Cedarholm conflict of 1968 suggest that the major question of that time was this: Is Pillsbury a president-run school or a board-run school?

fired in 1983), the discipline action clearly affected the relationship between Dr. Rammel and the entire Bible faculty. In conversations with several of those involved, there is unanimity on this point: previously Rammel had sought counsel and direction from his theologically trained faculty but following the 1981 meeting there was a marked change in this relationship as Rammel pursued advice from people outside of this cadre of biblically-trained advisors.

¹⁶I served as a floor supervisor that fall of 1984, and when I learned of this "meeting," I promptly informed the Dean of Men about it because I was amazed that a faculty member would organize a meeting when he should have been in church. The curt note I received in response from the Dean of Men speaks for itself: "Do not tell anyone about this meeting!" In retrospect I would surmise that the Dean of Men was given these orders from those above him in the authority structure. But regardless of who gave the original edict, it speaks to the type of pragmatic atmosphere existent on the campus during these days.

¹⁷The promises made to these recruits also prompts incredulity. Several later claimed that they had been promised scholarships, and because the school was at that time under investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for racial discrimination, Pillsbury was forced to forgive at least \$50,000 of unpaid tuition and fees owed by these athletes (letter from Alan Potter to R.V. Clearwaters [June 15, 1988] and personal conversation with a faculty member [May 30, 2009]).

¹⁸Lest I be misunderstood at this point, the negative repercussions that accrued to the college because of the recruitment of some minority student-athletes were *not* due to the fact that they were minorities. Rather these repercussions were due to the fact that the college did not respond well to the situation created when these minority students wanted to date those of a different ethnicity.

¹⁹Those close to the situation admit that this confrontation with the IRS nearly cost Pillsbury its 501(c)(3) status as a tax-exempt educational institution. Had it not been for the wise efforts of Potter and the school's attorney, Pillsbury would likely have had to close its doors 16 years earlier than 2008.

²⁰Email correspondence from a board member (April 23, 2009).

The events that transpired at that time revealed to everyone that Pillsbury was and had always been a board-run school. The president and faculty were responsible to follow the mandates set forth by the board of trustees, and if anyone ever came to disagree with these mandates, he ought to leave quietly and honorably. At a crucial point in the latter Rammel years, particularly a special board meeting called to hear grievances from the faculty on April 30, 1984, it would appear that the board failed to recall its own mandate, i.e., its responsibility to govern in the best interests of the college. At that April meeting the board chose to give its support to Rammel even after hearing from numerous faculty members who shared their concerns about the direction and oversight of the college.²¹ After talking with many faculty members who attended that meeting, it is my understanding that Dr. Clearwaters played a significant role in the board's decision to support Rammel. At least one faculty member was chided by Clearwaters for failing to be sufficiently loyal to the president. As this faculty member recalls, Clearwaters pointed his finger at this man and said, "The problem here is not with leadership but with followship."²² To garner support for Rammel, Clearwaters was also said to have urged his fellow board members using the biblical phrase, "You shall not touch God's anointed." There will always be debate as to whether Clearwaters' support of Rammel or other factors caused the board to retain Rammel and to permit the mass exodus of faculty that spring. At any rate the board's support of Rammel certainly helped to perpetuate the problems occurring in the declining enrollment period of the latter Rammel years.

The Influence of Dr. Richard V. Clearwaters (1957-1987)

From 1957-1987 Dr. Clearwaters served in various roles as president, chairman of the board of trustees, and president emeritus of Pillsbury. While his influence waned during the last decade of his ministry at Pillsbury, it is not an exaggeration to say that he placed an indelible mark on the school, affecting its philosophy, governance, and ethos.

Clearwaters' leadership style was similar to that of many fundamentalist leaders in his generation, i.e., pioneering, authoritarian, principled, proprietary, militant, polarizing, and visionary. As a result Clearwaters enjoyed the admiration and loyalty of many followers while at the same time engendering opposition and division. The reality of these kinds of responses to Clearwaters' leadership at Pillsbury is recognizable in the events surrounding the Cedarholm resignation and subsequent establishment of Maranatha. During those years Clearwaters expected absolute loyalty to Pillsbury, especially among the churches in the MBA. For example, if any pastor dared to host a singing group from Maranatha or any other Bible college, he would receive the "cold shoulder" treatment.²³ If anyone chose to report about events surrounding the Cedarholm

²¹Interestingly, the board chose *not* to gather in executive session for this meeting. Rather, they invited President Rammel to sit in on the meeting that was called to hear the grievances of the faculty, many of which included disagreements with the President! One can imagine the uncomfortable nature of the situation for several of the faculty who chose to bring their grievances against Rammel while he was seated right in front of them, especially when some of these faculty had already signed contracts for the upcoming school year.

²²Personal conversation with this faculty member (Spring 2009). In regard to Dr. Clearwaters' outburst at this point in the meeting, the chairman of the board apparently issued a strong rebuke to Clearwaters for this comment, and to his credit, Clearwaters backed down and apologized for his actions (email correspondence with this board member [June 2, 2009]).

²³By "cold shoulder" treatment I am speaking about the ways in which pastors could be marginalized by Clearwaters and his supporters. This marginalization could take many forms such as being denied the opportunity to serve on Pillsbury's or Central's board, being kept from serving on various committees in the MBA, or being the object of negative statements in written correspondence. One pastor who served at an MBA church in the Twin Cities during the 70s shared with me the story of his "cold shoulder" treatment

affair, he had better get his facts straight or he could be certain to receive a swift and stern rebuke from Dr. Clearwaters.²⁴

Very few would question the notion that Dr. Clearwaters exercised strong leadership throughout his years of connection with Pillsbury. This was evident in how he led the effort to wrest control of Pillsbury from the liberal element on the Pillsbury board and helped to establish the college in 1957. It was seen in his handling of the conflict with Dr. Cedarholm during the turbulent events of 1968. We can also see his strong influence in the search for and selection of Joseph Rammel as Executive Vice-President. Following on the heels of the Cedarholm years, Clearwaters and the rest of the board were quite reticent to grant much authority to the college president. For this reason they were gratified to find an able administrator like Dr. Rammel who was quite willing to serve at the behest of the board since he was already accustomed to this type of arrangement in his previous years as a school superintendent. It still took five years before Clearwaters and the board were willing to grant Rammel the title (and authority) of president.

While it is difficult to gauge the effects of Clearwaters' strong leadership, both negative and positive results can be noted. Positively, Clearwaters played a key role in the origins of the school, in its philosophical direction, and in its preservation during the difficult days of 1958 and 1968. His nationally known reputation undoubtedly affected the willingness of fundamental Baptists to support the college by sending their students and money. Finally, he played a significant role in encouraging Dr. Rammel to come to Pillsbury, and he gave much help and advice to Rammel as he began his ministry at the college.

On the negative side of the ledger Dr. Clearwaters' leadership style also served to alienate some would-be supporters of the school. Undoubtedly, some good men received negative treatment from Clearwaters through the years, and this was likely the reason that these same men directed their support to other colleges when these arose as legitimate competitors. Clearwaters' strong support for Dr. Rammel in Rammel's latter years of ministry, though laudable from a loyalty standpoint, probably served, in hindsight, to hurt the school since his support helped to lengthen Rammel's tenure, thus contributing to the manifold problems that arose in the early 80s. Lastly, Clearwaters' lengthy service as chairman of the board may well have had the effect of squelching independent thinking and innovation by other board members so that when Clearwaters finally stepped down from that position, there were not enough able and thoughtful colleagues in place to move the college forward. Also contributing to Pillsbury's decline was Clearwaters' (and the board's) understanding that board members must be sought from Minnesota churches alone.²⁵ What might have occurred had Clearwaters known of the amended charter of 1878? We will never know. But one (apparently) unintended effect of the Minnesota residency requirement for board members was the limited pool of qualified trustees, for people outside of Minnesota could have greatly enhanced the ability of the board to govern and improve the college.

(email correspondence [July 17, 2009]). Even when he extended a warm invitation to Dr. Rammel to invite him to his church to promote Pillsbury (in 1973), he was rejected because he had previously indicated a willingness to support schools other than Pillsbury.

²⁴See Clearwaters' response to an article in the *Baptist Bulletin*: Dr. Richard V. Clearwaters, "The G.A.R.B. Guilt Complex of Dr. Merle R. Hull, Editor of the *Baptist Bulletin*," *Central Bible Quarterly* 12 (Spring 1969): 45-48.

²⁵In a letter (May 10, 1968) from Dr. Clearwaters and the rest of the board of trustees to "Friends of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College" Clearwaters makes the following statement: "By the Charter of 1854, all Trustees of the College must be residents of Minnesota and the College must be under the patronage of the Minnesota Baptist Association of Baptist Churches." Did Clearwaters know that the 1854 charter had been amended in 1878? This seems doubtful. But knowledge of the actual trustee requirement would have helped the school immensely. For more details see note 14 above.

Events of the Potter Years (1987-1994)

When Alan Potter assumed the presidency in the spring of 1987, the school faced a serious discrimination lawsuit and a period of six years of declining enrollment. Enrollment figures did increase to 369 in 1989; in addition the discrimination lawsuit dating back to the Courtney era was providentially resolved; and some non-Minnesotans were added to the board. But the greatest disappointment during these years was the school's failure to receive accreditation with the North Central regional accrediting agency. Those close to the situation have stated that the reason for this failure was that the accrediting team assigned to Pillsbury's case detected a difference of philosophy and direction between Potter and the board. The disappointment of not attaining accreditation was heightened by the fact that Pillsbury's greatest competitor, Maranatha, did achieve this status with the NCA at this time.

Despite this setback, the college was financially solvent when Potter resigned at the end of the spring semester of 1994. Many would suggest that Potter's departure served to hammer another nail into Pillsbury's coffin, for Potter had brought stability back to the college after the events of the early 80s; he had sought to progressively pursue new avenues of support outside Pillsbury's typical constituency; and he had united the faculty behind a clear vision he had cast called the "Pillsbury Idea."²⁶ But as one board member informed me, several trustees placed pressure on Potter to resign due to their desire to narrow rather than expand the college's constituency.²⁷ In addition an alarming number of vocal antagonists among Pillsbury's supporters criticized Potter for altering the discipline system (by switching to a non-demerit system) and for dropping some of the more stringent aspects of the codes of conduct (e.g. women were allowed to wear pants to athletic events). Perhaps the most alarming and maddening indication of the craziness of Potter's critics was their willingness to believe and to spread a rumor that Potter had allowed some students to drink beer in the college's dining hall and, in some versions of the story, Potter was even said to have participated by bringing his own 6-pack. Indeed, it is not difficult to see why Potter would want to leave under such conditions, and the failure of the board to support and defend him against these kinds of attacks speaks volumes about their contribution to Pillsbury's eventual demise.²⁸

Looking back from our present vantage point it may be that Potter's swift effort to make (what many perceived to be) necessary changes helped to create the tension that resulted with some of the constituency and some of the board members. Others might lay the blame for this tension at the feet of those who were too easily offended by the changes. Still others point to the youth and inexperience of the academic dean (Paul Ague served from 1991-1996) and several Bible faculty members.²⁹ Since it is impossible to assign blame in this matter, two observations seem clear: 1) when Potter departed a division of sorts existed between the faculty (who had supported

²⁶*Old Main Echoes* 34, no. 2 (Winter 1991).

²⁷Email correspondence from a board member (April 23, 2009).

²⁸In a conversation with Alan Potter about his resignation, he never accused the board as a whole for forcing him out (personal conversation with Alan Potter, May 29, 2009). I am making this assessment based on the opinions of others close to the situation.

²⁹Evidence of the kind of behavior evidenced by this youthfulness can be illustrated with two anecdotes. 1) One of the Bible faculty members attended a basketball game at the opponents' court and wore a "Promise Keepers" T-shirt. Regardless of one's disagreement or agreement with this organization, wisdom should have dictated the choice of a better shirt on such an occasion. 2) When Dr. Ague left Pillsbury following the spring semester of 1996, he had apparently set up a team visit with North Central for the fall semester. Unfortunately, he failed to inform the incoming administration so that when the team arrived in the fall, Dr. Crane's administration had no knowledge of the impending meeting (personal conversation with a faculty member [July 31, 2009]).

Potter's initiatives) and the board and 2) some of the constituency had begun to question what was happening on campus.

Events of the Carlson-Matteson Era (1994-1996)

Some have suggested that Gerald Carlson's one-year tenure as president of Pillsbury was a further step downward for the college. He inherited a student body of 245 students in the fall of 1994 that would shrink to 200 in the fall of 1995.³⁰ One board member described Carlson's year in office as quite discouraging due to his failure to understand the faculty and student body.³¹ A faculty member who served during that year also said that Carlson did not communicate very well with the faculty, thus creating a very uneasy and negative atmosphere.³² Admittedly, Carlson faced a difficult task, stepping into a situation in which the faculty had appreciated their previous president and desired to maintain the vision he (Potter) had articulated.³³

Although Dr. Matteson brought a positive attitude to the campus during his year as interim president, his tenure did not bring about the needed enrollment results for the college because the constituency knew his appointment was a stop-gap measure. With this uneasy situation created at Pillsbury, prospective students enrolled at Northland and Maranatha instead; these were colleges with much more stable atmospheres. At the end of the spring semester of 1996, 21 of the 36 faculty either resigned or were fired. The fat lady had begun to clear her throat at this point.

Events of the Crane Years (1996-2008)

Beginning with only 119 students in the fall of 1996 it is truly amazing that Robert Crane was able to keep the college going for another twelve years. Many would regard Crane as an able administrator whose financial abilities helped the college survive through many years of low enrollment. However, because he was unknown nationally, having no established reputation in academics or in fundamentalism generally, the college continued to die a slow death. Thus, when Greg Huffman assumed the presidency in the fall of 2008, his ministry became one of a pastor helping his people (in this case the faculty, staff, and students) to consider the grace of God in the midst of trials.

Summary

Adding up all of these blows against Pillsbury College, one can see why the knockout punch of insurmountable debt forced its closure following the fall semester of 2008. While the events of the latter Rammel years were certainly life-threatening, some stability was regained during Potter's

³⁰Precise enrollment numbers for these years are difficult because I have not been able to access official numbers from the board minutes. These numbers come from looking at college yearbooks of the years indicated.

³¹Email correspondence from a board member (April 23, 2009).

³²Personal conversation with this faculty member (May 30, 2009).

³³For a description of the challenges Carlson faced and a defense of his actions during that school year, see his booklet, *What Happened at Pillsbury?* (Maple Grove, MN: Nystrom Publishing Company, 1996). In fairness to Carlson there were some faculty members who had given support to President Potter but who were not in full agreement with him (Potter). Some of these faculty members "were distressed with some of the attitudes of the majority of the faculty and staff as they related to Jerry Carlson's tenure. Even if you disagreed with Jerry's leadership, he deserved better than he got" (email correspondence from a faculty member [June 13, 2009]).

administration. However, the board of trustees appeared to stumble in its governing of the college. First, by failing to deal with issues as it should have during the early 80s and second, by failing to lend needed support to Potter. The decision to become even more provincial in the selection of Crane served to shrink the already shrunken pool of students from which Pillsbury was drawing so that the demise of Pillsbury became inevitable.

Lessons from the History of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College

I close this lengthy account with some briefly stated observations.

- 1) Integrity always matters. No one should ever be considered so untouchable that he is not called to account for his failures and shortcomings.
- 2) Competency and due diligence are essential requirements for inclusion on the board of trustees. As one board member observed, "Trustees must do their homework in order to become knowledgeable about the entire spectrum of the work of the institution from academics to economics. [They] must provide a contribution of time, energy, and resources that extends beyond attending meetings to actually moving the institution forward."³⁴
- 3) Failure to make difficult decisions in the present, i.e., making decisions by indecision, will usually result in greater heartache in the future. Failing to deal with a sinning child, an unwise football coach, an unscrupulous financial officer, and a president who has lost the confidence of most of his faculty will bring about ruin. Likewise, a failure to support a beleaguered president will result in his resignation.
- 4) Seasoned subordinates, i.e., veteran faculty members, ought to be heard especially when they are speaking with one voice. Had the board listened to the faculties of 1984 and 1994, better decisions could have been made. In addition, institutions would be wise to develop a mechanism by which faculty members can have access to board members without the threat of dismissal or the accusation of disloyalty.
- 5) When subordinates disagree with their superiors, they ought to leave quietly and honorably because they want to see the institution's ministry continued unimpeded. The faculty members who left in 1958 and 1984 did. Those who left in 1968 and 1996 did not.³⁵
- 6) Ineffective practices or detrimental behavior should not be rewarded with continued approval on the basis of past performance. Anyone, including the president, a board member, or a faculty/staff member, may serve admirably and beneficially for a period of time, but when an individual demonstrates that he is no longer an asset to the school, he or she should be removed.
- 7) Rumors must be confirmed before being accepted. The tendency to believe a negative story about an individual or institution is a common yet dangerous practice. Additionally, passing along an unconfirmed story violates biblical teaching about gossip.
- 8) Reputation is developed and earned over many years, but it can be lost in a single moment. Once the constituency loses trust in a school, it is extremely difficult to regain that trust in

³⁴Email correspondence from a board member (April 23, 2009).

³⁵Certainly not everyone who left in 1968 or 1996 left poorly. But an ample number from each of these years did act in such a way that the ongoing ministry of the college was hampered after their departure. Several examples of this have already been detailed above in regard to the 1968 situation. In regard to 1996 (along with the account about the accreditation visit) one faculty member told me about the strange disappearance of a stack of recruitment cards in between the spring and fall semesters (email correspondence from a faculty member [June 18, 2009]).

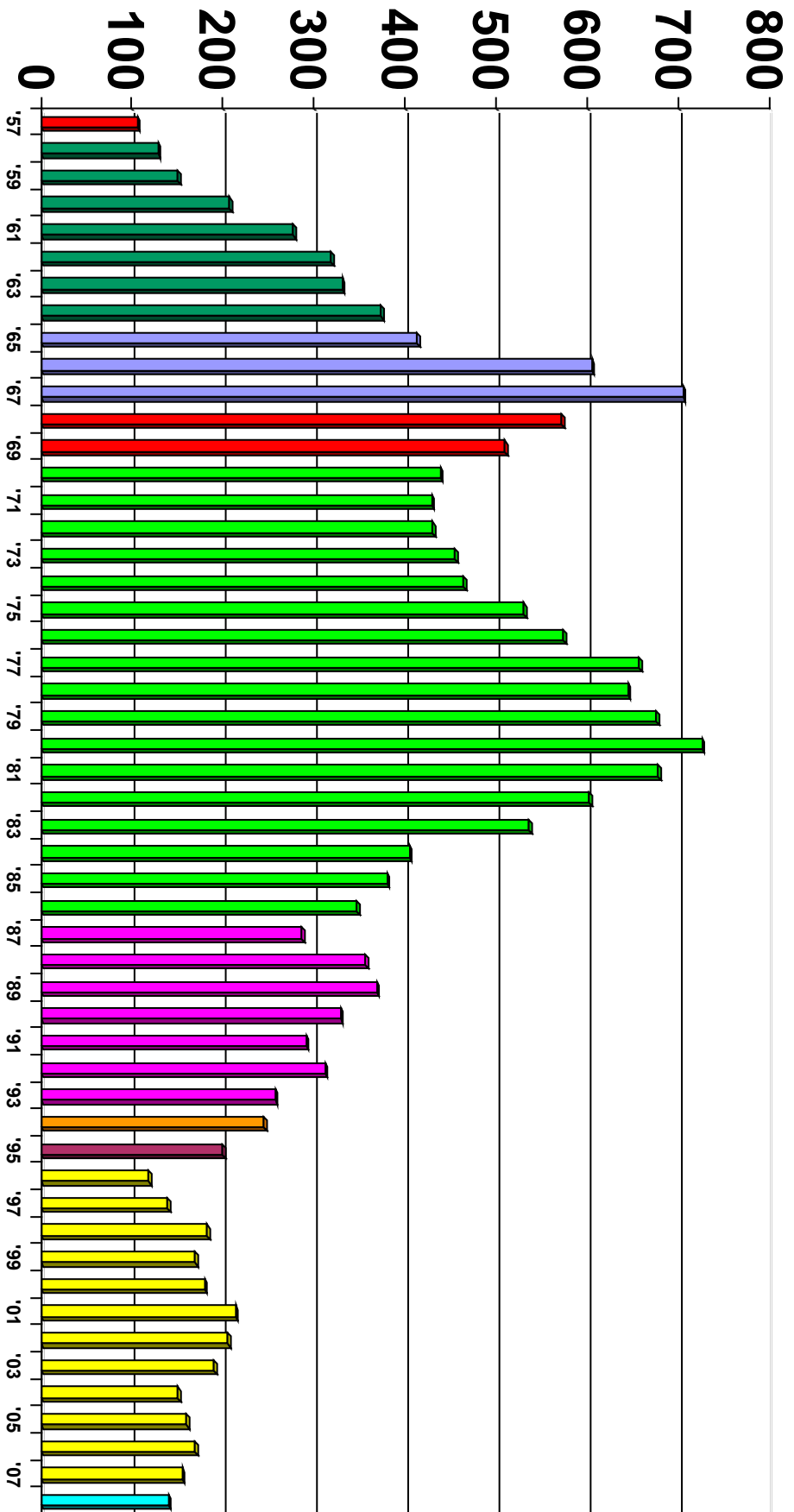
subsequent years.

- 9) God honors those who endure in the face of difficult circumstances (James 5:11). The faithfulness of the staff and faculty members who served at the college, especially during times of significant institutional upheaval, provides a great example. Twenty of these served at least 15 years or longer. Of these Wayne Deckert (28), Tom Lawson (31½), and Sam Telloyan (26) served the longest.³⁶

In God's providence Pillsbury Baptist Bible College trained young men and women for Christian service for 51½ years. Though none of the founders of the school might have been able to imagine the impact that the college would have, they, like us, would likely be saddened by the ending of this significant training institution. Yet God's hand is not hereby shortened or disabled by this reality. He will continue to build his church just as he promised (Matt 16:18). And what should our response be to what God has been gracious to do through Pillsbury from 1957-2008? Monroe Parker's words from the Pillsbury College Hymn provide the answer to this question: "O God, we stand in awe of the work which thou hast wrought."

³⁶Besides the three mentioned, the remainder of the list includes: Darrell Bevis (21½), Peggy Briggs (23), Norm Brown (21), Ed Cunningham (17), Russell Dell (17), Robert Eiseman (18), Jim Hazewinkel (20), Dell Johnson (17), Kathleen Lawson (16), Arlene Lewis (15), Jim Lewis (15), David McGuire (24½), Randy Miller (20), Ray Pratt (17), Joseph Rammel (16½), Mary Schmal (17), Sherry Segal (20½), and Barbara Walley (15). See Carolyn Van Loh, *Great is Thy Faithfulness* (N.p.: Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, 2006), 78-80, for a listing of the faculty members and the years they served.

Pillsbury College Enrollment Figures (1957-2008)



Presidents of Pillsbury College

- R. V. Clearwaters – 1957-1958, 1968-1975
- Monroe Parker – 1958-1965 (assumed office Feb 1958)
- B. Myron Cedarholm – 1965-1968 (assumed office Sep 1965)
- Joseph Rammel – 1970-1986 (from 1970-1975 Rammel served as the Executive Vice-President; assumed office summer 1970)

- Alan Potter – 1987-1994 (assumed office April 1987)
- Gerry Carlson – 1994-1995 (assumed office summer 1994)
- Earle Matteson – 1995-1996 (assumed office summer 1995)
- Robert Crane – 1996-2008 (assumed office summer 1996)
- Greg Huffman – 2008 (assumed office summer 2008)