

## Let Worldly Minds the World Pursue

*John Newton (1725–1807)*

Let worldly minds the world pursue,  
It has no charms for me;  
Once I admired its trifles too,  
But grace has set me free.

Its pleasures now no longer please,  
No more content afford;  
Far from my heart be joys like these;  
Now I have seen the Lord.

As by the light of opening day  
The stars are all concealed;  
So earthly pleasures fade away,  
When Jesus is revealed.

Creatures no more divide my choice,  
I bid them all depart;  
His name, and love, and gracious voice,  
Have fixed my roving heart.

Now, Lord, I would be Thine alone,  
And wholly live to Thee;  
But may I hope that Thou wilt own  
A worthless worm, like me?

Yes! though of sinners I'm the worst,  
I cannot doubt Thy will;  
For if Thou hadst not loved me first  
I had refused Thee still.

## ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

### *In the Nick of Time*

#### **Growing Up Fundamentalist, Part Seven: Vocation**

*Kevin T. Bauder*

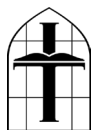
One of the rituals of life at Bible college was the daily chapel service. In chapel we heard preaching by local pastors and other Christian leaders. We sang hymns—usually better ones than the hymns I'd grown up singing. Part of chapel was also devoted to community life. Chapels were like student assemblies with announcements, skits, and congratulations for students who achieved some milestone.

Life in a Bible college was as varied as life in any college or university. We had concerts and recitals, speech and theater, intervarsity and intramural sports, a student paper. The food in the cafeteria was good. Unlike some Christian schools, relationships between male and female students were fairly relaxed; we could date whom we chose when we chose. We pretty well had the run of Des Moines, which offered plenty of interesting things to do.

Besides these activities, the college hosted special events that focused on spiritual interests. Class schedules were modified for a week each semester as the college hosted a missionary conference in the fall and a Bible conference every spring. Most of the preaching at these events was well above average. Our own faculty and administration could offer outstanding exposition of Scripture.

All classes were taught from a Christian perspective. The history courses were largely church history. The classes in social studies reflected a biblical perspective on human nature. The course in ethics was geared toward establishing and defending biblical morality. Students seeking a bachelor of arts would take two years of biblical Greek.

In a Bible college, all students major in Bible. Our studies began with survey courses that covered both the entire biblical corpus and the entire system of doctrine. All students completed a class in biblical interpretation. More required courses focused on individual biblical books such as Genesis, Matthew, Acts, and Romans. Students could take many other biblical and theological electives.



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This constant focus on biblical and doctrinal content was an important formative force in my life. Through my first year-and-a-half I tried to ignore it, but it pressed on me constantly. The teaching of my professors, the intensity of the spiritual conferences, and the daily routine of biblical preaching in chapel began to reshape my understanding of who I was and what mattered. Along with my roommate Dave's example, this constant biblical teaching helped to bring about that mid-sophomore-year renewal of long-neglected dedication.

At that point my whole perspective changed. The primary emphasis on our campus no longer seemed to be one of denial, but of opportunity. Ours was a small school in which faculty, students, and administrators knew each other personally. I saw that the president, the professors, and others were serving at considerable personal sacrifice. Furthermore, they were on my side. They were not there to repress me, but to help me succeed.

I had said that I would start giving back. The next day I heard a chapel announcement that one of the school's theater troupes had lost an actor and was looking for a replacement. Theater was right down my alley, so I tried out and got the part. I spent the second semester traveling with that group. We performed in high schools and churches from Ohio to the Rockies. It was the first time as an adult that I actually tried to do something just to serve the Lord.

The experience was wonderful, and I don't mean from a thespian point of view (I'd been in better productions in high school). What was different was the sense of mission and camaraderie shared by the actors and crew. Those people became my friends, and the friendships were different in quality from any I'd experienced before. One young woman became a special friend. I took her to the spring formal that year. After she graduated, we kept up a relationship through the summer. At the end of the summer she agreed to become my wife.

Early in my junior year I learned that an old injury had been improperly treated and was going to require surgery. About halfway through the first semester I dropped out of school. By that time, my wife-to-be had been offered a staff position at our college. I took a daytime job and did not return to school again for more than a year.

When Debbie and I were married, I had no sense of vocation at all. I was working full-time in an auto parts warehouse. That was definitely not my calling. An insurance agent tried to recruit me to sell insurance. A chiropractor tried to convince me to go into his field. Nothing seemed right.

During that time Debbie and I began working with the young people in my father's church. Teaching the Bible just seemed to fit. Preaching felt natural to me. I had never really considered the ministry, and I had a list of reasons that I thought I wouldn't do well. Over the next year, however, the Lord put

me in positions in which every one of those reasons was tested—and collapsed. One day Dave even encouraged me to think about the pastorate.

Over these months I began to sense that ministry should be my life's work. To this point, however, I had said nothing to Debbie. I brought the subject up over dinner one evening: "What would you say if I told you I thought the Lord was leading me to be a preacher?" She replied that she had seen this coming and that she fully supported me. That was that. I knew what I was going to do.

Of course, this decision meant returning to Bible college. I started with a single course, a night class on Psalms. This was the first time I'd taken a class really wanting to learn the Bible. The book of Psalms just seemed to come alive. Studying the compositions of David and Asaph was not a chore; it was a delight.

Next fall I was back full time. The first morning that I stepped on campus one of my old professors saw me crossing the parking lot. He looked me up and down, grinned, and said, "I knew you'd be back."

Perhaps the most formative course that I took was a summer class on the history of fundamentalism. This was the first time I had heard any sustained description of fundamentalism, either as an idea or as a movement. The professor didn't try to sugar-coat anything. He was frank about the problems in fundamentalism, but he was also clear about what fundamentalism was. I entered the class doubting that I would ever be a fundamentalist. I left the class knowing that I already was one.

The next two years flew past. Debbie and I lived in the small town where I'd spent my high school years. After my father moved to a different state, we became members of the formerly-Presbyterian church he had pastored. We formed new friendships and learned new life lessons. Along the way I wrote a paper or two that impressed my professors, and they began to encourage me toward seminary. Though a married man, I was still growing up fundamentalist.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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