

## If Death My Friend and Me Divide

*Charles Wesley (1707–1788)*

If death my friend and me divide,  
Thou dost not, Lord, my sorrow chide,  
Or frown my tears to see;  
Restrained from passionate excess,  
Thou bidst me mourn in calm distress  
For them that rest in Thee.

I feel a strong immortal hope,  
Which bears my mournful spirit up  
Beneath its mountain load;  
Redeemed from death, and grief, and pain,  
I soon shall find my friend again  
Within the arms of God.

Pass a few fleeting moments more  
And death the blessing shall restore  
Which death has snatched away;  
For me Thou wilt the summons send,  
And give me back my parted friend  
In that eternal day.

## ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

### *In the Nick of Time*

#### **A Friend and Mentor, Part One: The Facts of His Life**

*Kevin T. Bauder*

The young Charles A. Hauser, Jr., suffered from a speech impediment. He struggled to make himself understood. Consequently, he intended to follow his father into the world of banking, where he would be working with ledgers and financial statements rather than with the public.

He might have enjoyed such a career except for one thing. The young Charles A. Hauser, Jr., was also a member of an independent Baptist church in Altoona, Pennsylvania—a church that produced multiple pastors and missionaries over the years. By the time Hauser had completed his BBA degree at the University of Pittsburg, he had become convinced that the Lord was calling him into vocational ministry.

He first attended the Pittsburg-Xenia seminary because it was near his home. His experience there was not happy. He was still troubled by the speech impediment, and one of his professors once told the young Charles that he ought to go into business because he would never be any use as a minister. Hauser never forgot that discouragement, and it later gave him compassion for students who struggled to complete seminary.

Eventually, Hauser transferred to Dallas Theological Seminary, where he took his Th.M. degree. At Dallas he was strongly influenced by Charles Caldwell Ryrie. He then went on to study at Grace Theological Seminary under such luminaries as Alva J. McLain, Herman A. Hoyt, and John C. Whitcomb.

After receiving his Th.D. from Grace, Hauser taught briefly at the old Buffalo Bible Institute in Buffalo, New York. In 1962 he moved to California to join the faculty of the San Francisco Baptist Theological Seminary. While at San Francisco he became active in the so-called Hard Core of the Conservative Baptist Movement, eventually helping to frame the doctrinal statement for the New Testament Association of Independent Baptist Churches.

During those years, SFBTS was noted for its faculty. Hauser taught alongside individuals like William Bellshaw, LaVern Shaeffer, and Bernard Northrup. These were men of strong and sometimes idiosyncratic opinions, and Hauser was forced to sharpen his thinking in conversation with his



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www.centalseminary.edu | info@centralseminary.edu  
900 Forestview Lane N, Plymouth, MN 55441 | 800.827.1043

peers. Along the way he had lost his speech impediment, though he could still stumble from time to time. Intemperate decisions by the seminary administration led to the exodus of nearly all professors during the summer of 1972.

Hauser was invited by Bryce Augsburg to become a founding professor of a new seminary connected with Denver Baptist Bible College. In addition to teaching at Denver Baptist Theological Seminary, Hauser served as the academic vice president of both college and seminary. The school struggled almost from the beginning, so the professors were perpetually behind in their salaries. Augsburg left the presidency in 1979, and Hauser continued to serve under William Fusco (the two men hailed from the same home church). After Fusco resigned in 1984, Hauser continued to serve under L. Duane Brown until the college and seminary closed in 1986.

After Denver, Hauser joined the faculty of Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis. He also served as registrar and then dean of the institution. He taught at Central Seminary until his retirement in 2006, after which he became Dean Emeritus and served on the board. Central Seminary also awarded Charles Hauser the D.Hum. degree, *causa honoris*. His career at Central Seminary mainly spanned the presidencies of Ernest Pickering, Douglas McLachlan, and Kevin Bauder.

Hauser was dean when the seminary was asked to teach courses in Romania during the early 1990s. Eventually Central Seminary opened a full branch campus in Arad, Romania, where it trained something like twenty percent of all Baptist pastors in that country. Hauser traveled frequently to this campus, and he oversaw its work until his retirement.

The wife of Charles Hauser's youth, Janet Melling, died while he was teaching at Denver. The registrar at Denver, Anna (Ann) Miller, had been widowed many years earlier. Their common experience of bereavement eventually drew them together. They married, and after Charles became the dean at Central Seminary, Ann took over the job of registrar.

Ann had three grown sons. After Charles's retirement, the couple moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to be near one of her sons. They lived in Louisville until Ann's death in 2012. After Ann's death, Charles's health began to decline. Eventually he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, after which he moved into a care facility. His eyesight began to dim, then his hearing began to fade. During the COVID lockdowns he experienced profound loneliness. As his body weakened he was eventually confined to a wheelchair.

Until rather recently, Hauser would call his former co-workers for news about what was happening at Central Seminary. They would occasionally stop by to visit him when they were traveling near Louisville. For the last few months, however, he had expressed bewilderment at why the Lord was

leaving him on earth and not taking him to heaven. He was more than ready to go.

Last Saturday evening, March 19, Charles A. Hauser, Jr., received his wish. He was permitted to lay aside the "earthly tent, which is our house," so as to be "absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:1, 8 NASB—a translation that Hauser loved). These are the facts of Charles Hauser's life.

I feel, however, that I cannot stop with this bare summation of biographical information. The influence of Charles Hauser was far greater than these words can hint. Lord willing, I hope yet to say something about his personal influence as a teacher and a man of God.



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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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