

Keep Silence, All Created Things

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Keep silence, all created things!
And wait your Maker's nod;
My soul stands trembling, while she sings
The honors of her God.

Life, death, and hell, and worlds unknown,
Hang on his firm decree;
He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be.

His providence unfolds the book,
And makes his counsels shine;
Each opening leaf, and every stroke,
Fulfills some deep design.

My God! I would not long to see
My fate with curious eyes
What gloomy lines are writ for me,
Or what bright scenes may rise.

In thy fair book of life and grace,
Oh, may I find my name
Recorded in some humble place,
Beneath my Lord, the Lamb.

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ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

In the Nick of Time

A Retrospective

Kevin T. Bauder

My employment as a professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary began in January of 1998, over twenty-five years ago. Charles Hauser was dean of the seminary, and he probably had more to do with recruiting me than anybody else. Doug McLachlan was president and the pastor of Fourth Baptist Church. Tom Zempel occupied the office of assistant to the president and headed up the biblical counseling program. My faculty peers included Ed Glenny, Roy Beacham, Bob Milliman, and Raymond Buck. The registrar at the time was David Capetz, and the advancement officer was Ron Gotzman.

For a month I had an office in the education building of the old Fourth Baptist facility, located in north Minneapolis. It was and is a violent area. Few members of the church lived in that part of Minneapolis. They all drove in for services from the suburbs. When I arrived, Fourth Baptist Church was erecting a new facility in the western suburb of Plymouth while creating a daughter congregation (Family Baptist Church) to continue ministering in north Minneapolis. The seminary moved to the new site at the end of January, and the church followed in April.

From the moment I arrived, both administration and faculty welcomed me with warmth and charity. I was never made to feel that I had to earn my right to be here. I was immediately entrusted with both responsibility and privilege. The three administrators (McLachlan, Zempel, and Hauser) set the tone, treating me as a colleague and partner rather than an employee and underling. When I made mistakes, these men always took a problem-solving approach. I always felt like they had my back.

It was never quite clear to me which of those three was managing what. Theoretically, there must have been specific lines of authority and divisions of responsibility, but these men worked so closely together that every decision appeared to have been made in concert. Furthermore, they actively involved the professors in any decision that was likely to affect the faculty. Working at Central Seminary felt less like taking a job than like becoming part of a family.



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Twenty years ago this week I was made president of Central Seminary. I remained in that office for exactly eight years. Doug McLachlan became the chairman of the board, and both Hauser and Zempel found themselves working under my oversight. All three gave me the fullest imaginable support. I had no idea how to be an institutional president. I'd never even had the opportunity to observe the workings of the office. The learning curve was steep, and they helped me at every step. If my service as president brought any successes to Central Seminary, those men (and the faculty who served with me) deserve the credit.

During the final third of my presidency, Matt Morrell became the pastor of Fourth Baptist Church and the chair of the seminary's board. Then, when I stepped down as president in 2011, Sam Horn was chosen to lead the institution. My plan when I resigned was to leave Central Seminary—not because of any animus toward the school, but because I had seen too many instances in which former leaders made bad followers within the organizations that they had led. I had no wish to cause problems either for Central Seminary or for Sam Horn as its president.

Both Horn and the board, however, asked me to remain. They offered me a very appealing position that made publication a priority. During a two- or three-year period I was able to publish three books and to contribute to a fourth, which is exactly what I had wanted to do. Furthermore, Horn went out of his way to help me learn how to fit into the institution in my new role. He was an insightful leader who placed my interests ahead of his own. For my part, I tried to give him complete support, even when my perspectives differed from his. I still feel that I owe Sam a debt that cannot be repaid.

After Horn left for Bob Jones, I was asked to serve on the committee that selected the new president. The logical choice was Matt Morrell, who agreed to accept the position, subject to our providing a provost who could manage the day-to-day operations of the seminary. Morrell has now occupied the office of president as long as I did, and under his administration the institution has flourished. We have had to adjust the way that we deliver education, but this adjustment has allowed us to grow in a world dominated by technological change, social upheaval, and a worldwide pandemic. It's a glorious thing when one of your students can become both your pastor and your boss, and you still like and respect him.

One Sunday after Morrell became president, I was preaching for a church in Mason City, Iowa. On my way to church I received a phone call that Tom Zempel had been taken suddenly to be with the Lord. That was a difficult day. As long as he was at Central Seminary, Tom was my strong helper, my counselor, and my friend. He will always have a place in my heart.

Then, a year ago, Charles Hauser slipped into glory after a long physical decline. He had been ready for years, wondering why the Lord left him to

linger in a nursing home during the pandemic. Hauser had gone from first being my professor when I was in seminary, to being my boss, to being my adviser and helper. In every stage of our relationship, he was my friend.

Of the three administrators who brought me to Central Seminary, only Doug McLachlan remains. For five years he was my president. For nearly a decade he was my pastor. If you think that nobody can be your boss *and* your pastor, then you haven't worked with McLachlan. From the time that I came to Central Seminary and throughout my presidency, I believe that he and his wife Marie prayed for me by name nearly every day.

Administrations come and administrations go. Professors come and professors go. Board members come and board members go. Technologies come and technologies go. The thing that gives a seminary its continuity is the idea that propels it. I believe that the idea behind Central Seminary is the same today as it was when I came here at the beginning of 1998. It is also fully in keeping with the idea that was built into the school by its founder, Richard V. Clearwaters.

In the meanwhile, Central Seminary and its people have been one of God's magnificent graces in my life. I am grateful to Him for allowing me to serve here, and I am grateful for those people who brought me to this ministry and who have helped me in it. I wish that I had another twenty-five years to give them.



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.
