

**Ye Faithful Souls, Who Jesus Know***Charles Wesley (1707–1788)*

Ye faithful souls, who Jesus know,  
 If risen indeed with Him ye are,  
 Superior to the joys below,  
 His resurrection's power declare.

Your faith by holy tempers prove,  
 By actions show your sins forgiven,  
 And seek the glorious things above,  
 And follow Christ your Head to Heaven.

There your exalted Savior see  
 Seated at God's right hand again,  
 In all His Father's majesty,  
 In everlasting pomp to reign:

Your real life, with Christ concealed,  
 Deep in the Father's bosom lies;  
 And, glorious as your Head revealed,  
 Ye soon shall meet Him in the skies.

To Him continually aspire,  
 Contending for your native place,  
 And emulate the angel choir,  
 And only live to love and praise.

**ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ***In the Nick of Time***Dr. Richard Redding, Colleague***Kevin T. Bauder*

Central Seminary opened a ministry in Romania shortly after the collapse of communism. Early on, we assumed that all the people of Romania were Romanians. Consequently, we tried to establish a campus in an ethnic Hungarian community. We soon learned that Romanians were reluctant to attend what they perceived as a Hungarian school. Thanks to the welcoming spirit and hard labors of Pastor Benjamin Costea, we were able to relocate to Arad in western Romania. In that location we could draw both majority Romanians and minority Hungarians.

We also drew one student who was neither. Richard Redding was an American missionary working in Romania under the Baptist Bible Fellowship. He began attending our classes, and he graduated with our first class in 1994, receiving his MABS. Two years later he graduated again with his MDiv. When I arrived at Central Seminary in January of 1998, the seminary was flying four men from Romania to Minneapolis to work on their DMin degrees. The goal was for these men to become the future backbone of a Romanian seminary. Richard was one of them, and he eventually graduated with his doctorate.

Richard and his wife Linda had been sent to Romania as part of the first wave of missionary activity after communism. They were already veteran missionaries from Colombia, and their skill in Spanish made it easier to learn Romanian. When they arrived in Romania, they found already-existing Baptist churches in nearly every major center. These were churches that had weathered the assaults of communist atheism and dictatorship. The churches were deep in piety but shallow in their understanding of the Bible and of Christian doctrine. As far as I know, Richard and Linda did not try to establish new Baptist churches. Instead, they gave themselves to strengthening the biblical understanding of existing Baptist pastors and to helping train up a new generation of ministry.

That is how Richard became the ideal go-between to help coordinate our Romanian and American administrations. He himself held a relatively minor post in the Romanian administration (I believe that he was the registrar). His true value lay in helping Americans and Romanians to understand



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each other's mindsets and expectations. He and Linda also regularly hosted American professors when they came to teach in Romania.

In between class sessions, Richard also acted as an associate pastor to Beni Costea. This work included labors in two principal churches and several minor ones. Some American missionaries neither understood nor appreciated this arrangement—to them, it wasn't really missions unless the Americans were the bosses. By working alongside Romanian pastors in their own churches, however, Richard managed to achieve a level of influence that far exceeded that of most American missionaries. He was able to play a significant role in bringing an entire contingent of Romanian pastors and churches to greater theological maturity.

Under communism, Romanian Baptists were very Arminian. They had little idea of how the Bible fit together or how the plan of God could be seen progressing across the biblical story line. They lacked skills in the biblical languages, and their understanding of Baptist distinctives had not been cultivated in decades. Central Seminary taught its students Greek and Hebrew. It introduced them to dispensationalism, and it got them thinking in terms of New Testament patterns for church order and cooperation.

Communism offered few benefits for biblical churches. One unintentional benefit was that, by blocking Western ideas, the communist government actually prevented liberal theologies from infecting Baptist churches. These theologies were only beginning to develop in Romania during the 1990s and early 2000s. The result was that the Baptist churches found themselves in the position that American churches had been in during the 1920s and 1930s.

Central Seminary tried to provide our students principles for dealing with this situation, and we saw some evidence of success. For example, at one point the government offered to begin paying Baptist pastors generously from state funds. To do this, however, Baptists would have to submit to a more centralized and controlled structure. Faced with this temptation, our graduates understood what was at stake. They opposed the offer and led Baptists to reject what would surely have become a poisoned chalice.

During those years, Richard Redding kept up quiet leadership from behind the scenes. As far as I can tell, he and Linda never attracted much attention to themselves, but their influence was evident. Romanian Baptists in their orbit were eventually able to plant churches in Austria, Italy, France, England, and even in the United States. Central Seminary graduates from those years have served churches in all those countries.

Richard and Linda left Romania for Mexico around 2010—maybe a bit earlier. By the time they moved, Richard had helped Central Seminary to educate nearly twenty percent of all the Baptist pastors in Romania. In about 2012 or 2013, financial considerations led Central Seminary to cease operations in Romania. By that time, however, Romanian pastors such as Gelu

Pacurar and Marius Birgean had earned research doctorates. They had the knowledge and credentials to provide leadership so that seminary education could continue among Romanian Baptists.

In Mexico, Richard continued in educational ministry. He also found time to publish five science-fiction novels (the "Light-Plus" series) that can be found on Amazon. Incidentally, Richard claimed at least indirect responsibility for the fact that the Antichrist is depicted as Romanian in the *Left Behind* series.

After he began to develop physical difficulties, Richard and Linda retired from the mission field, eventually settling near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Then came a period of illness and decline. Finally, Richard was taken home to glory on New Years Eve.

Dr. Richard Redding was one of the best men I knew. He was a man of devotion, integrity, intelligence, warmth, hospitality, and humility. During the time that I saw him in action, he never occupied the driver's seat. Yet he took responsibility for the smooth running of the vehicle, and his quiet influence helped to decide the direction it went. His work was never widely and publicly celebrated, but it deserves to be, and it will be someday. For now, we at Central Seminary acknowledge both our indebtedness and affection toward him.



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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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